

PEEL 2021/22

Police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy

An inspection of Warwickshire Police

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Overall summary

Our judgments

Our inspection assessed how good Warwickshire Police is in nine areas of policing. We make graded judgments in eight of these nine as follows:

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

We also inspected how effective a service Warwickshire Police 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 satisfied with several aspects of the performance of Warwickshire Police in keeping people safe and reducing crime, but there are areas where the force needs to improve.

These are the findings I consider most important from our assessments of the force over the last year.

The force needs to improve how it identifies victims' vulnerability at first point of contact

Warwickshire Police is missing opportunities to [safeguard vulnerable people](#). It needs to improve how it assesses calls from the public, so that vulnerable people and repeat callers are routinely identified. And it needs to do better at consistently giving advice to people about preventing crime and preserving evidence when they contact the force.

The force needs to make sure that it carries out effective investigations, giving victims the support they need

Despite the force's efforts to improve how it investigates crime, too many of its serious investigations aren't supervised well enough and aren't effective enough. This is resulting in a poor service to some victims of crime. The force doesn't always pursue evidence-led prosecutions where appropriate. And it doesn't always follow the [Code of Practice for Victims of Crime](#) or give enough support to victims by assessing their needs accurately.

The force needs to make sure that it has the right people in the right place with the right skills

Although the force has invested substantially in its information technology (IT) infrastructure, which it hopes will improve its efficiency and effectiveness, we found that staff are being moved from critical areas of work to manage demand, and that some teams were under-resourced and without the specialist skills needed to perform their role. The force needs to optimise the benefits of its IT programme and make sure there is sufficient capacity, capability and supervisory oversight in teams that manage offenders and outstanding suspects, especially those who pose the highest risk of harm to the public.

Warwickshire Police has recently reviewed its operating model. Its investments in managing vulnerability are aimed at helping the force respond to threat, harm and risk more effectively, enabling it to give a better service to the public.

It has been necessary for the force to revise its infrastructure at the same time as making changes to its systems. As stated above, this year the force has transformed its approach to IT, exemplified by the introduction of a new [control room](#). Although at the time of our inspection it was too early to assess the benefits of these changes, the scale and pace of this transformation shouldn't be underestimated. And the strategic plans the force has put, and is putting, in place give cause for optimism. But the plans must be carefully reviewed. We look forward to seeing the progress of the force's plans.

My report sets out the more detailed findings of this inspection. I will continue to check the force's progress in addressing these in the coming months.



Wendy Williams

HM Inspector of Constabulary

Reducing crime assessment

We have identified seven themes underpinning a force's ability 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 force's operating model isn't meeting demand, and it doesn't have enough capacity and capability in its specialised investigation teams to cope with demand. In February 2022, the force made a strategic decision to use neighbourhood officers to support response policing teams. This prevented neighbourhood officers from working on problems in their communities, including working with other agencies on initiatives to tackle crime and [anti-social behaviour](#). The force recognised this would have a short-term impact, but felt it was necessary to respond to emergency calls. Neighbourhood officers have now returned to their communities.

The force analyses harm in its communities effectively and works well in partnership with other organisations, such as the county council, to solve problems. But we found the force isn't consistently assessing problem-solving plans or sharing effective plans throughout the force.

We found good examples of the force working with other organisations to divert people away from offending and to safeguard vulnerable people.

Other factors contributing to the force's ability to reduce crime are:

- It has effective methods for interacting with local communities. These help to build trust, so the public gets involved in volunteering schemes. This also helps the force to understand what is important to residents.
- It runs diversion activities to prevent young people becoming involved in crime.
- It works effectively in partnership with other agencies to reduce harm.

I am pleased that the force is addressing the right areas of policing to reduce crime.

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

- It doesn't always identify vulnerable or repeat victims when people contact the force.
- It doesn't consistently supervise its crime investigations to a good standard.
- Investigations don't always consider victims' needs and the force doesn't understand well enough why victims withdraw their support.
- Call handlers don't consistently use [THRIVE](#) to prioritise the force's response to incidents.
- Officers are unable to attend incidents promptly to secure evidence at the scene.
- The call abandonment rate and call answering rates, which may result in people disengaging or not reporting information to the police that would help prevent and detect crime.

Until the force has the right people with the right skills in the right place and improves its capacity, capability and effectiveness in the areas of investigations, vulnerability and neighbourhoods, it won't be able to effectively reduce crime.

Providing a service to the victims of crime

Victim service assessment

This section describes our assessment of the service Warwickshire Police provides to victims, from the point of reporting a crime through to the end result. As part of this assessment, we reviewed 90 case files.

When the police close a case of a reported crime, it will be assigned what is referred to as an 'outcome type'. This describes the reason for closing it.

We also reviewed 20 cases of when the following outcome types were used:

- A suspect was identified, and the victim supported police action, but evidential difficulties prevented further action ([outcome 15](#)).
- A suspect was identified, but there were evidential difficulties, and the victim didn't support or withdrew their support for police action ([outcome 16](#)).
- A suspect was identified, but the time limit for prosecution had expired (outcome 17).

While this assessment is ungraded, it influences graded judgments in the other areas we have inspected.

The force needs to improve the time it takes to answer emergency and non-emergency calls, and how it identifies repeat or vulnerable victims

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. And the victim should receive appropriate [safeguarding](#) advice.

The force isn't meeting national standards for the time it takes to answer emergency calls, and needs to improve this. It also needs to improve the speed at which it answers non-emergency calls to prevent the caller abandoning the call. When calls are answered, the victim's vulnerability is often not assessed using a structured process. Repeat victims aren't always identified, which means this information may not be taken into account when considering the response victims should receive. Victims aren't always given advice on how to prevent crime or preserve evidence.

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

A force should aim to respond to calls for service within its published time frames, based on the 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 response should take into consideration risk and victim vulnerability, including information obtained after the call.

The force's attendance was often outside its recognised timescales. Victims sometimes weren't told about delays, and their expectations weren't met. This may cause victims to lose confidence and disengage from the investigation.

The force allocates crimes to appropriate staff

Police forces should have a policy to make sure crimes are allocated to appropriately trained officers or [staff](#) for investigation or, if appropriate, not investigated further. The policy should be applied consistently. The victim of the crime should be kept informed of the allocation and whether the crime is to be further investigated.

The force's arrangements for allocating recorded crimes for investigation were in accordance with its policy. In all the cases we reviewed, the crimes were allocated to the most appropriate department for further investigation.

The force isn't always carrying out thorough investigations or conducting victim needs assessments

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

Effective supervision wasn't always evident in the force's crime investigations. This resulted in some investigations not being thorough enough. So victims are potentially being let down and offenders may not be being brought to justice. When [domestic abuse](#) victims withdrew their support for a prosecution, the force didn't always consider the use of orders designed to protect victims, such as a [domestic violence protection notice](#) or a [domestic violence protection order](#). Obtaining such orders is an important method of safeguarding the victim from further abuse in the future.

Under the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime, there is a requirement to conduct a victim needs assessment at an early stage, to decide whether victims need additional support. The outcome of the assessment and the request for additional support should be recorded. The force isn't always completing the victim needs assessment. This means not all victims will get the appropriate level of service.

The force isn't always using the appropriate outcome or obtaining an auditable record of victims' wishes

The force should make sure it follows national guidance and rules for deciding the outcome of each report of crime. In deciding the outcome, the force should consider the nature of the crime, the offender and the victim. And the force should show the necessary leadership and culture to make sure the use of outcomes is appropriate.

When a suspect has been identified, but evidential difficulties prevent further action, the victim should be informed of the decision to close the investigation. Victims weren't always told about decisions to take no further action and to close investigations.

When a suspect has been identified but the victim doesn't support or withdraws their support for police action, the force should make sure it has an auditable record from the victim, confirming their decision. This will allow the investigation to be closed. Evidence of the victim's decision was absent in most cases we reviewed. This means that victims' wishes may not always be fully represented and considered before the investigation is closed.

When a crime can only be prosecuted in the magistrates' court, prosecution must start within six months of the offence being committed. An investigation can be closed if a suspect has been identified but the time limit has expired. The force used this outcome incorrectly on several occasions.

Engaging with and treating the public with fairness and respect

Adequate

Warwickshire Police is adequate at treating people fairly and with respect.

Innovative practice

The force continues to improve the way it uses [stop and search powers](#)

Warwickshire Police has reviewed its stop and search policy. The review highlighted the importance and impact of stopping and searching children and how these encounters should be managed. It has introduced a procedure called safeguard, where the force notifies the parents or guardians of a young person under the age of 18 if they have been stopped and searched. While in its early stages at the time of our inspection, this procedure is designed to make sure the force considers and responds to the vulnerabilities of young people.

