

# **PEEL 2021/22**

## **Police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy**

An inspection of West Yorkshire Police

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# Overall summary

## Our judgments

Our inspection assessed how good West Yorkshire Police is in 12 areas of policing. We make graded judgments in 10 of these 12 as follows:

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

We also inspected how well West Yorkshire Police meets its obligations under the [strategic policing requirement](#), and how well it protects the public from armed threats. We do not make graded judgments in these areas.

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.

## 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](#), 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, does not necessarily mean that there has been a reduction in performance, unless we say so in the report.

## **HM Inspector's observations**

I congratulate West Yorkshire Police on its excellent performance in keeping people safe and reducing crime. I have graded the force as outstanding in four areas of policing, which properly reflects its high level of performance in a challenging policing environment.

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

### **The force's approach to community engagement is underpinned by its effective partnership working arrangements**

Communities in West Yorkshire are culturally diverse, and the force has worked well with its communities to understand their diversity and to be able to work together to solve local policing issues. I am impressed by the force's well-established approach to community engagement.

### **The force's well-established neighbourhood policing model has a strong focus on early intervention**

The force has invested significantly in developing its neighbourhood policing model since we last inspected. Neighbourhood policing is valued by the force, and I am encouraged to see that resources aren't routinely abstracted away into other areas of policing. I am also pleased to see the value that the force places on early intervention. This is important in supporting children and young people to divert them away from offending.

### **The force is highly effective at combating the threats posed by serious and organised crime**

The force experiences a complex policing demand and it is innovative in its approaches to tackling [serious and organised crime](#) threats. I am impressed by the way the force has adopted a 'whole systems approach' to tackling this serious problem, and how effectively it works with other agencies to do so.

### **The force's understanding of stop and search is comprehensive and sophisticated**

The force has done significant work to analyse its stop and search activity, and in the overwhelming majority of cases there are reasonable grounds for that activity to take place. There is also good governance in place to make sure that stop and search is scrutinised properly by senior leaders. I am encouraged by this, as the force can show that it treats the communities of West Yorkshire fairly when they are subject to stop and search.

## The force needs to improve how it identifies vulnerability at the first point of contact

The force's call handling is good, and call handlers use [THRIVE](#) to assess the threat, harm, risk and vulnerability of an incident. But the THRIVE assessments aren't always effective, meaning that vulnerability isn't always appropriately identified. I am reassured that the force has taken immediate steps to address this after our inspection activity.

My report sets out the fuller findings of this inspection. While I congratulate the officers and [staff](#) of West Yorkshire for their efforts in keeping the public safe, I will monitor the progress towards addressing any areas I have identified that the force can improve further.



**Andy Cooke**

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 has a focus on problem solving and early intervention. We found good examples of the force working in partnership to divert children and young people away from offending and to safeguard [vulnerable people](#).

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

- Its effective community engagement methods that help to build trust so that the public will share intelligence and information to help reduce crime;
- Its effective neighbourhood policing model, supported by a culture of working in partnership to solve problems in local communities;
- Its comprehensive understanding of capacity, capability and demand that allows it to put its resources in the right places to prevent and detect crime.

We are pleased that the force is addressing the right areas of policing to reduce crime.

