

PEEL 2021/22

Police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy

An inspection of Cambridgeshire Constabulary

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Overall summary

Our judgments

Our inspection assessed how good Cambridgeshire Constabulary is in ten areas of policing. We make graded judgments in nine of these ten as follows:

Outstanding	Good	Adequate	Requires improvement	Inadequate
	Recording data about crime	Preventing crime	Investigating crime	
	Protecting vulnerable people	Treatment of the public	Responding to the public	
	Developing a positive workplace	Managing offenders		
	Good use of resources			

We also inspected how effective a service Cambridgeshire Constabulary gives to victims of crime. We don't make a graded judgment in this overall area.

We set out our detailed findings about things the force is doing well and where the force should improve in the rest of this report.

Data in this report

For more information, please [view this report on our website](#) and select the 'About the data' section.

Important changes to PEEL

In 2014, we introduced our police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy (PEEL) inspections, which assess the performance of all 43 police forces in England and Wales. Since then, we have been continuously adapting our approach and this year has seen the most significant changes yet.

We are moving to a more intelligence-led, continual assessment approach, rather than the annual [PEEL inspections](#) we used in previous years. For instance, we have integrated our rolling crime data integrity inspections into these PEEL assessments. Our PEEL victim service assessment will now include a crime data integrity element in at least every other assessment. We have also changed our approach to graded judgments. We now assess forces against the characteristics of good performance, set out in the [PEEL Assessment Framework 2021/22](#), and we more clearly link our

judgments to causes of concern and areas for improvement. We have also expanded our previous four-tier system of judgments to five tiers. As a result, we can state more precisely where we consider improvement is needed and highlight more effectively the best ways of doing things.

However, these changes mean that it isn't possible to make direct comparisons between the grades awarded this year with those from previous PEEL inspections. A reduction in grade, particularly from good to adequate, doesn't necessarily mean that there has been a reduction in performance, unless we say so in the report.

HM Inspector's observations

I am pleased with some aspects of the performance of Cambridgeshire Constabulary in keeping people safe and reducing crime. I am satisfied with most other aspects of the constabulary's performance, but there are some areas in which it needs to improve.

These are the findings I consider most important from our assessments of the constabulary over the past year.

The constabulary has highly effective planning processes that allow it to allocate its resources to where they are most needed

The constabulary's strategic, threat and risk assessment (known as CAMSTRA) is a well co-ordinated and comprehensive corporate planning cycle that combines analysis of current demand and forecasting of future demand effectively. It allows the constabulary to manage the expected future demand and risk and to understand the costs of doing so. This is an area of innovation.

The constabulary must improve the time it takes to attend calls for service

The constabulary has made some improvement to its attendance to calls for service, but it still isn't routinely attending incidents quickly enough. If the constabulary doesn't attend incidents in time, it can cause victims to lose confidence in it, or in more serious cases to be put directly at risk. This is an area for improvement.

The constabulary must improve the quality and timeliness of investigations

The constabulary must improve how it investigates and supervises crime. I saw examples of good outcomes secured for victims of crime, but the constabulary doesn't supervise investigations effectively and doesn't consistently set initial investigation plans. This means victims may not always get the service they deserve. This is an area for improvement.

My report sets out the fuller findings of this inspection. While I congratulate the officers and staff of Cambridgeshire Constabulary for their efforts in keeping the public safe, I will monitor the progress towards addressing the areas I have identified that the constabulary can improve further.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'RW', is positioned above the name 'Roy Wilsher'.

Roy Wilsher

HM Inspector of Constabulary

Reducing crime assessment

We have identified seven themes underpinning the ability of a force or constabulary to reduce crime effectively which, taken together, allow an assessment of the extent to which the force is doing all it can to reduce crime. This is a narrative assessment, as police-recorded crime figures can be affected by variations and changes in recording policy and practice, making it difficult to make comparisons over time.

The constabulary has a good understanding of the demand it manages, reinforced by positive crime-recording practices that make sure crimes are recorded correctly. The constabulary's innovative planning allow it to deploy resources where they are most needed.

The constabulary analyses harm in its communities effectively and works well in partnership with other organisations to solve problems. But we found it still isn't effectively assessing its problem-solving plans or sharing effective plans throughout the force.

The constabulary prioritises early intervention work with children and young people when they first come into contact with the criminal justice system. It refers them to supportive projects intended to deter them from offending.

Other factors contributing to the constabulary's ability to reduce crime include:

- It carries out effective media campaigns that raise awareness regarding crime and crime prevention.
- It works effectively in partnership with other agencies to reduce harm via a [domestic abuse](#) perpetrator panel, a [multi-agency risk assessment conference](#) and problem-solving groups.
- It contributes to a consistent and effective multi-agency safeguarding hub that supports the safeguarding of vulnerable victims.
- Emergency calls to the demand hub are usually answered promptly and callers are treated professionally and with respect.

But the following areas may negatively affect the constabulary's ability to reduce crime:

- It doesn't always identify repeat victims at the first point of contact.
- It doesn't always give crime prevention or scene preservation advice at the first point of contact.
- It doesn't always complete initial needs assessments in all appropriate cases.
- It doesn't always investigate crime promptly and effectively.

Providing a service to the victims of crime

Victim service assessment

This section describes our assessment of the service victims receive from Cambridgeshire Constabulary, from the point of reporting a crime through to its end result. As part of this assessment, we reviewed 130 case files as well as 20 cautions, community resolutions and cases where a suspect was identified but the victim didn't support or withdrew their support for police action. While this assessment is ungraded, it influences graded judgments in the other areas we have inspected.

The constabulary answers emergency calls quickly but needs to improve the time it takes to answer non-emergency calls

When a victim contacts the police, it is important that their call is answered quickly and that the right information is recorded accurately on police systems. The caller should be spoken to in a professional manner. The information should be assessed, taking into consideration threat, harm, risk and vulnerability. The victim should get appropriate safeguarding advice.

Emergency calls were answered well, but the constabulary needs to improve the time it takes to deal with non-emergency calls. When calls are answered, the victim's vulnerability isn't always assessed using a structured process. Repeat victims aren't always identified, which means that this information isn't taken into account when considering the response the victim should receive.

Not all victims are given advice on crime prevention or on preserving evidence. This potentially leads to the loss of evidence that would support an investigation and means opportunities to prevent further crimes against victims are missed.

The constabulary doesn't always respond to calls for service quickly enough

A force or constabulary should aim to respond to calls for service within the timescales it has set, which are determined on the basis of the level of prioritisation given to the call. It should change call priority only if the original prioritisation is deemed inappropriate, or if further information suggests a change is needed. The constabulary's response should take into consideration risk and victim vulnerability, including any information obtained after the call.

The constabulary often doesn't respond to calls appropriately. Victims weren't always informed of delays and therefore their expectations weren't always met. This may cause victims to lose confidence and disengage from the process.

The constabulary is good at recording reported crime. The constabulary's crime recording is overseen by its senior leaders

The constabulary's crime recording should be trustworthy. It should be effective at recording reported crime in line with national standards and have effective systems and processes in place that are supported by its leaders and backed up by the right culture.

The constabulary has effective crime recording processes to make sure crimes reported to the constabulary are recorded correctly and without delay.

We set out more details about the constabulary's crime recording in the crime data integrity section below.

The constabulary makes sure that investigations are allocated to appropriate staff with suitable levels of experience, but victims weren't always informed if their crime was not going to be investigated further

All forces and constabularies should have policies to make sure investigations are allocated to suitably trained officers or staff. Their policies should also establish when a crime isn't to be investigated and should be applied consistently. The victim of the crime should be kept informed of who is dealing with their case. They should also be fully informed over the decision to close the investigation.

The arrangements for allocating recorded crimes for investigation were in accordance with the constabulary's policy. In nearly all cases, the crime was allocated to the most appropriate department for further investigation. But victims weren't always informed of the fact that the crime they reported wouldn't be investigated further. To manage their expectations, victims must be kept informed and receive an appropriate level of service.