The force is working to understand and improve the way it uses force

The force is working with the [College of Policing](#) and Keele University on an initiative that examines disproportionality in the use of tasers. This initiative will carry out behavioural analysis of officers' [body-worn video \(BWV\)](#) recordings in cases where a taser has been used. It may help the College of Policing, [National Police Chiefs' Council](#) and other interested parties to better understand the reasons for any disproportionality in the use of tasers.

Areas for improvement

The force should improve its external scrutiny processes for stop and search and for use of force, to make sure the powers are being used fairly and appropriately

At the time of our inspection, the force had recently introduced an external scrutiny panel. But the panel doesn't meet the standards set out in the College of Policing's [Authorised Professional Practice](#). The chair isn't independent; so far, membership is limited; and its members don't have access to the force's stop and search and use of force data.

The force understands that the panel's representation needs to be more diverse and include people who have direct experience of stop and search. It is considering how it can make better use of virtual or hybrid meetings to help increase representation, especially for people who might not want to attend meetings in police buildings. It recognises that obtaining feedback is important for staff's understanding of the effects of their actions.

The force should make sure that its external scrutiny meets national standards and effectively improves its use of stop and search and use of force.

The force should increase its use of body-worn video to improve interactions between officers and the public

The force mandates the use of BWV, but it isn't always used. The force told us that between January and March 2022, officers used stop and search powers 334 times. But on 99 of those occasions, they didn't use BWV when stopping and searching members of the public. In 75 cases where BWV wasn't used, the stop and search was carried out by an officer in plain clothes.

BWV is useful not only when gathering evidence, but in maintaining public trust and confidence in policing. The force should consider issuing BWV to all officers (including plain clothes officers) who routinely use stop and search powers. It should give clear instructions about its use and make sure they are followed effectively.

Main findings

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

The force involves its communities in local policing activity

The force has a ten-week Citizens' Academy programme. The programme is open to the public and helps people to learn more about policing and how they might get involved. Some attendees may go on to become a cadet, volunteer or special constable. This helps the force and local people work together more effectively.

The force also has a popular police cadet programme, which currently has 120 members. The selection process examines the unique circumstances of each individual and what the programme can offer them. Unsuccessful applicants are invited to join local youth [independent advisory groups](#).

There is a group of 74 police support volunteers who work in a range of roles, assigned based on their skills and experience. For example, Neighbourhood Watch Schemes keep the force updated about local policing issues that affect communities, while horseback volunteers support the force in preventing crime in rural areas.

The force works with all its communities to understand and act on what matters to them, but it needs to make sure this work can be accessed by everyone

The force uses a community messaging service called Warwickshire Connected, which complements established social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. The messaging service is an interactive way for people to tell the police about problems in their communities and to get information. At the time of our inspection, more than 4,700 people had subscribed to it.

We were told about several examples of face-to-face events where [neighbourhood policing teams](#) meet their communities, such as Sikh women's groups, church meetings, and community events held for older people. The teams also visit schools and youth organisations. Local policing priorities are set through monthly problem-solving and vulnerability meetings. Using a polling system, the community can vote on local concerns and problems to help influence where the force sends its visible community patrols. But the extent to which this community interaction is planned and co-ordinated isn't very clear.

It is important that the force continues to use all available contact channels to communicate with its communities, and that it doesn't exclude those who don't use or don't have ready access to online methods. One example of this exclusion is an online-only survey. Not everyone in the community could access the survey, and therefore it wasn't fully representative of local communities. The upcoming recruitment of dedicated police community support officers should support this by enabling more in-person contact. But these roles weren't in place at the time of our inspection, so we haven't been able to assess their effectiveness.

The force is trying to understand and improve the way it uses stop and search and use of force powers, but needs to do more

The force provides good governance through a [chief officer](#)-led legitimacy board. The board considers all forms of public interaction and the use of police powers. A use of police powers board focuses on data and trends, but the breadth and depth of the data it analyses could be increased.

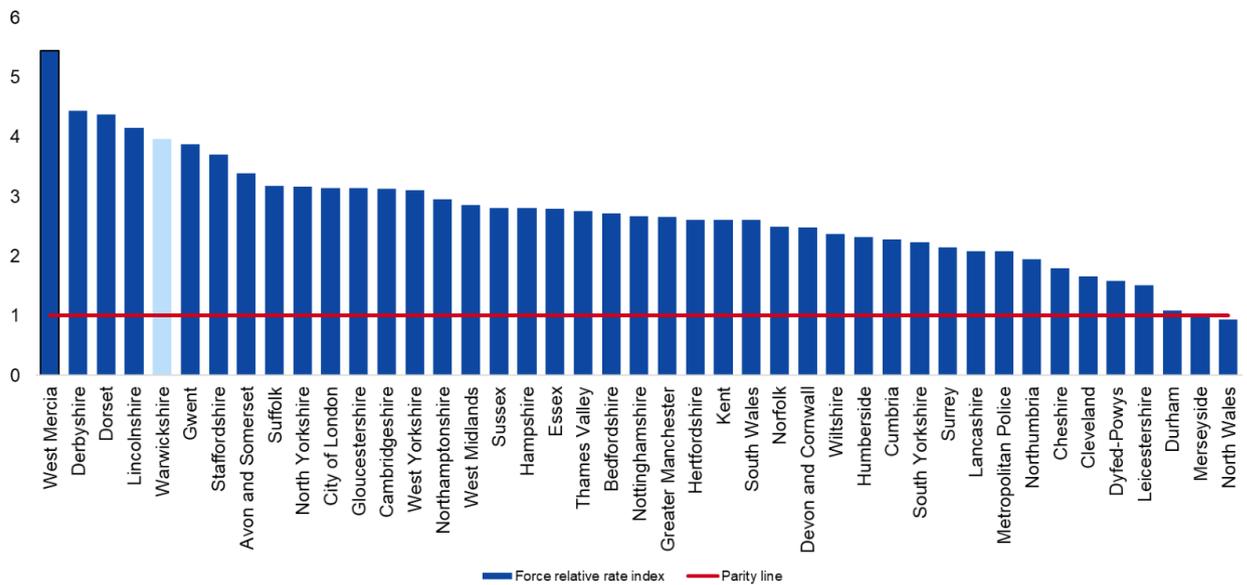
There are gaps in what the force chooses to monitor. For example, it doesn't analyse data about people who are stopped and searched more than once, or about the officers and teams that carry out the stop searches. Similarly, the force doesn't monitor the level of injury caused to people by type of force used. It also doesn't monitor the ethnicities of the members of public involved. For example, the force doesn't know if Black people who are handcuffed are more or less likely to be injured or injured more severely than White people.

A new app, called a power app, has recently been introduced. It is intended to improve the quality of information available to the force, but at the time of this inspection it was too early to see results. Internal audits were also recently introduced, where supervisors should dip sample clips of BWV when it was in use when a person has been stopped and searched or when force has been used. But this process was found to be ineffective as supervisors weren't always carrying out the audits and evidence of learning was limited, affecting the force's ability to understand whether its use of coercive powers is fair. A new framework has been devised which should increase how often supervisors carry out audits.

During our inspection, we reviewed a sample of 170 stop and search records dated from 1 January to 31 December 2021. Based on this sample, we estimate that 88.2 percent (with a confidence interval of +/- 4.6 percent) of all stop and searches by the force during this period had reasonable grounds recorded. This is broadly unchanged compared with the findings from our previous review of records in 2019, where we found 86.0 percent (with a confidence interval of +/- 4.3 percent) of stop and searches had reasonable grounds recorded. Of the records we reviewed for stop and searches carried out on people from ethnic minority backgrounds, 29 of 34 had reasonable grounds recorded.

Although Warwickshire Police is trying to address disproportionality, this is still substantial. In the year ending 31 March 2021, people from ethnic minority backgrounds were four times as likely to be stopped and searched as people from White backgrounds. People of Black or Black British ethnicity were 13 times as likely to be stopped and searched as White people. People of Asian or Asian British ethnicity were three times as likely to be stopped and searched, and people of mixed ethnicity were four times as likely.

Figure 1: Relative rate for individuals from ethnic minority backgrounds to be stopped and searched compared to individuals from White backgrounds, for the year ending 31 March 2021



The force recognises it has work to do to tackle disproportionality, and has explored the reasons for this. Minutes and data are published on the website, as are disproportionality reports.

The use of police powers board is an effective meeting which is driving improvements to the force’s practices, policies and procedures. The force should continue to invest in this, paying particular attention to further explorations of the reasons for disproportionality. This will help to reassure the force and the public, and show that the force’s use of force and stop and search is fair.