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

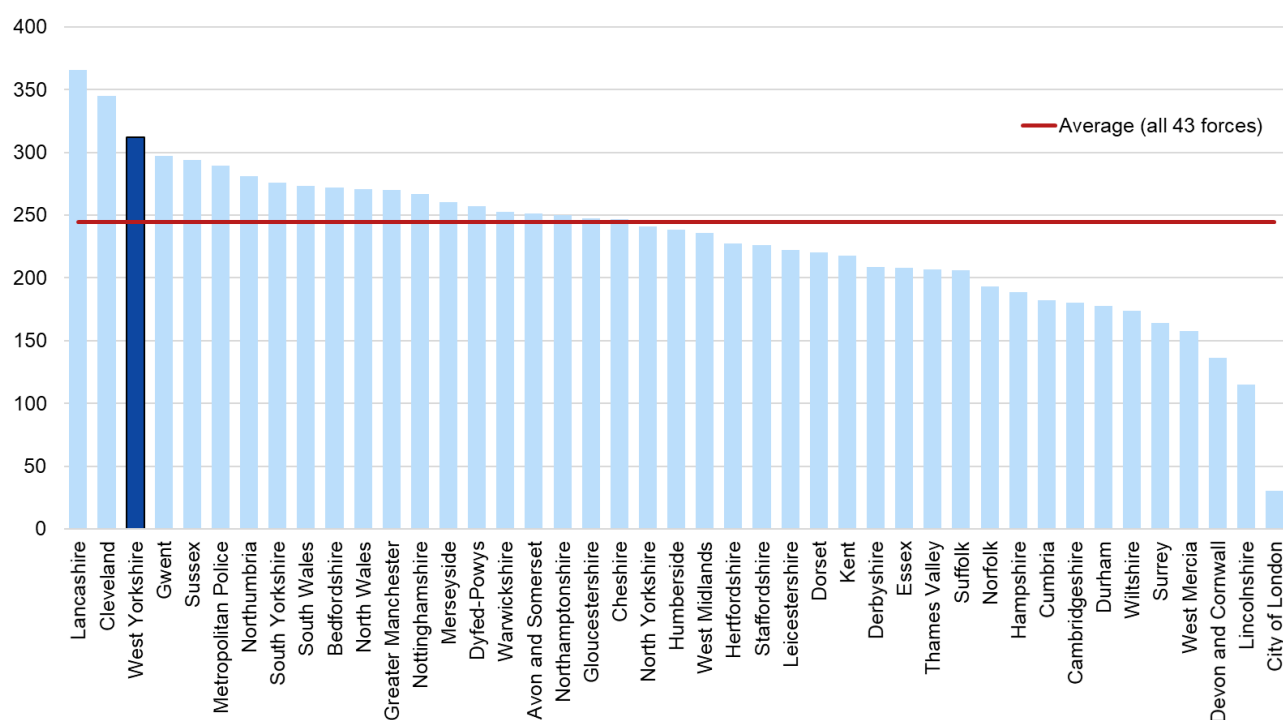
- Not always recognising vulnerability or repeat victims at first point of contact.
- Not always providing crime prevention or evidence preservation advice at first point of contact.
- Not completing initial needs assessments in all cases, which could lead to victims withdrawing their support for investigations.

# Performance in context

As part of our continuous assessment of police forces, we analyse a range of data to explore performance across all aspects of policing. In this section, we present the data and analysis that best illustrate the most important findings from our assessment of the force over the past year. For more information on the data and analysis, please refer to the data annex.

In the year ending 31 March 2021, West Yorkshire Police recorded 312 incidents per 1,000 population on its command and control systems. This is higher than the average rate across all forces, which is 245 incidents per 1,000 population.