The constabulary doesn't always carry out effective or timely investigations

Police forces should investigate reported crimes quickly, proportionately and thoroughly. Victims should be kept updated about the investigation and should have effective governance arrangements to make sure investigation standards are high.

Investigations were sometimes not carried out quickly enough and relevant lines of inquiry often weren't completed. There was frequently a lack of effective supervision of investigations and investigation plans. This resulted in some ineffective investigations. Victims weren't always kept updated about the progress of the investigation.

When effective timely investigations aren't carried out, victims are let down and offenders aren't brought to justice. When domestic abuse victims withdrew their support for a prosecution, the constabulary didn't always consider the use of orders designed to protect the victims, such as a [domestic violence protection notice](#) or [order](#). Obtaining such orders is an important method of safeguarding the victim from further abuse in the future.

The [Code of Practice for Victims of Crime](#) requires forces to carry out a needs assessment at an early stage to determine whether victims need additional support.

The constabulary isn't always completing the victim needs assessment, which means not all victims will get the appropriate level of additional support.

The constabulary finalises reports of crimes appropriately, but sometimes fails to consult the victims for their views or record their wishes

The constabulary should make sure it follows national guidance and rules for deciding the outcome type it will assign to each report of crime. In deciding the outcome type, the constabulary should consider the nature of the crime, the offender and the victim. These decisions should be supported and overseen by leaders throughout the constabulary.

In appropriate cases, those offenders who are brought to justice can be dealt with by means of a caution or community resolution. To be correctly applied and recorded, it must be appropriate for the offender and the victim's views must be taken into consideration. In most of the cases reviewed, the offender met the national criteria for the use of these outcomes, but the victim's views were sometimes not sought or considered.

Where a suspect has been identified but the victim doesn't support or withdraws support for police action, an auditable record from the victim should be held confirming their decision. This will allow the investigation to be closed. Evidence of the victim's decision was absent in most cases reviewed. This represents a risk that victims' wishes may not be fully represented and considered before crimes are closed.

Crime data integrity

Good

Cambridgeshire Constabulary is good at recording crime.

We estimate that Cambridgeshire Constabulary is recording 93.2 percent (with a confidence interval of +/- 2.3 percent) of all reported crime (excluding fraud). This is a statistically significant improvement compared with the findings from our previous 2017 inspection, where we found 87.8 percent (with a confidence interval of +/- 1.7 percent). We estimate that the constabulary didn't record more than 4,500 crimes during the year covered by our inspection.

We estimate the constabulary is recording 89.1 percent (with a confidence interval of +/- 4.3 percent) of violent offences. This is a statistically significant improvement compared with the findings from our previous 2017 inspection, where we found 80.0 percent (with a confidence interval of +/- 3.1 percent).

We estimate that that the constabulary is recording 99.0 percent (with a confidence interval of +/- 1.7 percent) of sexual offences. This is a statistically significant improvement compared with the findings from our previous 2017 inspection, where we found 91.1 percent (with a confidence interval of +/- 2.9 percent).

Area for improvement

The force needs to improve how it records equality data

The constabulary's data for victims of crime shows that age and gender are well recorded, ethnicity is less well recorded, and other protected characteristics are not well recorded. The force should be collecting this information to understand the extent to which each protected group is affected by crime, how this differs from those without the protected characteristics, and whether a different response is needed for these victims.

Main findings

In this section, we set out our main findings on how well the constabulary records crime.

Crime recording is well supervised and scrutinised by chief officers

The constabulary has focused on improving how it records crimes. It carries out regular in-depth audits, the results of which are reviewed by chief officers. Any errors found during audits are corrected and then circulated to relevant staff, so that they learn from the correction. There is a crime recording action plan, which is reviewed and updated with progress against actions.

The constabulary has improved how it records violent crime

The constabulary has improved how it records violent crime, but it needs to improve further. Many of the violent offences that weren't recorded were domestic abuse-related offences, which is a particular concern. When crimes weren't recorded, the constabulary didn't investigate the report of crime and there was often no safeguarding to protect the victim. Domestic abuse victims often need substantial support to protect them from further abuse, but they are deprived of this support if crimes aren't recorded.

The constabulary records anti-social behaviour well, but other behavioural crimes aren't always well recorded

Anti-social behaviour-related crimes are well recorded. Behavioural crimes such as harassment and stalking aren't always well recorded. Victims of these types of offences are often vulnerable and the impact of these crimes is high, so it is important that these crimes are recorded. These crime types aren't well understood by officers.

The constabulary is good at recording most sexual offences but isn't always recording rape offences correctly

The constabulary records almost all sexual offences correctly, but reports of rape aren't always recorded appropriately. Rape is one of the most serious crimes a victim can experience, so it is especially important that crimes are recorded accurately to make sure victims receive the service and support they expect and deserve.

The constabulary doesn't always record crimes against vulnerable victims

The constabulary doesn't always record crimes against vulnerable victims. Some of the crimes missed were crimes of a serious nature, such as rape, indecent images of children, and controlling and coercive behaviour. When the crime wasn't recorded there was often no investigation and sometimes no safeguarding of the victim. Failure to record these crimes can result in perpetrators not being identified or brought to justice.

Engaging with and treating the public with fairness and respect

Adequate

Cambridgeshire Constabulary is adequate at treating people fairly and with respect.

Area for improvement

The force should make sure that reasonable grounds to search are correctly recorded in stop and search encounters

The force has previously been a high performer in its recording of reasonable grounds to search in stop and search encounters. In 2019 and 2020, an HMICFRS audit found that 94 percent of grounds recorded on stop and search forms were reasonable. The audit only measures the quality of the grounds as they are recorded on the stop and search form, not whether the grounds themselves were reasonable at the time.

In 2020 and 2021, this percentage dropped to 80.6 percent. The force must understand what has contributed to this decline, and establish whether it represents a reduction in the number of reasonable grounds or a reduction in the effective recording of reasonable grounds.

The force has audited its stop and search records, which suggests that there is primarily an issue with how the force records reasonable grounds. The force should make sure that it sustains an improvement over time of the number of reasonable grounds recorded by the force during stop and search encounters.

Main findings

In this section we set out our main findings that relate to treating people fairly and with respect.

The constabulary gets in touch with communities that are traditionally seen as less likely to report or engage, but its approach could be more consistent

The constabulary engages well with a number of the diverse communities in Cambridgeshire. We found evidence of sustained and targeted work with Lithuanian and Chinese communities. We also saw evidence of work with communities whose socio-economic status or vocation might make them less likely to report crimes, such as sex workers and homeless people.

The constabulary's corporate communications department targets specific demographics in its campaigns, adjusting its methods accordingly. For example, it mainly uses in-person and offline methods for campaigns to contact older people, such as physical stalls in garden centres and door-to-door approaches.

But when we visited neighbourhood policing teams, we found that meaningful work with the full range of communities throughout the county was inconsistent. Officers might be aware of a specific community in their area, but not plan any continuing work with that community. The use of [key individual networks](#) also varied, as did how often officers attended community events.

The constabulary is improving its understanding of use of force

The constabulary has previously under-recorded instances of use of force. In 2020 and 2021 the constabulary recorded 4,716 incidents of use of force. This is below the England and Wales average for the number of people it serves.

We found there were two primary factors contributing to this under-recording problem. Firstly, officers were less likely to record a use of force if handcuffs were used on compliant arrestees. However, using handcuffs is a use of force, even if the arrestee didn't physically resist. Secondly, officers weren't always using the force's IT system correctly to record use of force.

The constabulary has directed officers to record compliant handcuffing as a use of force and has also moved to a more accurate recording system. Use of this new system is being monitored to make sure that officers don't use the old system in error. The constabulary now can give more accurate data to its internal monitoring and external scrutiny panels.