Preventing crime and anti-social behaviour

Adequate

Warwickshire Police is adequate at prevention and deterrence.

Area for improvement

The force should make sure that abstractions are effectively monitored and reduced (An abstraction is the diversion of an officer to duties that aren't part of their core duties, not necessarily emergencies, for an extended period)

Warwickshire Police has an abstraction policy to protect neighbourhood policing activity. In February 2022, the force made a strategic decision to use neighbourhood officers to help support response policing. This prevented neighbourhood officers from working on problems in their communities, including work with other organisations on initiatives to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour. We were told about planned operations that had been cancelled at short notice. Other organisations indicated they feel the effects of these abstractions. This also means more is expected of police community support officers, but their numbers have declined.

We recognise that the force must maintain its ability to respond to emergencies quickly. And that the reasons for abstracting neighbourhood officers include student officer absence through detachment (when student officers have to go to university to complete studies as part of their national programme), and the force's response to ongoing local protests. The force has told us these abstractions have now stopped, and neighbourhood officers have returned to their communities. This means they can devote more time to preventative activities.

The force should keep records of each time neighbourhood officers are needed to fill gaps in response policing so it can review the frequency and impact of these abstractions.

Main findings

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

The force analyses its own data and data from partner agencies to establish high-demand and vulnerable locations, people and suspects, including repeat victims

The force regularly carries out data analysis, and appropriate information is discussed at monthly problem-solving meetings. The police data is shared with Warwickshire County Council's community safety partnership analyst, who prepares reports for monthly problem-solving meetings. The meetings are attended by other agencies and workers including rough sleepers co-ordinators, the probation service, community safety wardens, district councils and the county council. Data from several agencies is used effectively to set priorities and co-ordinate work.

The force's harm hub assesses information and [intelligence](#) to identify vulnerable people and repeat victims. This helps to identify children who need safeguarding. We saw evidence of risk management plans being used well to support repeat and vulnerable victims. One example involved an elderly person who was targeted by [county lines](#) drugs gangs. The local neighbourhood team followed a plan and used anti-social behaviour legislation effectively to protect the victim from further harm.

The force adopts early intervention approaches with a focus on positive outcomes

We found many cases of the force demonstrating creativity in its approach to early intervention. For example, it set up a boxing and fitness club to divert local teenagers away from criminality. The youth engagement team visits schools and colleges to hold educational inputs and workshops. The team shares safety messages about knife crime and county lines. It helps young people to understand the consequences of their decisions and gives them knowledge of the law.

Warwickshire Police takes an active role in county wide multi-agency vulnerability meetings. The force's approach is to divert people away from criminal activity, and these meetings identify people who may benefit from early help and support from different agencies. This offers several potential benefits, including a probable reduction in long-term demand for the force. The other agencies said they valued these meetings.

The force works with other organisations and uses problem solving to help prevent crime, anti-social behaviour and vulnerability

A third of Warwickshire's population live in rural communities. The force decided to introduce a rural crime team based on national good practice guidance. This has helped the force to be more effective when supporting neighbourhood teams, carrying out regional operations and sharing intelligence. A comprehensive performance framework means the force can evaluate its success against different types of crime, including:

- wildlife;

- agricultural vehicles and plants;
- livestock;
- equine;
- fly-tipping and waste;
- fuel; and
- heritage crime.

The rural crime team's co-ordinator makes sure a problem-solving approach is taken when new crime trends emerge. The team attends community events such as livestock markets and agricultural shows, where it offers preventative advice. A recent example involves the theft of GPS agricultural systems. The force worked with the National Farmers Union to buy marking kits and trackers. These were distributed to farmers whose property was more vulnerable to theft. The farmers were also given practical crime reduction advice. This helped to reduce the number of GPS systems that were being stolen, and served to strengthen the force's relationship with the farming community.

The force doesn't have an effective system in place for recording, monitoring and sharing problem-solving plans, and the plans aren't always updated, supervised or evaluated

Warwickshire Police understands the benefits of [problem solving](#). But it doesn't consistently record, monitor or evaluate how it tackles policing problems. When we examined its problem-solving plans, we found that they varied. Staff told us that a recent change in IT systems had made it difficult to record these plans. This means that senior leaders can't evaluate performance accurately.

We found good examples of problem-solving plans being used beyond neighbourhood policing, which is encouraging. In one example, a problem-solving plan was used to manage a person who made repetitive malicious complaints about sexual offences.

But at the time of our inspection the force lacked an effective way to review and evaluate its problem-solving plans. It is in the process of recruiting a problem-solving advisor, as well as administrative support. This will allow the force to quality assure its problem-solving plans better, and give specialist advice about problem-solving to its staff.

Responding to the public

Requires
improvement

Warwickshire Police requires improvement at responding to the public.

Areas for improvement

The force should make sure that repeat callers, and those that are vulnerable, are routinely identified

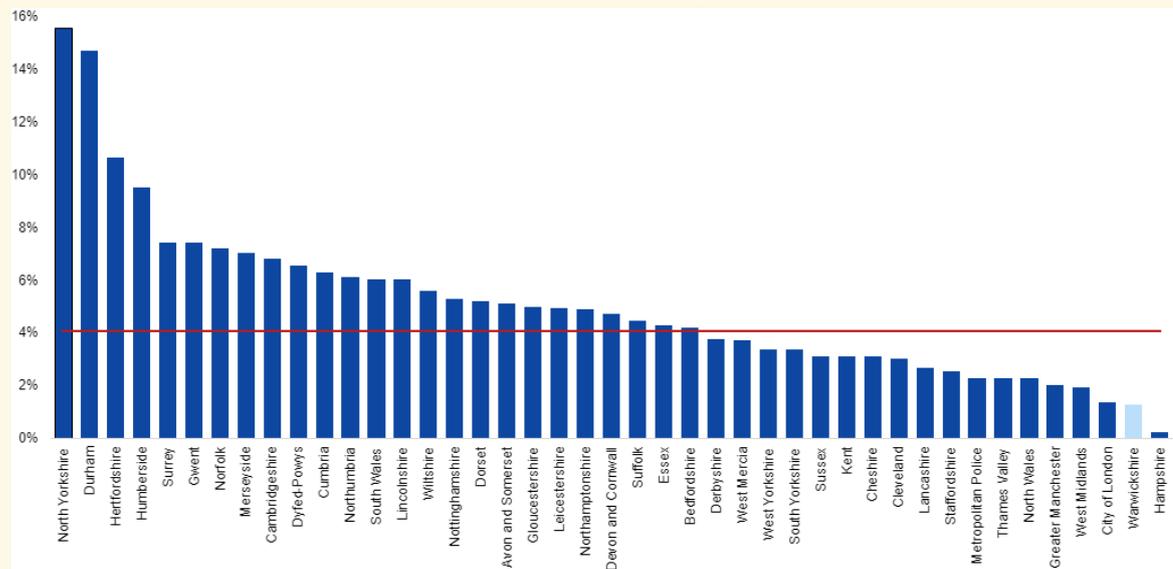
In the year ending 30 September 2021, Warwickshire Police recorded the second-lowest proportion of incidents with mental health concerns of all forces in England and Wales: 1.3 percent of incidents were noted by the force as involving mental health concerns, compared with 4.1 percent of incidents across England and Wales. This suggests there is some under-recording of mental health-related incidents.

The force isn't routinely identifying repeat or vulnerable victims. As part of our victim service assessment, we found that checks were made to see if a caller was a repeat victim in 40 out of 59 cases reviewed. Where callers were identified as a repeat victim, this was recorded by the call handler in 24 out of 25 cases reviewed. We found that checks were made to see if an incident involved a vulnerable victim in 34 out of 57 cases reviewed. Where vulnerability was identified, this was recorded by a call handler in 23 out of 29 cases reviewed.

Staff and supervisors in the control room weren't aware of the force's definition of vulnerability. We were told training in vulnerability for call handlers and supervisors has been inconsistent, although an improvement plan is in place.

A failure to identify repeat or vulnerable callers means that the risks they face aren't always recognised and, as a result, they may not always receive the correct response. The force should make sure that repeat or vulnerable callers are routinely identified.

Figure 2: Proportion of all incidents that have been flagged as involving mental health concerns across forces for the year ending 30 September 2021



The force needs to make sure that call handlers give appropriate advice on the preservation of evidence and crime prevention

Our victim service assessment found that call handlers gave appropriate advice on the preservation of evidence in 13 out of 26 cases reviewed. We found that call handlers gave appropriate advice on crime prevention in 28 out of 38 cases reviewed.