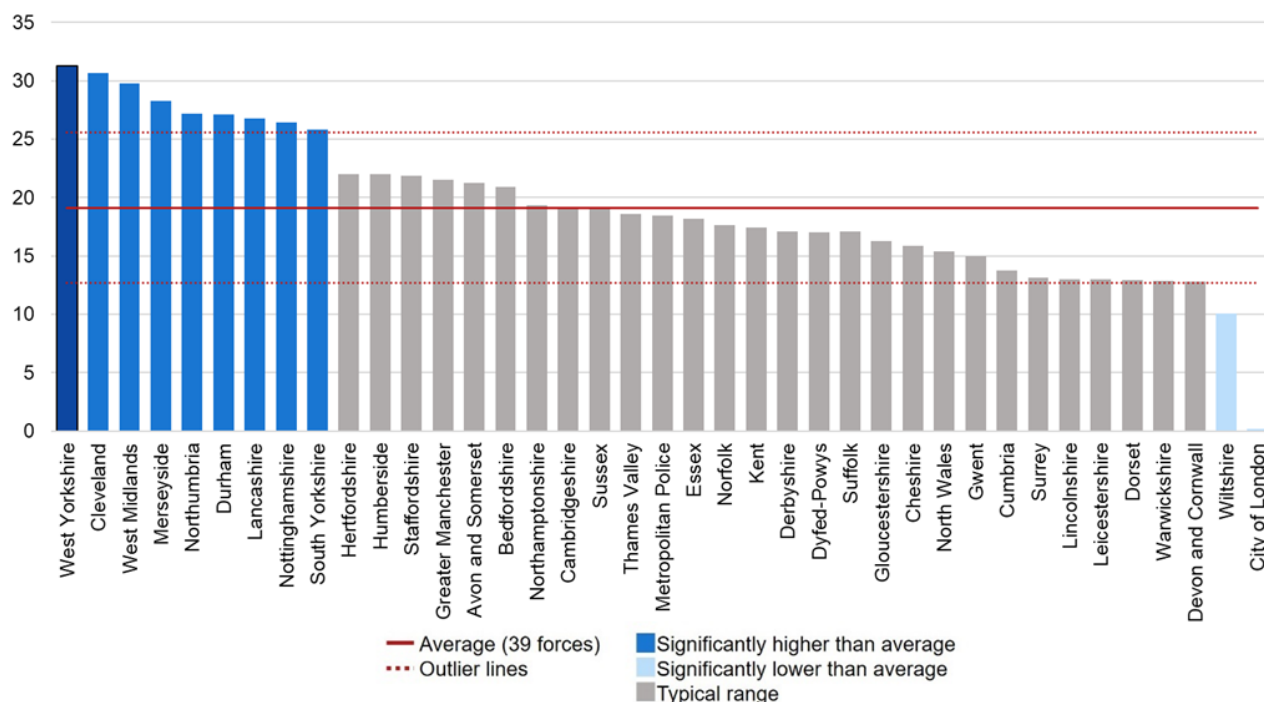
## Number of incidents recorded by command and control systems across forces in England and Wales per 1,000 population in the year ending 31 March 2021





In the year ending 31 March 2021, West Yorkshire Police recorded 31.3 [domestic abuse](#) incidents per 1,000 population. This is much higher than the average rate for England and Wales, which is 19.1 per 1,000 population. This may indicate how well the force identifies domestic abuse-related incidents, but it could also indicate genuine differences in the prevalence of domestic abuse in the force area.

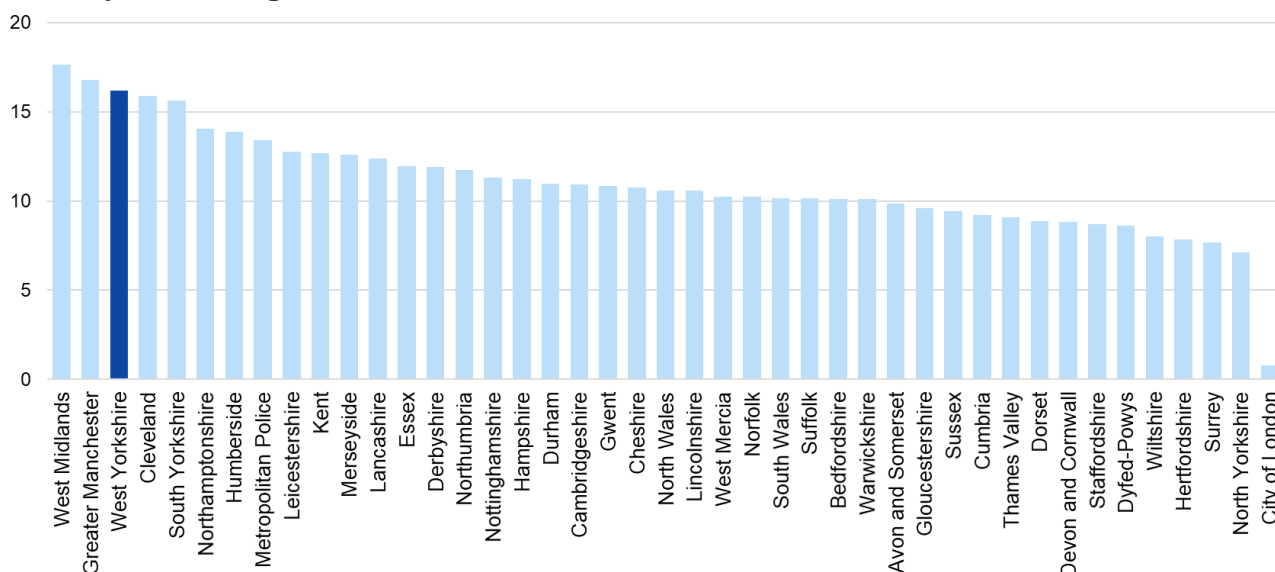
### Number of domestic abuse-related incidents recorded by forces in England and Wales per 1,000 population in the year ending 31 March 2021