The constabulary is increasing communication skills training

Communication and negotiation skills are a vital aspect of a police officer's training. They make sure that officers have the confidence to handle situations that could escalate into conflict without resorting to an unnecessary use of force. Good use of communication and negotiation skills also improves the satisfaction of those being stopped and searched.

Communication skills used to be included in annual personal safety training, and in related training such as Taser qualification. But although the constabulary still includes them in its training for officers qualifying to attend public order incidents, they haven't been included in personal safety or Taser training for at least a year.

The constabulary is aware of this problem. In April 2022 it introduced a mandatory learning package about communication skills to all defensive skills and Taser training.

The constabulary understands the effect of its messaging to the public

The constabulary has several ways of communicating important messages to the public. These include:

- eCops, a public messaging service that uses emails to send crime prevention advice and appeals to the public;
- messaging over social media platforms;
- working with community leaders and local councillors; and
- door-to-door campaigns.

The constabulary measures how the public interacts with these efforts through traditional means such as the number of subscribers and the number of click-throughs on social media. But it also carries out a more sophisticated analysis using an integrated evaluation framework. This framework gives clear direction for communication activity to be linked to specific objectives and measures how well these objectives are achieved. The objectives might include an increase in reports of [intelligence](#) about a specific crime type, an increase in the number of subscribers, or an increase in public discourse about a certain problem.

This analysis allows the constabulary to achieve better value for money for its communication activity. It also makes sure that communications are effective and linked directly to its priorities.

The constabulary has effective internal scrutiny of stop and search and use of force

The constabulary monitors its stop and search encounters and use of force. This includes recording the details of anyone who is searched or subjected to force. These details include their gender, age, ethnicity and any disabilities. The constabulary also monitors where these encounters take place. It identifies officers who are using these powers frequently and refers back to managers to make sure any searches or uses of force are appropriate.

This monitoring means the constabulary can introduce effective changes to the way it works. For example, the internal monitoring group examined a series of unsuccessful stop and search encounters. It found that sometimes officers would find a prohibited item, but because the item was found on a group of people and the individual owner couldn't be identified, this wouldn't be recorded as a successful outcome – even though it should be. This discovery led to changes in how the constabulary records outcomes.

Another example involved the use of the [incapacitant spray](#) PAVA. Internal monitoring showed that PAVA was effective only 50 percent of the time it was used. Further analysis revealed that the way officers were trained to use PAVA gave suspects an opportunity to turn their head away before the spray was released. As a result, training and guidelines were amended.

The constabulary supports effective external scrutiny of stop and search and use of force

The constabulary and the police and crime commissioner support have independently chaired the use of force and stop and search external scrutiny panels. These panels give members of the community the opportunity to discuss force-wide data and individual incidents of the use of force and stop and search. They are attended by a range of community members of different backgrounds.

The panels use supporting documentation and body-worn camera footage to assess reasonable grounds of stop and search or use of force. There is healthy and varied discussion after each incident is viewed.

The panels didn't meet during the pandemic, but the constabulary used this time to give training to the panel members. These included sessions on the use of force and stop and search from the professional standards department, and sessions run by the armed policing command.

The constabulary also provided training from the exploitation lead at Cambridgeshire County Council about [county lines](#) (the exploitation of vulnerable people by organised crime groups, who use them to traffic drugs into rural areas). Panel members are now also invited to attend student officer training in the use of force and stop and search, and to take part in role-play exercises.

Preventing crime and anti-social behaviour

Adequate

Cambridgeshire Constabulary is adequate at prevention and deterrence.

Area for improvement

The force should make sure it takes a consistent approach to the main duties of its neighbourhood policing teams, including building relationships with its communities and problem solving

Neighbourhood policing teams don't give a consistent service throughout the county. We found that although there were good examples of community interaction and problem solving, these weren't always carried out in the same way by all teams. Some officers we spoke to weren't routinely engaging their local communities and some had had limited interactions with partner organisations to carry out problem-solving plans together. Officers also didn't always use the ward profiles made available by the force.

This inconsistency undermines the force's organisational approach to prevention and deterrence. The force must make sure that neighbourhood teams provide a consistent service throughout the county. It must have clear guidelines for how these important duties should be carried out and effective oversight through the existing governance structure.

The force should make sure problem-solving plans are routinely assessed and evaluated and that learning is made available to staff

In our last inspection in 2019, we identified that the force should better evaluate and share problem-solving plans. In this inspection we found that evaluation of problem-solving plans was still limited. While there was some progress in sharing what works, this was still not routine.

The force must better evaluate its problem-solving activities and make sure staff are aware of what works.

Main findings

In this section we set out our main findings that relate to prevention and deterrence.

The constabulary invests in neighbourhood policing teams and considers the impact on staff and communities when officers are diverted to other duties

The constabulary has invested in its neighbourhood policing teams by directing the extra funding from the policing precept increase into recruiting officers for neighbourhood policing teams. Even though the constabulary has decreased its number of police community support officers (PCSOs) from 80 to 40, these savings have been re-invested into neighbourhood policing teams.

Despite this investment, officers told us that they are regularly diverted from their main duties to respond to emergency calls to respond to protest activity and to perform other duties.

The constabulary is aware of this. It monitors diversions from duty through an 'abstraction tracker' that records how long officers are diverted for, the officers' rank and the activity they are diverted to. The constabulary's abstraction policy has guidance on the maximum amount of time officers should be diverted from their duties.

At the time of our inspection, those most likely to be diverted were inspectors. The abstraction of police constables was seen as manageable.

The constabulary effectively identifies high-harm suspects, victims and locations

The constabulary uses the Cambridge Crime Harm Index (CCHI) to identify high-harm individuals and locations. The index measures the effect of a crime by assessing the level of harm caused, rather than just the number of incidents. Higher-harm crimes, such as serious assault, are given greater emphasis than multiple instances of lower harm crime, such as theft or criminal damage, while still recognising the potential for greater harm in a series of repeat incidents.

A rolling three-month harm index is produced by the intelligence and specialist crime department (ISCD), with high-harm suspects targeted for intervention. The constabulary is also developing a key offender dashboard, which includes the data from these lists as well as from other forums such as the domestic abuse perpetrator panel. This helps the constabulary to co-ordinate work against high-harm suspects.

The ISCD produces a monthly high-harm victim list, which is disseminated to neighbourhood teams. We saw evidence of neighbourhood officers prioritising visits and intervention work with these victims.

The constabulary also identifies high-harm locations. As well as the CCHI, the constabulary also prioritises which secondary schools in the county need the most policing input.

The constabulary carries out effective early intervention and prevention work with children and young people

The constabulary prioritises early intervention work with children and young people. One way it does this is through its [out-of-court disposals](#) process. This makes sure that first-time or youth offenders are given support to break the cycle of offending.

Interventions include a programme to tackle adolescent to parent violence, support for adult and juvenile mental health, and support for substance misuse. An out-of-court disposals panel scrutinises some cases on a quarterly basis. This is so the constabulary can make sure that the use of out-of-court disposals is appropriate. The panel includes the Youth Offending Service and the Crown Prosecution Service.

Feedback has been positive, with case studies showing clear instances of young people receiving a trauma-informed response designed to divert them from further offending. The constabulary is working with Anglia Ruskin University to review its child perpetrators of violence towards parents intervention programme.

The constabulary also carries out other positive interventions, such as its Transforming Lives programme. This programme works with children and young people to prevent them being drawn into the criminality of older siblings or peers. The constabulary also works with the Cambridgeshire Youth Panel to give children and young people with internet access and digital devices help with improving online learning, access to training and school work.