Giving good advice on the preservation of evidence improves opportunities to identify offenders. This is particularly important when there may be delays in officers attending a call. Crime prevention advice helps to stop people from becoming victims or repeat victims.

The force needs to attend calls for service within its published attendance times and make sure that, when this doesn't happen, victims are fully updated

The force isn't meeting its published target attendance times consistently. It sends the nearest available and most appropriate resource when responding to emergency calls. Non-emergency calls have a target response time of 60 minutes. But in 17 of 23 cases we reviewed, the force didn't update the victims to inform them when there were delays in police attending their call. By not attending promptly, the likelihood of evidence being lost increases, witnesses may leave scenes, and victims can lose confidence in the police.

During our reality testing, some staff said that they don't have the necessary driver training to attend emergency incidents quickly enough. The force told us that half of its staff are trained and there is a plan in place to increase this number. More trainers and extra courses support this.

The difficulty the force faces in responding quickly to demand has been heightened by recent protests. Warwickshire Police's new operating model is aimed at improving its ability to respond quickly to calls. We welcome this significant development and will monitor its effects with interest as part of our continuous assessment approach to future inspections.

Our 2019 report said that the force needed to improve the application of risk assessment when delays occur. This remains an area for improvement. The force should make sure that risk assessments are consistently applied to calls for service so that risk and vulnerability are visible from the outset and inform deployment decisions. Improvements must also be made to the quality of incident risk assessments when deployment delays occur

The force uses a risk assessment framework called [THRIVE](#) to identify risks and accurately determine the priority for a particular call. We found that the force was effective at assessing the priority of a call based on the information given. The structured triage approach to assess risk and consider the needs of the victim/caller was completed in 40 out of 61 cases we reviewed.

We found no evidence of comprehensive THRIVE assessments or recording of decisions on call incident logs. There is no template for staff to follow, which means the recording and use of the THRIVE model is inconsistent.

Delays in attendance may affect the risk posed to and vulnerability of victims and officers. In the case of such delays, we would expect to see a repeat THRIVE assessment being carried out, which may influence the priority grading of the response to meet victim needs.

Without an accurate THRIVE assessment, important information about the vulnerability of people involved in an incident may not be given to the officers attending it. This means those people might not get the right level of safeguarding or support.

Main findings

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

The force can't effectively manage the number of non-emergency public calls for service, and needs to reduce the abandonment rate and caller wait times

The number of calls to the force switchboard and the [101](#) service (for non-emergency calls) that are abandoned by the caller is high and above the national required standard. Abandonment generally happens at the first point of contact or later, when the caller is transferred to the police. The force told us that 18.3 percent of the 101 calls it receives are abandoned. The national standard states that a force with a switchboard should have no more than 5 percent non-emergency abandonment.

The force has a performance framework which monitors abandonment rates for non-emergency calls on a daily and weekly basis. But this framework hasn't led to improvements. Delays in calls being answered will lead to more calls being abandoned, and potentially reduce public confidence in the force's ability to respond.

The force has made improvements to support the wellbeing of its contact management staff, but more work is needed

In its [force management statement](#), the force recognised that the operational control centre (OCC) building, telephone and IT systems were long overdue for replacement or upgrades. It also noted that demand, staffing and the working environment were affecting the wellbeing of the OCC staff.

The force introduced a new control room in March 2022. At the same time, substantial investment in IT saw replacements and updates to IT systems in the control room. While the relocation and IT upgrade caused additional pressure, this was unavoidable. Performance stayed relatively stable, and the force now has a modern control room that is fit for purpose.

The upgrade of the systems and office space has improved working conditions. There also are other bespoke wellbeing arrangements available to help make the staff feel valued.

But despite improvements to the working environment and systems, we found that staff in the OCC feel a strong focus on performance is affecting their wellbeing, and they don't feel supported. At the time of our inspection, the force told us that the OCC had the highest rate of sickness in the force.

The force should continue to find ways to seek advice from experts to inform better decision making

Frontline officers feel well supported when dealing with incidents involving mental health concerns. The mental health [street triage](#) scheme has two cars staffed with a police officer and a mental health professional, operating daily between 2pm and 2am. They give advice and help to officers and call handlers. If needed, and when possible, they attend incidents and deal with the person directly. Call handlers told us that they can also refer open logs to the mental health team, who will assess and refer to other organisations, such as mental health organisations.

Nineteen officers have had five days of mental health training to equip them for this role. During our inspection, response officers spoke positively about mental health triage. They told us that it means they detain fewer people under [section 136 of the Mental Health Act 1983](#) because other solutions are found. Mental health partners said that they have seen a reduction in the inappropriate use of section 136 as a result. This means a better outcome for the person suffering a mental health crisis, as they don't have to be detained at a police custody suite.

But we were told that there aren't always enough staff to operate the triage car, and mental health professionals aren't always available. When a call is taken outside these hours, we were told that calls may not be resourced until the triage car is next on duty. This can lead to a delay in responding to mental health concerns. Officers told us that they would welcome more training in how to support people experiencing mental ill-health.

The force is good at assessing victims' vulnerability and risk at domestic abuse incidents

In 2019, 257 officers and staff received domestic abuse matters training, and this year a further 233 officers and staff received training. There are 16 more training dates booked between January 2023 and March 2023, when it is hoped that approximately 200 more officers and staff will be trained. This training package has been developed with the College of Policing and [SafeLives](#) to support a cultural shift in the way police officers and staff approach domestic abuse incidents.

Officers we spoke to showed a clear understanding of their role and importance in safeguarding victims of domestic abuse. And we found that staff felt confident assessing risk at domestic abuse incidents using [domestic abuse, stalking, harassment and honour-based violence risk assessments](#) and vulnerable adult risk assessment accurately and where appropriate. Supervisory reviews of the risk assessments are effective and high-risk cases are referred effectively to the domestic abuse unit for further intervention and information sharing.

Investigating crime

Requires
improvement

Warwickshire Police requires improvement at investigating crime.

Areas for improvement

The force should make sure it carries out proportionate and thorough investigations into reported crimes

The force isn't investigating crime well enough. In our victim service assessment, we found that in 81 cases we reviewed where important lines of inquiry should have been followed, this was done in 62 cases, resulting in missed investigative opportunities. When lines of inquiry aren't followed, it is less likely that investigations will result in positive criminal justice outcomes. It also means that some offenders aren't brought to justice, and victims are let down.

The force should make sure investigation plans are created where applicable, with supervisory oversight to make sure that all reasonable investigative opportunities are pursued

The force doesn't always supervise investigations effectively and it doesn't consistently set initial investigation plans. We found that where it was appropriate for investigation plans to be created, this was done in 24 of the 43 cases we reviewed. We also found that where it was appropriate for supervisors to give advice and direction to the investigation, this happened in 52 out of 74 cases we reviewed.

Not using an investigation plan means that potential lines of inquiry may not be identified or pursued. The force should make sure that investigation plans are used consistently. Supervising officers should be involved in developing these plans. The force should then make sure that it checks for effective supervisory involvement to assure that investigations are carried out to recognised standards. This will make it more likely that investigations achieve the best outcomes for victims.

The force needs to make sure that the requirements of the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime are complied with. This includes giving victims the opportunity to give victim personal statements and complete victim needs assessments

The force doesn't consistently comply with the Victims' Code. In 31 of the 62 cases we reviewed, we found that victim needs assessments weren't completed. These assessments make sure that any support the victim needs is identified at an early stage of the investigation. Each victim's needs should be reassessed as the case progresses, to establish if they have changed.

Victim personal statements give an opportunity for victims to explain how a crime has affected them. But we found that in eight of the nine cases we reviewed, the force didn't provide an opportunity for the victims to complete them. The force includes a declaration on the witness statements that victims sign, explaining that if a victim personal statement wasn't taken at that time, the victim understands their right to give one at any time. Sometimes the impact of a crime won't be felt immediately, and it is better to give victims the opportunity to give their victim personal statement later. But the force doesn't check whether these opportunities are given to victims as investigations progress. And inconsistent levels of supervision mean it is less likely this will happen.

The force should make sure that there is an auditable record of the decision of the victim and their reasons for withdrawal of support. The force should make sure it documents whether evidence-led prosecutions have been considered in all such cases

We reviewed 20 cases where a suspect was identified, but where there were evidential difficulties and the victim didn't support or withdrew their support for police action (outcome 16). An auditable record of the victims' wishes was present in just 2 of the 20 cases we reviewed. If this record is present, the force can better understand why a victim doesn't wish to support a prosecution and at what point this decision was made. The record also gives assurance that a case has been finalised correctly and lets the force share its findings with criminal justice organisations to address any problems it identifies.