**Note:** If a force is above the outlier – high line, it has a significantly higher proportion of domestic abuse incidents than other forces. If a force is below the ‘outlier – low’ line, it has a significantly lower proportion of domestic abuse incidents compared to other forces

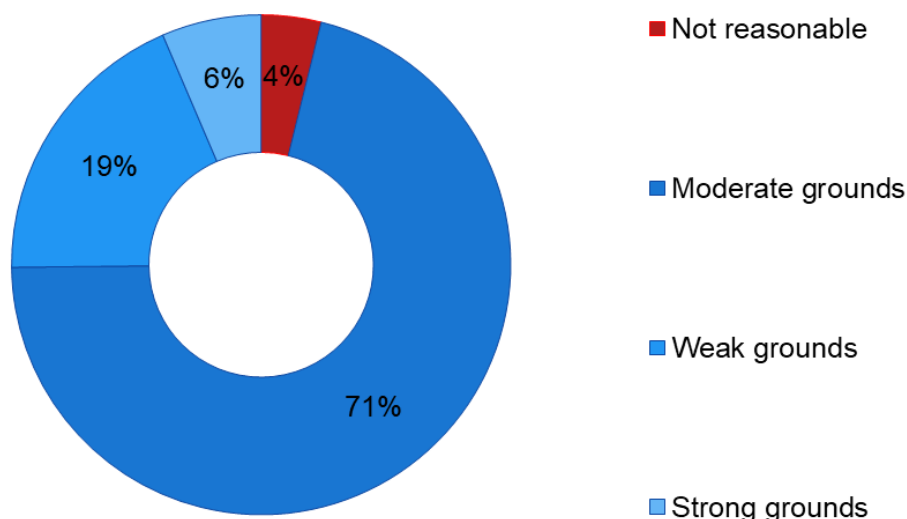
For all offences West Yorkshire Police recorded in the year ending 31 March 2021, the force’s Crime Severity Score is 18. This is the third highest of all forces in England and Wales. The Crime Severity Score accounts for harm caused by each crime rather than just the number of crimes. This suggests that crime committed in the West Yorkshire Police area is more serious than anywhere in England and Wales other than in the West Midlands and Greater Manchester force areas.

## Crime Severity Score across forces in England and Wales, per 1,000 population in the year ending 31 March 2021



Our most recent stop and search audit for West Yorkshire Police was of its 2020 cases. We found that 96.2 percent of searches by the force were reasonable, with a  $\pm 3.0$  percent confidence interval. This is a slight improvement on our 2019 audit, in which 94.2 percent of searches were found to be reasonable. Our most recent audit found that 4 percent of searches were performed on grounds considered 'not reasonable', 6 percent on grounds considered 'strong', 71 percent 'moderate' and 19 percent 'weak'.