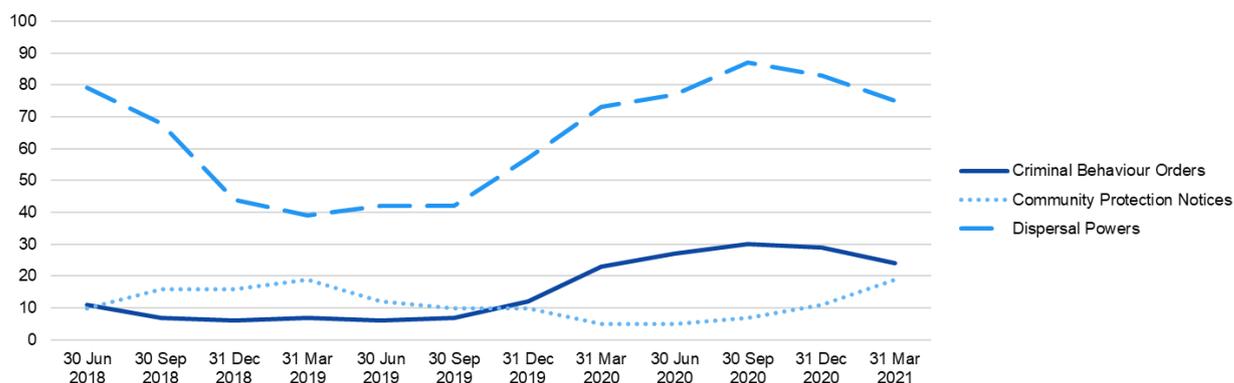
The constabulary has increased its use of ancillary orders aimed at preventing anti-social behaviour

In our last inspection in 2019 we identified the awareness of ancillary orders, such as [criminal behaviour orders](#), in the work of frontline officers as an area for improvement. The constabulary has effectively raised awareness of these preventative tactics with frontline officers. As a result, the use of ancillary orders to target anti-social behaviour and those that cause harm has increased.

The chart below shows the number of anti-social behaviour orders issued by the constabulary over 36 months. There was an increase in the number of criminal behaviour orders and dispersal powers issued between the year ending 31 March 2019 and the year ending 30 September 2020.

The numbers have decreased since this time period and that initial rise. The constabulary should make sure that the targeted use of these orders is sustained.

Rolling 12-month total of anti-social behaviour orders issued by Cambridgeshire Constabulary each quarter from the year ending 30 June 2018 to the year ending 31 March 2021



The constabulary uses innovative methods to give crime prevention advice to a range of people

The constabulary's corporate communications department runs specific awareness-raising campaigns to inform the public and prevent them from becoming victims of crime.

A particularly innovative example was a campaign to raise awareness of modern slavery. The constabulary identified the countries in which victims were most often trafficked and then ran targeted Facebook foreign language adverts in these countries. The adverts warned of the common signs of being targeted for trafficking to help prevent individuals being trafficked in the first place, rather than the constabulary acting once the victims are in Cambridgeshire. Such use of social media targets potential victims far sooner than the constabulary would normally be able to manage.

The constabulary is developing its organisational and cultural approach to prevention and deterrence

The constabulary has recently restructured to create a partnerships and prevention command, led by a superintendent. This command will steer the constabulary's prevention activities, guided by the newly introduced prevention strategy and action plan.

The constabulary has an accompanying cultural campaign, which is branded as 'One More Step'. It challenges officers and staff to consider what extra step they might take with a victim, suspect, incident or task, to prevent harm occurring in the future.

At the time of our inspection this refreshed approach to prevention and deterrence had only recently been introduced, so the effect we could see was limited. But we expect the constabulary will continue to build on it.

The constabulary provides professional development to neighbourhood policing teams, but doesn't support this with a structured training package for new neighbourhood police officers

The constabulary provides continuing professional development for its neighbourhood officers, including training on anti-social behaviour, civil orders and problem-solving. This usually takes place during what the constabulary calls 'Tuesday training'. It is supported by locally based tactical advisors and continuing professional development officers who reinforce important knowledge and act as points of contact for officers.

But the constabulary doesn't offer a training package for officers who are newly joining neighbourhood teams. This means that the skill sets, knowledge and overall approaches of neighbourhood officers can vary.

The constabulary works effectively with other organisations to solve problems, but it could use shared platforms more consistently

We found good evidence of officers working with other organisations to solve problems. Officers attend multi-agency problem-solving groups with other agencies, including the local authority, and education and health services. These groups can highlight emerging problems such as street drinking, anti-social behaviour in housing, and repeat vehicle crime, and can manage the response to them throughout organisations.

The constabulary's problem-solving plan to target repeat retail crime was recently mentioned in a parliamentary debate, due to the quality of the response. The plan involved the constabulary partnering with the stores that were affected.

The constabulary uses an online partnership platform to work with other organisations on problem-solving plans. The partnership platform allows all of those involved to post updates on actions that all parties can see. This constant sharing of information improves the response to the identified problem.

But we found that that some officers hadn't used the platform for some time and that partnership updates weren't always recorded on the system. This limits the significant contribution a shared system can make to effective partnership working.

We also found that the constabulary frequently uses a problem-solving model to tackle neighbourhood issues, but that the use of the model outside neighbourhood teams is limited.

Responding to the public

Requires improvement

Cambridgeshire Constabulary requires improvement at responding to the public.

Areas for improvement

The force needs to attend calls for service in line with its published attendance times and make sure that victims are fully updated when delays occur

The force doesn't always respond to calls within its published time frames.

In our previous inspection in 2019, we found this problem was particularly evident in domestic abuse calls that were graded as prompt. A prompt grading means that the call doesn't need an emergency attendance, but should be attended within four hours. The force has introduced a new grading of priority for calls that should be attended within an hour. Domestic abuse calls in this grading are escalated for the earliest attendance possible.

But while the force has improved their response to prompt graded domestic abuse calls, it still isn't routinely attending calls of all types quickly enough. We found that response and attendance were within the target time in only 41 out of 79 incidents. The delays were mainly in the new 'priority' category.

Failure to attend incidents in time can cause victims to lose confidence in the force and disengage from further action. Victims may be put at risk and evidence may be lost.

The force needs to make sure that call takers give appropriate advice on preserving evidence and crime prevention

The force doesn't routinely give advice to callers regarding preserving evidence or the prevention of crime. We found that crime prevention advice been given to callers in only 40 out of the 48 appropriate cases we reviewed. Advice on preserving evidence was given in only 27 out of the 36 appropriate cases we reviewed.

This means that the force is missing opportunities to preserve evidence that would greatly help investigations. This means that the force is missing opportunities to reduce repeat victimisation at the point of call.

The force should make sure that repeat victims are routinely identified

The force isn't routinely identifying repeat victims. We found that checks were made to see if a caller was a repeat victim in only 57 out of 81 cases.

Where callers were identified as a repeat victim, this was recorded by a call handler in 30 out of 33 cases. But by not identifying repeat victims consistently, the force can't make sure the victim receives the most appropriate response. It is missing out on opportunities to understand and reduce repeat victimisation.

Main findings

In this section we set out our main findings that relate to how well the force responds to the public.

The constabulary needs to improve the time it takes to deal with non-emergency calls

The constabulary doesn't promptly resolve non-emergency calls. These calls, made on the [101](#) number, are triaged by a switchboard operator and forwarded to the most appropriate destination. This might be to the emergency 999 line, but more often it is to a secondary line for another department.

There are delays on this secondary line that often cause callers to abandon the call. Constabulary data shows that the rate of abandonment of these non-emergency calls was above the national standard of 5 percent for forces with a switchboard. We also found evidence of callers placed on a non-emergency line abandoning the call and then calling 999. Failure to respond effectively to enquiries from the public can cause callers to lose confidence in the service and inappropriately tie up the emergency 999 line.

The constabulary needs to improve how it conducts and records THRIVE assessments

The constabulary uses a risk assessment framework called [THRIVE](#) to identify risks accurately and determine the correct priority for a particular call. We found that the constabulary was effective at assessing the priority of a call based on the information given, but the automated question sets don't always prompt call handlers to ask for all of the relevant information. This reduces the effectiveness of the assessment.