In some cases, such as for domestic abuse-related crimes, it would have been appropriate for the police to continue an investigation through an evidence-led prosecution. But this only happened in one out of nine cases we reviewed, and investigating officers didn't consider it as an option often enough.

The force needs to put in place appropriate governance and monitoring processes to make sure that the use of outcomes is appropriate and complies with force and national policies

In our victim service assessment, we found that ineffective monitoring of crime outcomes means the force isn't consistently complying with national standards.

We reviewed 20 cases where a suspect was identified and the victim supported police action, but where evidential difficulties prevented further action (outcome 15). Of these 20, 8 were suitable to be administered in this way. We found 5 cases that should have been further investigated. Although 17 of the cases had supervisory endorsement for the outcome, the number of cases that were unsuitable indicates that the force's supervisory involvement isn't effective. In more than half of these cases, the victim hadn't been updated with the outcome.

We reviewed 20 cases where a suspect was identified, but where there were evidential difficulties and the victim didn't support or withdrew their support for police action (outcome 16). Of these 20, the incorrect outcome had been applied in 6 cases. Auditable records of victim wishes were missing in 18 of the 20 cases.

We reviewed 20 cases where a suspect was identified but the time limit for prosecution had expired (outcome 17) and found that the use of this outcome wasn't appropriate in 4 of these cases. In 4 cases, the outcome was used for matters which, when charged, could have been dealt with at a Crown Court. This means that statutory time limits don't apply. In other cases, other outcomes would have been more appropriate. In 9 cases the statutory time limit had expired due to ineffective supervision, and a lack of direction and oversight.

The force needs to review its process and improve knowledge and awareness in this area to make sure it is using outcomes appropriately. The force should make sure all victims are updated with the outcome, and victim contact should be recorded.

Main findings

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

The force has increased staff training to improve the quality of investigations and outcomes for victims

The force has introduced a five-day immersive course for patrol officers, called Operation Sherlock. The course aims to improve the quality of investigations and outcomes for the victim. The training covers crime scene management, ways to secure evidence at the earliest opportunity, court [disclosure](#) of evidence requirements and court processes.

The force told us that so far 170 student officers have completed the training programme. There are a further seven courses planned for this year. The force also intends to give this training to frontline supervisors. Staff we spoke to who have received the training told us they felt more confident and knowledgeable about the action they need to take to make sure investigations are completed effectively.

The force currently has insufficient capacity and capability to carry out investigations

Warwickshire Police's staff are young and inexperienced. This includes its tutors and supervising officers. The force offers several ways for people to join its workforce, including a degree-holder entry programme. But managing these different routes is difficult, because they add to the demands faced by tutors, who often carry high workloads. This means tutors can't always support students effectively, which affects how well the force investigates crime.

We found that the force had recently finalised 963 investigations. This took place over a three- to four-week period, and was called Operation Zakynthos. We were assured that it was planned thoroughly, and the force understood the consequences of finalising these investigations. There is a force investigations, standards and outcome board, which oversaw the operation and a subsequent evaluation. This has led to additional training being given to staff. But at the time of our inspection, it wasn't clear how this has led to sustainable improvements. We found examples of cases being finalised when investigative opportunities were present. This showed that quality assurance processes hadn't always been effective.

But the force is changing its operating model to help it cope with demand more effectively. It is creating specialist teams that will investigate serious sexual offences, including rape. At the time of our inspection these changes hadn't happened, so we weren't able to assess if they are effective.

The force understands the steps it must take to make sure that it can investigate crime effectively and achieve better outcomes for victims

We were satisfied that senior leaders understood the underlying problems the force faces in investigating crime effectively. The force's governance structure helps it to identify problems and act quickly to solve them. But these are new arrangements, and their benefits weren't yet apparent at the time of our inspection.

But the force has responded well to our previous recommendation about its processes for allocating investigations to different teams. We found that almost all reports of crime are allocated in line with the force's policy, and a clear escalation process is in place.

Investigators maintain regular contact with victims throughout investigations

We found that investigators adhered to victim contact expectations and timings in most cases. The force's victims' experience board scrutinises compliance with the Victims' Code. Each week, a report is published to help supervisors understand how well their teams are performing. The force complements this with an online performance dashboard, which is available to all staff. This digital tool helps the force to understand investigative demand and how well staff are supporting victims.

During our reality testing, we confirmed that officers and supervisors appreciate why regular contact with victims is important.

The force identifies opportunities to improve its forensic capabilities

In September 2021, the force entered a formal collaboration with West Midlands Police for forensic services. This will be reviewed after 12 months to establish if it is achieving the benefits both forces predict. Notably, a backlog of forensic submissions has reduced, and early indications are that examination times have improved. The force can speed up urgent cases, and staff we spoke to were positive about the introduction of digital kiosks. These kiosks help trained staff to examine [digital devices](#) quickly for evidence.

The force's arrangement with West Midlands Police also gives it access to wider specialist forensic support. We look forward to learning more about the benefits of this collaboration in future.

Protecting vulnerable people

Adequate

Warwickshire Police is adequate at [protecting vulnerable people](#).

Areas for improvement

The force needs to improve its capacity and capability to deal with child sexual exploitation

Warwickshire Police has a dedicated child [sexual exploitation](#) (CSE) supervisor and co-ordinator. But the force lacks dedicated CSE investigators. It introduced child abuse trafficking exploitation (CATE) teams in 2020. We found that these teams are staffed by inexperienced investigators who don't yet have the skills or time to manage complex child exploitation cases. Because there are no CSE investigators, CSE work is allocated to CATE staff, and it isn't attended to quickly enough. We were told that sexual exploitation is seen as secondary to child abuse investigations. At the time of our visit, we identified 20 child exploitation investigations that hadn't been allocated to an investigator.

But the force is changing its operating model so that it copes with demand more effectively. This will see staffing for CSE increase to two supervisors and ten dedicated staff. These changes are being prioritised, but at the time of our inspection they hadn't happened, so we weren't able to assess if they are effective.

The force supports several multi-agency meetings including multi-agency child exploitation (MACE). Although there is a strong working relationship with other organisations throughout Warwickshire, we found that police actions decided in MACE aren't prioritised and are difficult to allocate.

Currently, the force isn't managing risk effectively. This affects how well it meets the needs of vulnerable victims. It should make sure it has sufficient capacity now to protect children and young people who are victims of exploitation.

The force should make sure its harm assessment unit within the multi-agency safeguarding hub is resourced effectively so that delays can be avoided in the assessment of child and adult cases

At the time of the inspection, we found there were 70 vulnerable adult cases, 102 child abuse cases, and 87 medium-risk domestic abuse cases awaiting a full assessment. There is no triage process in place for these cases and so the specific risk isn't known until each case is opened. Staff in the [multi-agency safeguarding hub \(MASH\)](#) were working overtime to manage their workload.

Where cases are delayed, information isn't shared quickly enough with relevant organisations. This prevents vulnerable people from getting the help they need when they need it. There is no weekend cover which means that there will always be delays in sharing information with local agencies, and backlogs inevitably occur.

Since our inspection, the force has worked to reduce the backlog of vulnerable adult, domestic abuse and child abuse cases by using overtime and making its processes more efficient. The force plans to fill vacancies in this area of work at the earliest opportunity. But there is currently no planned increase in headcount of staff and no permanent changes to shift patterns to meet demand.

If changes aren't made to the resourcing model in the MASH, there is a risk that backlogs will continue, and safeguarding opportunities will be missed.

Main findings

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

The force works effectively and proactively with partner agencies and other organisations to reduce vulnerability

The force has collaborated with Warwick University to produce films about alcohol awareness, exploitation and violence against women and girls. The films are shown using virtual reality headsets and are aimed at 15- to 20-year-old boys and men, those in further education, and first-year university students. It will also be shown to police officers who may be dealing with incidents of violence against women and girls.

A film about violence against women and girls (*Five Women, One Story*) will be used to raise awareness about the effects of actions that could be seen as 'minor' or normal. It encourages boys and young men to challenge inappropriate behaviour by their peers. The film discusses online abuse and unwanted touching. The force consulted with subject matter experts, including charities, partner agencies and those with direct experience, to help develop the film. It will be shown at schools in late

2022, and the force is considering ways to incorporate the film into its police officer training programmes.

There are effective multi-agency safeguarding arrangements in place

Warwickshire Police has well-established [multi-agency risk assessment conference \(MARAC\)](#) arrangements in place and these follow SafeLives guidance. The force told us that this is corroborated by a recent SafeLives review. Multi-agency relationships at both strategic and practitioner level work well. Multi-agency processes help the force and those it works with to manage those who cause the most harm and to keep victims safe.