## Reasonableness of grounds for West Yorkshire Police stop and search cases in 2020



This dataset shows whether the force's use of stop and search under section 1 of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (PACE) and section 23 of the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 is fair and effective. Data is from the audit of 2020 stop and search records.

# Providing a service to the victims of crime

## Adequate

West Yorkshire Police is adequate at providing a service for victims of crime.

### Area for improvement

**The force should ensure that requirements for call handlers to provide advice about the preservation of evidence and crime prevention are clearly understood**

Call handlers do not always provide advice on crime prevention or preservation of evidence. We found that advice on preservation of evidence was only given in 44 of the 96 cases we examined where it would have been appropriate, and crime prevention advice was only given in 32 of 80 applicable cases. This means that the force is losing opportunities to preserve evidence and provide advice to victims to prevent further crime.

**The force should ensure that an auditable record is made of a victim's decision to withdraw support for an investigation, or of their wishes for an [out-of-court disposal](#)**

There are not always documented records about a victim's wishes following an investigation. Where a decision to administer a caution had been made, we found that only 10 of the 20 cases we examined contained evidence confirming that the victim had been consulted. Where a victim had withdrawn support for an investigation, we found an auditable record endorsed by the victim in only 6 of the 20 cases we examined. This means that the force is not always following national policy about recording victims' wishes, and is losing opportunities to understand the reasons why victims are withdrawing support for investigations.

### Main findings

In this section we set out our main findings that relate to how well the force provides a service to the victims of crime.

## **The force answers 999 and 101 calls on time and a low number of callers hang up while waiting for their call to be answered**

The force is exceeding the national target for answering 999 calls within 10 seconds and meeting the national target for answering [101 calls](#). The force also often has a daily abandonment rate of 0 percent for emergency calls. This is positive as it means that when members of the public ring West Yorkshire Police in emergencies they will usually be provided with a quick response.

## **Call handlers are polite, and treat the public with respect**

Call handlers are polite and professional when dealing with members of the public. We observed some good examples of them providing support and advice to vulnerable victims.

## **The absence of an effective THRIVE assessment sometimes affects prioritisation and response**

The force undertakes a THRIVE risk assessment to determine its initial response to incidents. We found that logs contained accurate descriptions of incidents in 191 out of the 200 we looked at. But we found that they did not always provide an effective assessment of the caller, or accurately consider their need for support or [safeguarding](#). We found that in the majority of cases (204 out of 211), the prioritisation and subsequent response to the call for service were appropriate to the nature of the caller and incident. But the effective use of THRIVE would have assisted in the cases where the prioritisation and response were not appropriate. We comment on this further in section 4 of this report (Responding to the public).

## **The force allocates incidents appropriately**

We found that the force has a consistent approach in allocating incidents to the appropriate team, and that an effective response is provided once they have been allocated. This includes the proportionate use of scheduled appointments in accordance with the force's policy. This was evident in 209 of the 212 incidents we looked at. We found that in all cases where the type of response or the appointment time had been changed, this was done appropriately and in accordance with risk and vulnerability. The rationale and justification were recorded and sanctioned by a supervisor when required.

## **The force has a crime screening policy that is usually applied in a consistent way**

The force also uses the Evidence-Based Investigative Tool (EBIT), a statistical tool that relates the presence of certain important evidential factors in some types of investigations to the likelihood of a positive investigative outcome. This is to ensure the most efficient use of limited investigative resources. EBIT is used to help the force decide which crimes it will investigate ('screened in') and which it won't ('screened out'). We found that crime screening decisions were generally correct and made in accordance with force policy – this was the case in 72 out of 78 cases. But we found some cases in which the call handler missed the mention of a crime during the call and didn't record it, so it didn't enter the crime screening process. This could

potentially lead to victims not receiving the investigation they deserve, offenders escaping justice, and the force being open to reputational risk. In all cases where the crime was screened in for investigation, it was allocated to the most appropriate department. In the 31 cases where a crime was screened out, we found that 6 were incorrect decisions. In some of these cases, the victims had not been provided with an appropriate level of service and support.