We also found that these question sets take a long time to get the information and often prompt for information that isn't needed at the initial stage of a call. We found examples of call handlers following question sets and then arranging dispatch several minutes after the call was first made, causing the unit to miss its target attendance time.

The constabulary understands its incoming demand

The demand hub, where the constabulary answers calls for service, uses a live dashboard to give an overview of demand. This includes incoming calls on 999 and 101, the lengths of calls and the number of unanswered calls. It includes webchat figures and social media reports.

This, combined with the constabulary's positive crime data integrity practices, shows that the constabulary understands its incoming demand. We reviewed the constabulary's grading and appointment system and saw no evidence of incoming calls being inappropriately diverted to disguise the level of incoming demand. Nor did we find calls being inappropriately resolved in the demand hub to suppress the need for a unit to attend.

The constabulary is exploring new ways of identifying hidden demand

The constabulary is pursuing an innovative project to uncover hidden harm in online gaming. The constabulary is working with a local games developer that manages an online role-playing game. They are developing a way to promptly identify and then report criminal behaviour in the game's text chats, in messaging and on forums. If a threat to life is made, it is reported to the demand hub and then to the authorities in whichever country the child concerned is believed to be in.

Staff from the game developer have been trained by the demand hub training team, and there are plans to keep this training in-house as the project develops. The constabulary is also working with a multinational game developer on the same issue.

The constabulary has several ways for the public to make calls for service

The constabulary has a dedicated digital desk that processes webchat interactions with the public and monitors the constabulary's social media accounts. The digital desk staff are dedicated to webchat for their shift. They don't take 999 or 101 calls unless there is extensive demand on these lines. We did find there were occasions in the past 12 months when the webchat service had been switched off for this reason.

The constabulary uses a software platform to help monitor its social media accounts for messages that need a response. For example, in May 2021 the constabulary received 20,154 messages on social media. The demand hub responded to 807 of these.

The constabulary supports staff wellbeing in the demand hub and also offers effective and continuous professional development

The constabulary supports staff in the demanding call handler role. Staff told us that they had good support from supervisors. There are regular check-ins, action plans and phased returns in response to welfare issues. Staff also have access to the [trauma risk management](#) scheme, which gives referrals for counselling. Absence and sickness rates are low.

Staff also have access to a training team that is dedicated to the demand hub. Bespoke training is given on issues raised by staff or identified by supervisors. While face-to-face training stopped during the pandemic, it has since resumed.

Investigating crime

Requires
improvement

Cambridgeshire Constabulary requires improvement at investigating crime.

Area for improvement

The force should make sure that investigation plans are created when needed, with supervisory oversight ensuring all investigative opportunities are taken

The force doesn't supervise investigations effectively and doesn't consistently set initial investigation plans. We found that where it was appropriate for investigation plans to be created, this was done in only 47 out of 60 cases. We found that where it was appropriate for supervisors to give advice and direction to the investigation, this occurred in only 43 out of 68 cases.

The force should make sure that every appropriate investigation has a plan. Supervising officers should be involved in developing these plans and in outlining the objective for each investigation. The force should then make sure that supervisory involvement in investigations is consistently applied and carried out to recognised standards.

The force needs to make sure that the requirements of the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime are complied with

The force isn't effectively adhering to the requirements of the Code of Practice for the Victims of Crime. While we did find evidence of investigators updating victims on the progress of investigations, as agreed with them, we also found that victim needs assessments weren't always being completed. In 15 out of 59 cases, we found no evidence of victim needs assessments being completed, or enhanced services being considered.

Victim needs assessments make sure that any special measures needed by the victim are identified at an early stage of the investigation, so that the victim receives the appropriate support.

The force should make sure that an auditable record of the decision of the victim and their reasons for withdrawal of support, or wishes for an out-of-court disposal or caution are fully documented. It should make sure it documents whether evidence-led prosecutions have been considered in all cases

The force isn't appropriately documenting the wishes of victims to withdraw from an investigation or to accept an out-of-court disposal, such as a community resolution or caution. Investigators do record victims' decisions, but it is important to obtain an auditable record to have evidence of victims' wishes and to understand why they don't wish to support a prosecution or accept an out-of-court disposal.

The force is also not routinely recording whether an evidence-led prosecution has been considered in cases where a victim withdraws support. It should make sure this is done more consistently.

Main findings

In this section we set out our main findings that relate to how well the force investigates crime.

The constabulary has clear plans to address detective resilience

The constabulary is aware of the number of vacant detective roles it currently has and what it will need in the future. It has a comprehensive detective recruitment plan in place, covering both internal attraction and external recruitment.

The constabulary's management of internal candidates interested in becoming detectives is robust. Candidates are placed on a clearly defined detective pathway with an assessment centre-style internal recruitment process. After this, they are supported to take the national investigators' exam and complete their portfolio.

The constabulary has invested in its digital and cyber hub, reducing delays in examining digital devices

The constabulary has invested in its digital and cyber hub by recruiting more digital media investigators and digital media analysts. This has reduced the time it takes to return a download of a phone or computer to investigators. The constabulary has also procured a number of field triage vans. These means that it will be better able to triage phones and computers at the scene of incidents.

The constabulary has also invested in a triage unit. It has the staff and technical equipment to allow faster and more effective triaging of computer and phone submissions, and to divert those less likely to give a positive result. The constabulary prioritises devices belonging to victims and returns them as soon as it is able.

This increase in capability and capacity contributes to the team's aim to reduce processing time to an average of ten weeks over the next few years. We did still hear

some complaints from investigators regarding the length of time it takes for devices to be analysed, but we didn't find this caused any significant delay to investigations.

The constabulary effectively supports its investigators and this is reinforced by positive local line management

We found that investigators in both the volume crime and specialist crime teams are often carrying high workloads. The constabulary considers the effect of this on staff welfare, and investigators are given support. While we saw this in the constabulary's overall management of welfare, we also found multiple instances of investigative supervisors prioritising welfare in their teams. They do this by giving investigators time and space when needed and by making reasonable adjustments in the workplace.

Supervisors and their staff are also given resources to support them with the complexities of investigative work. These include a supervisory e-book, which was independently shared with us by the College of Policing as good working practices.

Protecting vulnerable people

Good

Cambridgeshire Constabulary is good at protecting vulnerable people.

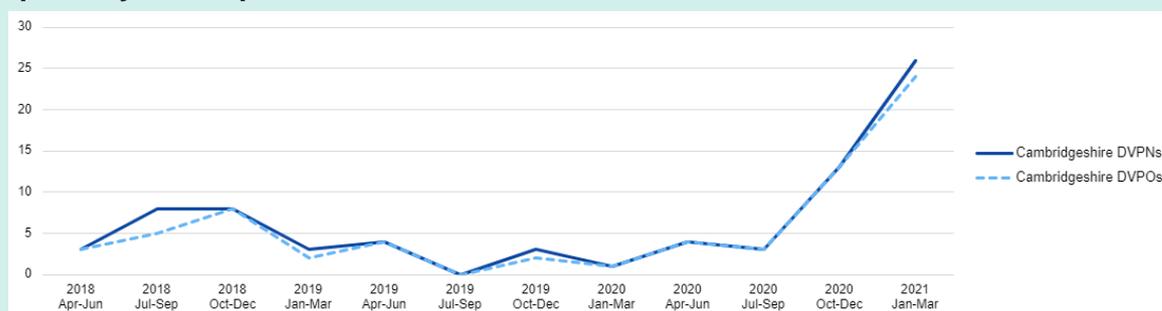
Innovative practice

The force has enhanced its frontline response to vulnerable people by introducing specialised vulnerability focus desks

The force has introduced vulnerability focus desks to support the frontline response to domestic abuse and [missing persons](#). The desks also assist in developing safeguarding and action plans for repeat vulnerable victims.