There are three conferences across the county, with one chairperson and co-ordinator, which supports a consistent approach to safeguarding. The conferences take place on a regular basis.

The MARAC is well attended by a range of partner agencies and third-sector organisations including housing, adult and children services, public health services, and [independent domestic violence advisers](#). Where an agency is unable to attend, meaningful updates are given in advance of the conference. Participants actively contribute when discussing high-risk cases. They focus on safety planning and risk management for victims, perpetrators and children exposed to domestic abuse. Actions to protect victims are reviewed and referrals involve a good blend of agencies. We saw several cases discussed where protective orders were in place or considered. This approach helps provide effective protection to vulnerable victims.

The force should make sure that orders such as [domestic violence protection notices](#) and orders are considered in all appropriate cases

As part of our victim service assessment, we found that [domestic violence protection orders \(DVPOs\)](#) and other ancillary orders were considered in just 5 of 15 applicable cases we reviewed. This may mean that opportunities to prevent further harm to victims of domestic abuse are being missed.

All [high-risk domestic abuse](#) cases are currently managed by either the criminal investigation department or the domestic abuse unit. The domestic abuse unit is effective at co-ordinating applications for DVPOs and scrutinising applications for stalking and prevention orders. But all standard and medium-risk domestic abuse cases are managed by response officers, and it is unclear whether DVPOs are always considered.

Response officers told us that they would welcome more guidance and training on ancillary orders and the [Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme \(Clare's Law\)](#).

Managing offenders and suspects

Requires
improvement

Warwickshire Police requires improvement at managing offenders and suspects.

Areas for improvement

The force needs to make sure that it has effective governance in place to monitor the application and use of release under investigation and bail

The force oversees its use of [release under investigation \(RUI\)](#) and [bail](#) by referring to performance reports that it produces each month. The force directs officers to extend bail rather than convert it to RUI. So, it scrutinises decisions that are documented in custody records to check that when bail is converted to RUI, this decision is made in the victim's interests. It also examines decision-making for certain types of crime, such as domestic abuse, in more depth.

But, during our inspection, we found that not all supervisors were aware of changes to bail. They don't routinely monitor offenders who are on bail. Although supervisors have access to a performance dashboard, we were told by some supervisors that it isn't user friendly, and they resort to using their own spreadsheets.

The approach to bail and RUI relies on individual staff preferences rather than an effective system of governance, scrutiny and accountability. We learned that bail is often allowed to lapse to RUI because RUI is easier to manage. Other staff told us that they sometimes didn't consider bail in certain circumstances when it should be used.

We identified some positive practice among officers and supervisors where they considered safeguarding needs and used bail effectively to support victims and witnesses. We also found that the online child sexual exploitation team uses bail robustly, and its decisions reflect safeguarding needs.

But the force's oversight of the use of bail and RUI needs to improve so that it can understand what good performance and effective practice are. It is unclear how the force uses data on the use of bail and RUI to inform its practices or make improvements.

The force should improve its performance monitoring processes to make sure it can robustly address the backlog of work. Supervisory oversight should include a thorough review of [Violent and Sex Offender Register records](#), providing additional scrutiny to address outstanding actions

At the time of our inspection, the force told us it had 54 overdue home visits to registered sex offenders. These visits are carried out by the force's registered sex offender management unit's officers so that officers can assess risk and identify the steps needed to reduce that risk. The backlog of home visits included two high-risk cases which were overdue by two months. The most overdue visit was for a low-risk case from January 2021.

The force also told us it had a total of 48 overdue risk management plan and [active risk management system \(ARMS\) assessments](#). An ARMS assessment is a nationally recognised risk assessment tool used to highlight areas of concern and to allow officers to take appropriate action to negate those concerns. One case had been overdue since 2020. Although this case was initially low risk, not carrying out an ARMS assessment means that any increase in risk could be missed. By failing to complete home visits and ARMS quickly enough, the force can't be sure it has assessed the risk posed by sexual offenders accurately.

Supervision was also poor because supervisors weren't highlighting overdue work when they reviewed cases involving sexual offenders. They didn't always make sure actions were in place to mitigate the risks registered sex offenders pose.

The force should review these processes and make sure it understands the level of demand they present. This will give it an opportunity to make effective decisions about resources and risks, and act when there are peaks in demand.

The force should make sure it has the capacity and capability to progress all investigations of online indecent images of children effectively and quickly, including those referred to the force and those highlighted in [peer-to-peer file-sharing systems](#). The force's investigative practice should include early liaison with children's services

Demand is high within the online child sexual exploitation team (OCSET). This has led to difficulties in completing enforcement action quickly enough; for example, an arrest or executing a warrant. At the time of this inspection, the oldest case awaiting enforcement action was six months old.

We found that where children have been identified as being at risk from an online offender, liaison with children's services wasn't always carried out at an early stage. This reduces the opportunity to share valuable information between agencies and affects how quickly effective safeguarding measures are taken.

Warwickshire Police has acknowledged OCSET as an area of risk. Over the next 12 months, the force intends to increase the number of staff who work in this area. This reflects current pressures and anticipated changes in future demand in this area. We encourage the force to take these important steps.

Main findings

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

The force effectively pursues outstanding suspects and wanted persons to protect the public from harm, but its management of outstanding suspects is inhibited by poor quality data

We found that the force prioritises arresting outstanding suspects using its daily management meeting, where leaders scrutinise progress in making arrests.

High-risk offenders are handed over between shifts in patrol and criminal investigation department teams, and frontline response officers can check with the control room whether someone is wanted. There is a positive culture of pursuing suspects effectively, and we found teams supported each other well when it came to apprehending outstanding suspects. Our victim service assessment confirmed that the force arrests suspects promptly.

The force can track the number of outstanding suspects, but the process relies on staff making sure they update a suspect's status on the force's systems accurately. This makes it difficult for the force to monitor and prioritise progress. Unless processes are followed consistently, the force's data will be inaccurate. During our inspection, the force couldn't give an accurate picture of the number of outstanding suspects.

Outstanding offenders and wanted or [missing persons](#) are circulated on the [police national computer](#) after they are reviewed and risk assessed by a supervisor. But we found that this information wasn't circulated in a consistent way. This is made more difficult by the force currently transferring data about outstanding suspects between different records management systems. At the time of our inspection, the force told us that 30 data packages still had to be transferred.

But when the transfer process is complete, the force will have access to data about outstanding suspects each day. This will support more effective performance management processes, including being able to review cases by their overall duration and the severity of the offences involved.

The force works well with other organisations, but needs to make sure that the integrated offender management team can manage its workload in a sustainable way

The force has a well-established [integrated offender management \(IOM\)](#) programme, and works together with other organisations. At the time of our inspection, the IOM team had been reduced to less than half its original size and had no analytical support. This means that staff were managing a high workload. Additional members of staff have been allocated to the team, but the force needs to make sure that the team can operate sustainably.

The IOM staff we spoke to were highly committed, but the team doesn't have the capacity to manage demand. It often relies on other teams for support, for example, when visiting offenders. This affects how proactive staff are, and demands in other teams mean they sometimes visit offenders without sufficient support.

IOM meetings are well attended by the police and other agencies. These include the probation service, housing services and the prison service resettlement officer. These meetings review offenders who are due for release, new referrals, and offenders who are already managed under the IOM scheme. There are good levels of information sharing and agencies combine their efforts to achieve good outcomes. The IOM team shares premises with probation, which helps to build strong and effective relationships.

The force has identified that it can improve how it manages high-risk offenders. A proposal has been made under the new operating model to create a high-risk offender management unit. This will make sure the most violent or dangerous offenders are subjected to more effective management.

The force doesn't refer offenders to intervention and perpetrator programmes to reduce re-offending, and needs to better understand the benefits and outcomes of managing offenders effectively

We found good examples of multi-agency working to reduce re-offending throughout the force. But we didn't find evidence of the force using or being able to use any schemes to help reduce the likelihood of further offending, for example, diversionary intervention schemes or programmes for perpetrators of domestic abuse.

The force doesn't routinely evaluate the cost and benefit of managing offenders through the IOM scheme. As a result, it can't fully assess the effectiveness of its approach to reducing re-offending. It doesn't know whether its investment in offender management is sufficient, beneficial, or targeted at the right group of offenders. The force has returned to using IDIOM, a web-based offender tracking tool which is provided by the Home Office to police forces to support IOM. Once this tool has been used for a reasonable length of time, the force will have data to show how it is affecting re-offending rates.

The force has effective digital capability, but capacity is limited

The force has invested in digital media investigators (DMIs) whose role is to give on-scene expert digital advice and support to officers, including the OCSET team. DMIs can review devices belonging to suspects for evidence of criminal activity. This helps the investigations by gathering evidence quickly and accurately.