### **The standard of investigations in West Yorkshire Police has improved**

The force has undertaken significant work to improve the standards of its investigations. We found that investigations were conducted in a timely manner in 94 out of 103 cases, and investigative opportunities had been taken in 97 out of 106 cases. But we found that on the nine occasions where investigative opportunities weren't taken, these related to serious crime such as rape and sexual harassment. While overall standards have improved, the force must maintain its focus in this area so that it can be sure its investigations do not fail and that offenders do not escape justice. We comment on this further in section 5 of this report (Investigating crime).

# Engaging with and treating the public with fairness and respect

## Outstanding

West Yorkshire Police is outstanding at treating people fairly and with respect.

### Innovative practice

**West Yorkshire Police is undertaking innovative work with black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) communities to improve its understanding of inequalities within elements of policing**

The force has established an [independent advisory group](#) called the Race, Inequality, and the Legacy of Historical Injustices Within Policing, Independent Scrutiny and Advisory Group. The group aims to drive improvements in policing outcomes for people from minority ethnic backgrounds. It will also make sure that the force is seen as legitimate by the public and is held to account for the actions it takes. This is likely to have a positive impact on community confidence in West Yorkshire Police.

### Main findings

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

### **The force is highly effective at working with its communities to seek their views about what matters to them**

We found extensive evidence of how well the force works with local communities. It has carried out demographic and vulnerability profiling together with third sector agencies. This helps the force understand the diverse make-up of its communities. One of the models the force uses to work with communities is the Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) model. Using this model, the force can identify key people within communities, and work with them to understand the issues affecting the local area. The force then identifies the people, places and resources that could be used to tackle the issues by working together. We found a positive example of this work in the Holme Wood area of Bradford, where the community worked with the police to build resilience against serious and organised crime. We also found many good examples of effective working with community organisations across the force. These included 'Cuppa with a Copper' in Huddersfield, and work with local priests in Leeds District to encourage children in Roma communities into school. In Bradford District the faith officer conducts a five-hour faith walk every month visiting places of worship to maintain effective contact with local people. The work is positive as getting local communities involved will help them feel empowered to support local policing.

### **The overwhelming majority of stop searches have been carried out with reasonable grounds**

We examined a sample of stop and search records during our inspection and found that the recorded grounds for the stop and search were reasonable in 96.2 percent of cases (with a confidence interval of +/- 3.0 percent). All 54 records we reviewed for stop and searches on BAME individuals had reasonable grounds. This is extremely positive as it means that communities in West Yorkshire can be reassured that stop and search activity is being carried out fairly.

### **The force has a comprehensive and sophisticated understanding of its stop and search data**

The force has undertaken detailed analysis of its stop and search data and has published this on its website. This data is regularly reviewed at force, local, team and individual level and is further scrutinised by a trained community panel. The force can demonstrate improvements to its ways of working because of the scrutiny posed by these groups. One example is the improvements that have been made to officers' recording a person's self-defined ethnicity during a stop and search encounter. This has helped the force's understanding of the ethnicities of people subject to stop and search activity. The force's governance and scrutiny in relation to stop and search is evidence of good practice and provides much reassurance to communities that its use of this power is fair and effective.

### **The force empowers communities to get involved in local policing**

The force makes effective use of volunteer members of the public to support its problem-solving activity. Volunteers are offered opportunities to work in roles where the force can make best use of their skills, rather than just working in administrative roles. Examples of this have included wildlife liaison and the mounted branch.