Response officers spoke favourably about support from the focus desks, which have improved the frontline response to vulnerability. In May 2021, the vulnerability focus desks gave advice on 122 domestic abuse investigations and completed 22 bespoke safeguarding reviews. They helped apply for 30 [domestic violence protection notices](#) (DVPNs), which was more than had been applied for during all of 2020. And the number of [domestic violence protection orders](#) (DVPOs) increased from 13 in the quarter ending December 2020 to 24 between January and March 2021.

Number of DVPNs and DVPOs applied for by Cambridgeshire Constabulary quarterly from April 2018 to March 2021



The vulnerability focus desks have also improved how the force deals with children missing from home. The average missing from home time has decreased from 25 hours to three hours. Ninety-one percent of children and young people missing from home are located within 24 hours.

The force supports staff in high-impact roles by using a ‘pause point’ policy to prevent burnout and support career progression

The force has introduced a process called pause point. This is a welfare provision for staff in high-impact roles such as child abuse investigation or paedophile online teams.

The pause point process gives staff members and supervisors the opportunity to determine if a break from the role would be beneficial, and identifies opportunities to do this. It is mandated for all staff, partly to make sure that those who may need to take a break or consider other career paths don't feel they are being singled out.

We spoke to staff in high-impact roles. They were aware of the process and saw it as supportive. We were told about specific examples of it being used successfully to manage a supportive move for staff.

Main findings

In this section we set out our main findings that relate to how well the force protects vulnerable people.

The constabulary records vulnerability effectively, but should improve its identification of vulnerability at the first point of contact

We analysed a number of calls for service to the constabulary's demand hub. We found that while the constabulary recorded vulnerability effectively, it didn't always identify those who were vulnerable at the first point of contact. This is important to do, as it makes sure victims receive the support they need from an early stage.

There was evidence of call handlers checking whether the caller was a vulnerable victim in 76 out of 83 calls. Encouragingly, where the caller was identified as a vulnerable victim, this was recorded appropriately by a call handler in 31 out of 33 cases. Where other people present at the incident were vulnerable, such as children at domestic abuse incidents, this was identified and recorded in 20 out of 25 cases.

The constabulary has also increased its recording of when incidents are affected by mental ill-health and of the number of child sexual exploitation cases. This demonstrates a dedication to effectively understanding the vulnerability of the people it serves and those who need further safeguarding.

The constabulary analyses data to improve its response to vulnerable people

The constabulary develops [problem profiles](#) of areas of vulnerability such as domestic abuse and child sexual exploitation. These profiles examine trends in offending and victimisation. They are used to develop recommendations on how to improve the constabulary's response to vulnerability. Data about these priority areas is primarily held on the constabulary's databases, but it is introducing data and analysis from other organisations, such as information from children's social care and census data, to better support the insight in the profiles.

We saw instances of the insight from these profiles directly influencing constabulary policies and procedures. One example was the child sexual exploitation problem profile, which showed that there was an increasing number of young people sending indecent images of themselves to other young people. The constabulary engaged with other organisations, such as children's social care, to better understand the issue. Feedback from these organisations was that the constabulary was too focused on enforcement, potentially leading to young people being criminalised unnecessarily.

In response to this feedback, the constabulary recategorised these offences to make sure they were considered differently to similar offences that didn't involve the sharing of images between young people. The constabulary also stopped labelling either party as a suspect or a victim when the sharing of images was consensual.

The constabulary collects victim feedback and uses it to improve services

The constabulary collects victim feedback from a number of sources, including consulting with victim advocates such as [independent sexual violence advisers](#) and [independent domestic violence advisers](#). The constabulary has also set up a rape survivor panel and a violence against women and girls survivor panel. These consult with survivors on the service they receive at various stages of an investigation. The constabulary also routinely calls back victims for feedback on the service they receive and how it might improve.

We encountered examples of this feedback being used to improve services to victims. For example, a new memorandum of understanding was drawn up between independent sexual violence advisors and specially trained officers to better clarify how each supports and updates victims. This was as a result of feedback from victims who said that the distinction between the two wasn't always clear, and that it led to confusion and duplication. The constabulary should make sure that its avenues of victim feedback are well co-ordinated and continue to result in meaningful change to services.

The constabulary contributes to an effective multi-agency safeguarding hub

The constabulary effectively safeguards children and vulnerable adults by working in partnership with other agencies in an effective [multi-agency safeguarding hub \(MASH\)](#) that covers the whole of the county.

Despite increasing demand over the past year, referrals are dealt with promptly. On each occasion that we visited the MASH, there were few backlogs of cases to be shared with partners, and each case was triaged within a very short time of a referral being made. For example, during our final visit we saw referrals being triaged and the risk category identified within half an hour of a referral being made. Backlogs consisted only of the lower-risk cases. The unit routinely met its target timeframe of sharing high-risk cases within 24 hours and lower-risk cases within three days.

Partnership agencies reported a positive working relationship with the constabulary. These included a productive police presence at child protection conferences and the constabulary working effectively with the local authority's missing, exploited and trafficked hub (MET hub).

This positivity extended to the various other safeguarding activities carried out in the MASH, such as [Operation Encompass](#), which shares information about children in families affected by domestic abuse with schools, and the [multi-agency risk assessment conference](#), in which partners convene to manage high-risk cases of domestic abuse.

The constabulary responds to children at risk of being drawn into criminal and sexual exploitation through its MET hub

The constabulary also operates its own MET hub. This is a small team of investigators who engage directly with vulnerable children and young people who are at risk of criminal or sexual exploitation. The team builds trust with the young people it engages with and introduces practical steps to help them move away from risky behaviours or associations. The constabulary has recently recruited two extra staff who engage with children and young people the first time that they are reported missing to identify any risks, including the risk of them going missing again.

The unit is limited as to how much repeat interaction it can offer each young person. It focusses primarily on referring them to other organisations for longer term support. But we saw good examples of support given to children and young people. This included referrals to counselling, and action against perpetrators, such as a five-year modern slavery and trafficking prevention order against a man who criminally exploited children to sell drugs.

Managing offenders and suspects

Adequate

Cambridgeshire Constabulary is adequate at managing offenders and suspects.

Area for improvement

The force should make sure the quality of supervisory reviews of the management of registered sex offenders are robust and that actions are raised and completed, including comprehensive intelligence checks

We found that risk assessments of registered sex offenders were generally of an acceptable quality, but supervision of these assessments could sometimes be superficial. Some supervisory reviews merely approved the content of the assessment. In some cases this approval was warranted, but in others the review clearly missed opportunities to improve the assessment.

For example, one assessment didn't contain all the information it should, but the assessment was still approved. In another case, the supervisory review failed to note that the assessment didn't specify what visit frequency was recommended or whether intelligence checks had been conducted.

When intelligence checks were recorded, they were carried out only on force systems and didn't include the wider range of intelligence sources available, such as social media. The force has since changed its policies to include a wider range of checks, which we did see in some cases, but it should make sure this practice continues.

Innovative practice

The force shares information with partner agencies at an early stage when it concerns offenders accessing indecent images of children

The force is piloting a process to share critical information with children's social care and other agencies before enforcement action is taken to better safeguard children at risk. This process takes place in a weekly paedophile online team safeguarding review meeting, which is co-ordinated by the multi-agency safeguarding hub. At the meeting the force and its partner agencies discuss offenders accessing indecent images of children after the offenders have been identified, but before police action has taken place.

This meeting allows partner agencies to share any information they hold about the offender, so they can make more accurate assessments of risk prior to police action.

Main findings

In this section we set out our main findings that relate to how well the force manages offenders and suspects.