DMIs support investigations by participating in briefings, attending incidents, and preserving evidence and data that can be used by OCSET investigators. But there are only three trained DMI officers, and they aren't available for every case. A recent proposal for more staff has been provisionally agreed by the force, but their recruitment and training will take time.

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](#) 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 Warwickshire Police 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

Adequate

Warwickshire Police is adequate at building and developing its workforce.

Areas for improvement

The force should continue to review and improve wellbeing support for staff in high-risk roles and staff experiencing trauma

The chief constable is the force lead for wellbeing and has overseen some positive developments. But more improvements are needed.

The force mandates annual psychology assessments and counselling in several high-risk roles such as jobs protecting vulnerable people. Although the need for an annual assessment is stated in force policy, we found that these weren't being routinely carried out by [occupational health services](#).

There is a lack of central co-ordination or monitoring of the process, with line managers being responsible for organising the sessions. The force doesn't know which staff have had counselling or when it is due. There is no automatic appointment system, and no way of monitoring who has had counselling without reviewing manual records. The force currently has a reactive approach to wellbeing support in this area, rather than identifying issues early. We also found that many staff weren't aware of the mandatory counselling provision.

The force should do more to promote the benefits of counselling to its workforce, because some staff aren't confident that it supports their wellbeing effectively. We understand that since our inspection, the force has introduced a policy of psychological pre-screening and annual assessments for officers and staff working in high-risk roles. This is in the process of being implemented, and is in addition to the existing arrangements for mandatory psychological support.

Staff can take part in a debrief after dealing with a traumatic incident. But we found that the force was unclear on which debrief model to use. Warwickshire Police is exploring options to replace a model that is no longer in use nationally, but a suitable alternative hadn't been put in place at the time of our inspection.

Supervisors hold initial debriefs with their staff immediately following a traumatic incident. This allows them to address and manage any wellbeing concerns. These are carried out as a matter of course. There is follow-up action taken at the morning daily management meeting to further support staff.

There are also two formal debrief managers who assess whether an incident requires a formal debrief and explain how to signpost staff for further support. This is known as the post-incident process. We found this to be largely unsuccessful. Most staff we spoke to told us that they had to wait weeks for an appointment. This has led to formal debriefs being missed, and members of staff aren't followed up.

We were told that the stress assessments to support officers and identify problems early only happen when officers start to show signs of stress.

The force is working with a psychologist to develop an innovative framework with a proactive approach. The aim is to change the way the force supports officers' psychological wellbeing. Methods include debriefs, psychological screening, peer support and specialist counselling.

The force should evaluate its wellbeing offer, and make sure its officers and staff have manageable workloads and the time to access wellbeing support

The force seeks to improve the wellbeing of the workforce through a variety of methods such as gym provision, wellbeing hours (where the force aims to give time to staff for them to maintain their health) and a wellbeing van (a van which moves around the stations promoting wellbeing by, for example, offering different health checks). But many officers and staff aren't able to access the range of services available due to high workloads, so are missing out on the support available. We found officers with large workloads who were routinely having rest days cancelled and shifts changed at short notice. This is affecting their mental health and wellbeing.

At 31 March 2021, 11.7 percent of the workforce had ten or more rest days in lieu owed to them, compared to 10.8 percent across England and Wales. For police officers specifically, this rose to 20.2 percent, compared to 17.9 percent across England and Wales.

At 31 March 2021, Warwickshire Police had higher long-term sickness among police officers (2.2 percent) than the rate across all forces in England and Wales (1.5 percent). This is the first time since 31 March 2017 that Warwickshire Police has had higher long-term sickness than England and Wales.

The force doesn't routinely evaluate any of its wellbeing initiatives, so it doesn't fully understand what effect the services on offer are having on the workforce or whether they represent value for money.

Our 2019 report said that the force should improve individual performance reviews and that processes for talent identification should be consistently and fairly applied across the workforce. Poor performance should be managed consistently. This remains an area for improvement

The force told us that this work is now managed by the people services board and carried out by the workforce management group. We were told that performance development reviews were now aligned with officer start dates. This is to spread the demand on supervision throughout the year, to allow more time to complete more meaningful reviews.

Our inspection found that the force no longer has a formal talent management system in place. The force has introduced a 'maximising contribution' process to complement annual performance development reviews, but the process was described to us by some of the workforce as cumbersome and divisive.

In the year ending 31 March 2021, 54 percent of the workforce hadn't completed a personal development review. Staff we spoke to weren't aware of the maximising contribution process.

This was identified as an area for improvement in 2019. But sufficient progress hasn't yet been made and the changes the force has made so far haven't been successful. We were told that updates to the human resources system are needed before improvements can be made.

These problems mean that staff aren't receiving the continuous development they need to be fully effective in their roles. And there is no formal way to identify and nurture talent to support the force in its workforce planning.

Main findings

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

The force has an inclusive culture that promotes a sense of belonging, with staff proud to work for Warwickshire Police

Throughout our inspection we were told and could see that the force has a ‘family like’ culture. Its culture is based on respect, and staff feel comfortable to challenge colleagues and supervisors if needed. ‘We are Warwickshire’ is a positive brand that promotes the force’s identity and supports workforce inclusivity.

The force holds annual events, and includes family members so that they can see what the force does. We found a workforce that is proud to work for Warwickshire and is hopeful for the future. This was consistent throughout our inspection, and was supported by a survey that staff completed for us. The force was described by one member of staff as “small but beautiful”.

The force has a maximising innovation group, which works on innovative ideas force-wide. For example, it is introducing a ‘mojo award’, which is intended to bridge the gap between rewards and recognition. The award will focus on effort, behaviour and the mindset of the individual. It will be introduced in summer 2022. This is a significant development, but we can’t assess its effectiveness because it is so new.

While the force has recently surveyed its staff about inclusivity, integrity, behaviours and harassment, the results weren’t available during our inspection. Data has been collected to allow future analysis of [protected characteristics](#) in this context.

The senior leadership team promotes an ethical performance and behaviour culture

There is a strong governance framework in place for ethics and culture, with a clear commitment from chief officers. Staff told us that senior leaders are always approachable, lead by example, and are accountable.

The force has recently introduced an ethics culture, conduct and behaviours board to address the following themes:

- officers’ off-duty conduct and use of social media;
- performance requiring improvement;
- violence against women and girls;
- [abuse of position for sexual purposes](#); and
- inappropriate professional behaviours.

Discussions and expectations from the meetings are reinforced through chief officer vlogs and leadership development programmes.

The force has an internal [ethics committee](#) which has been reinvigorated following the pandemic. The committee meets quarterly. While at the time of our inspection a permanent chair was being sought, there are several independent members. Ethical dilemmas are submitted via the force’s intranet site on a form that is available

to all staff. The head of [professional standards](#) reviews submissions to confirm that they amount to an ethical dilemma. Issues raised that can or should be dealt with by management action are signposted appropriately.

The committee is promoted through the circulation of a professional standards newsletter each quarter, on the intranet and at staff training events, including supervisors' development days. Our inspection found a very mature understanding of ethics among the workforce. But despite the force's work to promote the committee, the staff that we spoke to generally didn't have wider knowledge of the committee's existence or awareness of how to submit ethical dilemmas.

The force listens to feedback from the workforce, so its staff feel confident to voice concerns

The force has used findings from its surveys to improve regional practice. The results of these surveys highlighted that it was difficult for officers to manage the demand presented by their student officer rotations and assessments.

The force submitted a proposal to the College of Policing suggesting the curriculum be changed, so that forces are better able to balance the need to meet academic requirements and the College of Policing's requirements. The proposal included the suggestion that modules should be combined. Doing this would make the process smoother for officers who are being assessed. The proposal was accepted and Warwickshire will be the first force to implement this change. Protected learning time is built in for student officers. The force has provided an extra three protected learning days to help them. All four forces in the region will eventually adopt the same approach that Warwickshire is leading on.

The force decided not to continue with the national wellbeing survey, which is being carried out by [Oscar Kilo](#) and Durham University to give staff the opportunity to say how they truly feel at work. The force will instead be running their own survey. This will be circulated this year to gain a deeper understanding of how staff are feeling two years after the end of the alliance arrangement with West Mercia Police.

The force has worked hard to understand attraction and attrition in recruitment, and is prioritising positive action to increase the diversity of the workforce

The force has a positive action officer who listens to candidate feedback and works with other corporate teams such as communications and HR to help create more attractive and effective recruitment campaigns.