The constabulary has improved its response to offenders accessing indecent images of children

The constabulary has made several improvements to how it responds to offenders who access indecent images of children. The constabulary now records its use of the [Kent internet risk assessment tool](#) to triage the risk of each case. It works with children's social care and other agencies to share information earlier on in the investigation than was previously done. It also meets with them more regularly to improve working relationships and processes.

To tackle offenders more effectively, the constabulary has increased resources in the paedophile online team. It has hired more staff on a temporary basis to reduce the backlog of outstanding cases.

Staff that work in this challenging area are well trained. They have access to the technology they need to effectively identify and pursue offenders.

The constabulary monitors high-risk domestic abuse offenders and works with other agencies to intervene in offending behaviour

The constabulary has a domestic abuse perpetrator panel that monitors high-risk domestic abuse offenders and the measures put in place to reduce the harm they cause. This panel brings together partnership agencies to share information, develop effective interventions and reduce harm.

Information-sharing between these partnerships is effective and enhances the constabulary's understanding of the risk these offenders pose. Through the panel, partners can support, but also challenge police actions, which we saw directly. Partners take responsibility for the actions they lead on.

The constabulary has improved its response to registered sex offenders

The constabulary now makes better and more consistent use of [reactive management](#) of registered sex offenders, only using it in the most appropriate cases. The constabulary has also improved how it identifies registered sex offenders on its case management system. It applies clear markers so that other units in the constabulary are aware of offenders and their status. The constabulary should extend this practice to the command and control system, which gives first responders information when they attend a location.

The constabulary's recording of visits to registered sex offenders was generally of a good quality and it makes good use of technology to support risk assessments. This includes the use of Good Sam, a video-streaming platform that helped the constabulary to conduct remote visits during the pandemic.

The constabulary should continue to monitor workloads in this busy team to make sure they don't become too high.

The constabulary isn't consistent in how it records breaches of notification requirements

Registered sex offenders are subject to restrictions to their movements and behaviour. These are known as [notification requirements](#). Requirements could include registering a change of address with the constabulary or alerting it when they apply for a new bank card. We found that low-level notification breaches, such as registering a new bank card, weren't always recorded as crimes by offender managers.

We saw no evidence that breaches were ignored, but failing to record low-level breaches as crimes may unintentionally hide how often an offender fails to comply with the restrictions placed on them. It may also hide a pattern of non-compliance that might eventually extend to more serious breaches.

The constabulary has clear policies regarding arresting wanted suspects, but robust management of this is frustrated by data issues

The constabulary has clear and appropriate policies regarding the pursuit of people who are wanted, and flagging them as wanted on the [Police National Computer](#). The constabulary uses local performance meetings, including those chaired by the district commander, to monitor how it pursues suspects. Higher-risk suspects are escalated so that further action can be taken if they aren't apprehended swiftly.

But while managing suspects at local performance meetings can be effective, the constabulary has difficulty in understanding exactly how many wanted people it has at any one time. This leads to a lack of oversight of how many wanted people there are and whether the number exceeds an acceptable threshold.

The main reason for this difficulty is a lack of clarity on the constabulary's case management system. This system only applies two categories to a suspect: whether they have been interviewed or not interviewed. This isn't detailed enough to determine whether or not a suspect needs to be arrested. The case management system may also fail to distinguish between crimes with multiple suspects and multiple crimes with a single suspect.

The constabulary is able to improve the accuracy of this data by carrying out a more thorough analysis, but this isn't routinely done. The constabulary is exploring options to increase the number of categories recorded against a suspect.

Disrupting serious organised crime

We now inspect [serious and organised crime \(SOC\)](#) on a regional basis, rather than inspecting each force individually in this area. This is so we can be more effective and efficient in how we inspect the whole SOC system, as set out in HM Government's SOC strategy.

SOC is tackled by each force working with [regional organised crime units \(ROCU\)](#). These units lead the regional response to SOC by providing access to specialist resources and assets to disrupt organised crime groups (OCGs) that pose the highest harm.

Through our new inspections we seek to understand how well forces and ROCUs work in partnership. As a result, we now inspect ROCUs and their forces together and report on regional performance. Forces and ROCUs are now graded and reported on in regional SOC reports.

Our SOC inspection of Cambridgeshire Constabulary hasn't yet been completed. We will update our website with our findings (including the force's grade) and a link to the regional report once the inspection is complete.

Building, supporting and protecting the workforce

Good

Cambridgeshire Constabulary is good at building and developing its workforce.

Area for improvement

The force should consider using up-to-date and accurate information about workforce skills to effectively enhance deployment throughout the workforce and meet any future skills gap

In our last inspection in 2019 we identified an area for improvement and said that the force should develop a comprehensive skills strategy to determine what future capabilities its workforce will need.

In this inspection, we found that the collaborated human resources team now has a better understanding of the skills gaps and has a plan to address them. But it still doesn't have a good understanding of the skills the current workforce has, which means it may not be effectively matching staff to roles.

The human resources team has tried to improve this understanding, but progress has been slow due to ineffective IT systems, which don't include the full range of skills the workforce has and those that are limited in scope.

The force has introduced a locally based unit to make sure its workforce needs are met. This unit works alongside and with the collaborated human resources team. But until the force has an up-to-date and accurate assessment of the skills of its workforce, decisions may not be being made with the best information available. This means the force is unlikely to effectively use its workforce's full range of skills.

Main findings

In this section we set out our main findings that relate to how well the force builds and develops its workforce.

Its leaders are seen as credible and ethical and staff feel valued

Staff told us that the senior leadership team are seen as ethical and credible. Many staff told us that the chief constable directly contacts any officer injured in the line of duty. This courtesy also extended to staff who tested positive for COVID-19 during the pandemic. While the workload, morale and satisfaction of individual teams varied depending on their role, most staff told us they felt valued by the constabulary.

The 2022 Police Federation Pay and Morale Survey shows that, compared to the average responses of officers from all constabularies in England and Wales, officers in Cambridgeshire Constabulary report better morale and less dissatisfaction.

The constabulary has a good range of preventative and reactive welfare provision in place and monitors its effect

The constabulary prioritises the wellbeing of its staff. The constabulary has a number of welfare provisions. These include:

- a recently refreshed employee assistance programme that signposts officers and staff to support;
- a wellbeing dog that regularly visits teams around the constabulary; and
- a regular calendar of events aimed at promoting physical and mental wellbeing, covering problems such as stress, menopause, sleep deprivation, etc.

Staff who attend traumatic incidents are generally offered trauma risk management and peer support. Staff we spoke to were aware of these measures and how they might be accessed.

The constabulary has also been training its workforce to proactively tackle wellbeing issues, including training on trauma impact processing techniques and suicide prevention. Officers and staff report positive relationships with their supervisors, who are given enough time and space to support the wellbeing of their staff.

Wellbeing is supported by a network of wellbeing champions. These are staff members located throughout the county who have received training to support colleagues and direct them to services that can help them. The constabulary has a full-time wellbeing co-ordinator who attends individual team briefings to promote wellbeing activities.

The constabulary makes good use of data to identify and monitor threats to workforce wellbeing. It monitors the benefits of its wellbeing provision through a qualitative impact assessment.

The constabulary engages with its workforce regarding proposed changes in working practices and is a flexible employer

The constabulary has active staff networks, including the Police Federation and UNISON. The constabulary engages with these networks to make sure the perspective of frontline officers and staff is considered on issues that might affect them. We also saw more direct consultation, such as inspectors surveying their staff about a proposed change to shift patterns.

The constabulary responded well to the challenges of the pandemic. It is still flexible regarding working from home. Local managers support their staff if they need reasonable adjustments in the workplace, and the constabulary was recently nominated, alongside Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire, for the Disability Smart Awards.

The constabulary understands attraction and attrition in recruitment and has devoted resources to positive action to increase the diversity of the workforce

The constabulary has made progress in understanding why people join the organisation and why they might leave. It has worked to understand why officers leave during their two-year probationary period by conducting exit interviews with those who do. A major reason for staff leaving early in their careers has been a lack of understanding of the challenges of the role. The constabulary has adjusted its recruitment advertising and processes to better explain this.

The constabulary has also devoted resources to increasing the diversity of the workforce. The positive action team works with applicants from diverse backgrounds to support them through the recruitment process. It offers support and mentoring once they are employed by the constabulary. The constabulary has also begun to analyse why applications from prospective staff from diverse backgrounds may not be successful.

The constabulary conducts 'stay' interviews to understand what attracts staff to stay in the workforce

Forces that value their staff conduct 'leave' interviews to understand what factors contributes to staff leaving the organisation. Cambridgeshire Constabulary also conducts 'stay' interviews, where it interviews staff from minority ethnic backgrounds and explores what contributes to their decision to stay with the constabulary. The results of these discussions are then shared on its intranet and showcased at the recruitment stage to encourage applicants from diverse backgrounds.

The constabulary is making significant progress in achieving full transition to the new PEQF-based initial entry routes and has forecasted the effect on frontline policing

The constabulary has prepared well for the transition to the police education qualifications framework (PEQF) and the new recruitment entry methods it offers. The constabulary had already reached its recruitment target for March 2022 by the end of 2021. It is working closely with other forces and Anglia Ruskin University to achieve the move from the current recruitment model to PEQF.

The constabulary has also forecast what the effect of this move will mean for its frontline teams. Officers on PEQF spend time in education, away from the frontline, and the constabulary has considered how this will affect the resources it can deploy in 2022 and 2023. It is effectively planning for this.

Vetting and counter corruption

We now inspect how forces deal with vetting and counter corruption differently. This is so we can be more effective and efficient in how we inspect this high-risk area of police business.

Corruption in forces is tackled by specialist units, designed to proactively target corruption threats. Police corruption is corrosive and poses a significant risk to public trust and confidence. There is a national expectation of standards and how they should use specialist resources and assets to target and arrest those that pose the highest threat.

Through our new inspections, we seek to understand how well forces apply these standards. As a result, we now inspect forces and report on national risks and performance in this area. We now grade and report on forces' performance separately.

Cambridgeshire Constabulary's vetting and counter corruption inspection hasn't yet been completed. We will update our website with our findings and the separate report once the inspection is complete.

Strategic planning, organisational management and value for money

Good

Cambridgeshire Constabulary is good at operating efficiently.

Innovative practice

The force has a highly effective business planning process that helps it to efficiently allocate its resources to where they are most needed

In 2019 the force introduced the Cambridgeshire strategic, threat and risk assessment (CAMSTRA). It now has a well co-ordinated and comprehensive annual corporate planning cycle, which aligns analysis of current and future demands with planning. This makes sure that the force has the finance and workforce capabilities it needs to manage those demands.

The process identifies any current and future operational pressures the force may face when meeting its priorities. It is able to systematically assess each pressure against the force's capacity and capability to manage the expected future demand and risk and to understand the costs of doing so.

CAMSTRA has become an integral part of the constabulary's business planning. It gives the force the opportunity to scrutinise the use of resources in all operations, so that it can see where it might achieve greater efficiency. It links with the force's financial plans and takes a rigorous, detailed approach to identifying and tracking anticipated savings, along with income opportunities.

Area for improvement

The constabulary should review its S23 agreement on the provision of collaborated occupational health to make sure it is delivering what is agreed and that staff throughout the three forces are supported by an effective occupational health unit

The constabulary has a proven track record of seeking collaboration, which has led to its tri-force collaboration with Bedfordshire Police and Hertfordshire Constabulary (BCH) and a seven-force strategic alliance. And we found that its work to promote and secure staff wellbeing is often highly effective and well regarded by staff. But the force still isn't consistently well served by the tri-force collaborated occupational health function.

The BCH occupational health unit has experienced staff shortages and this has reduced its service. We found that staff were routinely experiencing delays when they approached the unit for help. This has led to some staff seeking private medical support instead.

The delays place more responsibility on busy supervisors to manage the problem. They can lead to staff not being deployed, because supervisors don't receive advice on people's fitness to work before they have to make a decision on this. This may reduce the force's ability to meet its demand.

Main findings

In this section we set out our main findings that relate to how well the force operates efficiently.

The constabulary manages its finances well

Financial planning and management are well-aligned with the overall management of the constabulary. Senior leaders throughout the organisation are appropriately involved. Budgets are delegated to the right level, promoting effective budgetary responsibility and accountability among service managers.

The constabulary is in an improved financial position since our previous inspection and the current medium-term financial plan shows a balanced budget each year through to 2025/26. Its reserves are to be maintained at healthy levels and not used to support revenue spending. It made savings of over £5m in 2021/22, and its planning processes help it to continue to identify areas where efficiency can be improved and savings can be made.

It has developed an enterprise strategy, which is linked to the corporate plan. The strategy consists of four pillars:

- innovation;
- income generation;
- savings and efficiencies; and
- funding.

The constabulary does most of its procurement through the seven-force collaboration. It makes use of regional and national procurement frameworks to secure the best deals and to access specialist expertise. Environmental sustainability is incorporated into its financial plans.

From 2022/21, there is funding in the capital programme to support plans for the constabulary to achieve zero carbon emissions, with a particular focus on using ultra low-emission vehicles and reducing carbon from its buildings.

There is a wide variety of linked governance structures to help the constabulary to maintain scrutiny and oversight of financial performance at the same time as encouraging change and innovation.

The constabulary has a highly effective strategic planning framework to make sure it tackles issues that are important locally and nationally

The constabulary has good, well co-ordinated planning processes in place, supported by improved governance arrangements and strong performance management. It uses systematic processes including the CAMSTRA to better understand threats and risks to the community, and the public's expectations.

The constabulary's corporate plan sets its objectives and priorities for policing. The priorities set out in the 2021/22 corporate plan align the police and crime commissioner's police and crime plan with the findings from the CAMSTRA, and are informed by the strategic demand assessment. They were refined and amended over the course of the year as new priorities emerged, such as a renewed focus on tackling violence against women and girls.

Staff are clear on priorities and have a good understanding of how they are established. The constabulary can clearly show that resources follow priorities. The performance framework defines the constabulary's objectives. It measures and sets out roles, responsibilities and the expectations of interested parties. It also systematically measures, monitors and manages performance against the national crime and policing measures.

Performance is continuously scrutinised by the force performance board. It is formally reviewed each quarter primarily by the strategic performance management board. The results of the review are then reported to the force executive board and sent from there for onward scrutiny to the office of the police and crime commissioner. Any corrective actions found to be necessary are decided by the strategic performance management board and tracked by the force performance board.

There is some good partnership working with other organisations to provide more resilient services and better manage demand. But the lack of analytical capacity in the constabulary means that when assessing performance and developing plans, it makes only limited use of the data available from these organisations.

The constabulary has a good understanding of both its current and future demands

The constabulary has an established and rigorous approach to understanding and managing demand. There is a comprehensive corporate planning cycle that annually aligns analysis of current and future demand with planning. This makes sure it has both the finance and the workforce capabilities to meet those demands.

The demand risks found through the CAMSTRA are supported by the strategic demand assessment. This assessment helps the constabulary to direct the right resources to the right areas to manage demand and support priorities. For example, it has invested in cyber and online prevention officers to respond to the growing threats to vulnerable victims from online fraud and scams.

The constabulary has a clear understanding of future and emerging demand and it is able to redirect resources and invest in additional resources to respond to changing demand. For example, it has identified changes in the type of call received in the demand hub. There are an increasing number of calls relating to vulnerable people, including people experiencing problems caused by mental ill-health, or people subjected to domestic abuse.

To provide more efficient and innovative ways for the public to contact the police, the constabulary has invested in additional call handlers, alongside developing technology

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