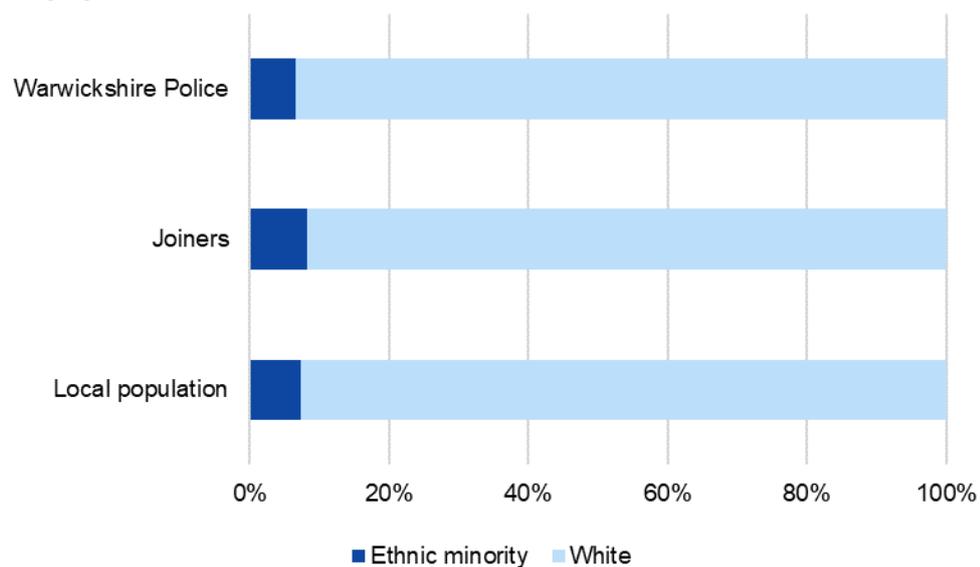
The positive action officer devises newsletters and makes direct contact with candidates to coach and mentor them, and keep them engaged in the application process. The work on positive action is supported by the force's staff networks. They contact individuals to give support, for example, by holding mock practice assessment centres and workshops. For existing staff, the force offers support through the internal promotion process. Individuals from under-represented groups are

notified of opportunities for career development, and volunteers that the force calls 'positive action champions' support potential applicants.

The force works with its communities to increase representation within the workforce. Community members are now involved in the process as volunteer recruitment interviewers, and there are 23 positive action champions within the community.

At 31 March 2021, 6.7 percent of Warwickshire Police's workforce (who had stated their ethnicity) were from ethnic minority backgrounds, compared with 7.3 percent of the local population. In the year ending 31 March 2021, the proportion of joiners who were from ethnic minority backgrounds was higher, at 8.2 percent.

Figure 3: Proportion of Warwickshire Police workforce and workforce joiners that self-identify as being from ethnic minority backgrounds at 31 March 2021, compared to the local population



Note: these calculations exclude ethnicities that weren't stated, which represented 3.2 percent of the workforce and 8.7 percent of joiners

As there is currently only one positive action officer, they are limited in what they can achieve, but the force intends to increase the capacity of this team.

The force has a workforce representation plan based on the National Police Chiefs' Council's diversity, equality and inclusion guidance. The plan focuses on leadership and culture, attraction and recruitment, retention, wellbeing, and fulfilment. The force also has a diversity and inclusion strategy, which focuses on five main themes:

- Growing a workforce which is representative of the communities they serve.
- Being an employer of choice that attracts, recognises and retains the very best people.
- Developing an inclusive culture within the force at all levels and ranks.
- Supporting members of the workforce to reach their potential.
- Putting the health and wellbeing of the workforce first.

Attrition rates for members of the workforce from ethnic minority backgrounds are monitored monthly, and detailed scrutiny of exit data is carried out and shared. The action taken by the force is starting to have positive results.

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.

Warwickshire Police'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

Adequate

Warwickshire Police is adequate at operating efficiently.

Areas for improvement

The force needs to make sure that it realises the benefits of its investment in IT and data to continue to improve its overall efficiency

The force has invested considerably in its IT, and is increasing its understanding of how it can benefit from modern technology. It recently completed a significant programme to update its systems and separate its IT arrangements from West Mercia Police, with which it was formerly allied. For example, it has issued laptops to staff so they can update information immediately and respond more efficiently.

But the force is still managing the transition of services from West Mercia Police, so it has some problems to overcome. The introduction of new systems within the control room is recent, and it will take time for everyone to understand them properly so they can be used to their full potential. Many staff told us about IT problems that inhibit their ability to work efficiently. But it isn't clear whether processes are in place to resolve the problems identified by staff.

Within three months, the force should review its IT strategy to make sure that the improvements it expects are being achieved.

The force needs to develop a comprehensive understanding of demand, and make sure it has the capability and capacity needed to meet and manage current demands efficiently

The force needs the right people in the right place to support planned changes to its operating model. It also needs to make sure that calls for service and investigations aren't subject to undue delay. The force responds to current demands for its services and it moves staff to meet this demand. But it needs to better understand how this affects the quality of service it provides to the public and the effect on its workforce's wellbeing.

The force sometimes re-allocates police officers from preventative policing roles to cope with demand. This often happens at short notice. It means these officers can't work with other organisations to solve problems, so the demand on the force remains high.

Some specialist areas, like investigations, don't have enough trained staff. And tutors must train new student officers while managing their own high workloads. The force placed embargoes on leave due to the upcoming Commonwealth Games and cancelled officers' rest days. But it lacks effective processes to give staff enough opportunity to take their leave, and this is affecting staff morale.

We recognise that the force is changing its operating model, which is a positive step. But these changes rely on the force having enough people who have the right skills and experience. We comment more on this in sections 5 and 6 – investigating crime and protecting vulnerable people.

Senior leaders need to be supported by robust processes. These should mean risks to the force's ability to sustain effective services can be identified at the earliest opportunity and mitigated. These risks include disproportionate demands faced by investigation teams or offender managers.

Within three months the force should make sure it:

- develops a comprehensive picture of demand and the capability and capacity of its resources to meet current and expected demand; and
- incorporates this information into its management processes and systems to supervise absences and leave effectively.

Main findings

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

The force has an effective strategic planning and performance framework, making sure it tackles what is important locally and nationally

The force has made considerable investments as part of its plans to improve services and meet public expectations. In our 2019 PEEL report, we raised concerns about the force's sustainability following the end of its strategic alliance with West Mercia Police. The force has put firm foundations in place to help it to stay sustainable.

Warwickshire Police's leaders and staff show a deep commitment to improving the force's services to the public. The force's strategic plans are aligned to the [Police and Crime Commissioner's Plan for 2021–25](#) and are described in its force management statement. We saw how the force's objectives are reflected in its plans. Its performance framework supports these priorities and will be improved by the force's growing ability to use data. This means the force is in a stronger position to make informed decisions that support its plans.

The force is developing an operating model that should allow it to prioritise and meet future demands

As the force withdrew from its strategic alliance with West Mercia Police, it revised its operating model to make sure it could continue to provide its core services. But the force knew this model would need to be changed, and this was reinforced by the onset of the pandemic.

Warwickshire Police's interim model gave it a base from which to develop its plans. The new operating model will inevitably mean more changes. So, the force is determining where pressures exist and reviewing processes to make sure this new model is fit for the future.

The force makes the best use of the finance it has available, and its plans are both ambitious and sustainable

The force's [medium-term financial plan \(MTFP\)](#) is balanced and uses sensible assumptions. The force sought advice when it developed the MTFP. Throughout the year, the chief constable and other senior leaders participated in budget-setting discussions. These discussions focused on topics including:

- the force's operating principles;
- planning assumptions;
- national and local operational factors;
- the capital programme;
- its use of [reserves](#); and
- financial risks.

This means the force has identified the savings it needs to make, and it has plans in place to achieve what is needed. Sound financial management is apparent.

The force's planning process is effective, and the public can be confident that the force has a good approach to managing the service.

As part of the force's transition from its strategic alliance arrangements, it worked with the Chartered Institute of Public Finance Accountancy under the Achieving Financial Excellence in Policing Programme. The force is expected to achieve a balanced budget for 2022/23. It isn't reliant on the routine use of reserves to finance any budget shortfalls.

The force collaborates effectively and ambitiously with other organisations, achieving value for money

The force's senior leaders understand the benefits of effective collaborations. The police and crime plan sets out how the force will continue to support work with other organisations by participating in the blue light emergency collaboration joint-working group. The group comprises the police, fire and rescue service, ambulance service, and mental health agencies.

There are formal collaborative agreements in place for forensics, firearms training, regional organised crime and counter terrorism. We also found that the force seeks wider opportunities to collaborate and become more efficient.

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