The force has a well-established Neighbourhood Watch network, and through this it is undertaking a fraud initiative called Communities that Care. Neighbourhood Watch volunteers are trained to become a point of contact for fraud issues, and work alongside the Trading Standards Agency to provide support and advice to potential fraud victims. This is good practice as it means that volunteers can educate people who might be vulnerable to fraud and prevent fraud from taking place.

### **The force understands the effectiveness of its social media engagement channels**

In Leeds District, the force carried out a campaign about child criminal exploitation. It used platforms like Spotify and Mumsnet to develop adverts that were targeted by age, gender and interest. The force then carried out evaluation to understand how successful the communication had been in reaching the right audience. This is positive as it allows the force to understand that its social media engagement extends beyond merely 'clicks on a page'.

### **The force has two-way engagement methods in place**

The force has developed an online Community Alert portal to encourage two-way communication with its communities. This has more than 20,000 users. A survey tool has now been added, and it is available in a range of languages to help more diverse communities feel included and able to get involved. This is good practice as it means that communities can provide their views on what matters to them.

### **The force provides effective communications skills training to the workforce**

The force is carrying out mandatory training to help its workforce understand how to be fair in their interactions with the public and not to be influenced by [unconscious bias](#). At the time of our inspection, more than 90 percent of the workforce had been trained. The force has also worked with Leeds Trinity University to develop training aids on communication skills. The training is not limited to how to resolve conflict, but also includes active listening skills and empathy.

The force has developed guidance for the workforce called 'Know Me To Protect Me'. This guidance helps the workforce understand the communication challenges for people from diverse backgrounds, to help break down barriers. This will help officers and staff to communicate better.

### **The force is improving its understanding of its data on use of force**

The force's understanding of its use of force data is less mature than its understanding of stop and search data. The force analyses data about tactical use of force, demographics, and disproportionality. This data is broken down into age, gender and ethnicity at district level. But the force does not break down the data further into the type of tactic per ethnicity. This is important as it will give the force a better understanding of whether there is any disproportionality in its use of force. The force is taking steps to address this.



# Preventing crime and anti-social behaviour

## Outstanding

West Yorkshire Police is outstanding at prevention and deterrence.

### Innovative practice

**West Yorkshire Police has developed an innovative Partnership Intelligence Portal to allow partners to share intelligence and information to assist in local policing and problem-solving**

The Partnership Intelligence Portal is an online portal that allows partners or local people who are members of [key individual networks](#) and [independent advisory groups](#) to submit information directly to the force. The information is reviewed by the Force Intelligence Unit and transferred onto force systems. This means that the force has much richer information available to inform its local policing activity.

**West Yorkshire Police has developed an anti-social and vulnerability analytical tool (ASVAT) to help identify repeat victims and to prevent escalation of risk to vulnerable people**

ASVAT draws information from force incident data about nuisance, concern for safety, hate crime and [anti-social behaviour](#). Incidents are reviewed and risk-assessed by neighbourhood support officers, and then the case is passed on to neighbourhood teams for reassurance work or problem solving. This means that the force can intervene early to prevent risk from escalating and to reduce repeat victimisation.

### Main findings

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

### **The force has a highly effective neighbourhood policing model that is focused on the prevention of crime, anti-social behaviour and vulnerability**

The force is committed to neighbourhood policing and has significantly developed its neighbourhood policing model since we last inspected. The work in this area is underpinned by a neighbourhood policing strategy that has a focus on the three pillars of engagement, intervention and problem-solving. Neighbourhood policing resources have been ring-fenced, and the force has an 'abstraction policy' which stops officers and staff from being routinely taken away from their neighbourhood policing duties. This is positive and shows the value that the force places on this area of policing.

The force has reduced crime across most crime types. In the 12-month reporting period to March 2021, crime had reduced by 13 percent, which means that there were 38,000 fewer victims of crime. While the COVID-19 pandemic has had a positive impact in reducing crime in most police forces, West Yorkshire Police's recorded crime has been falling since 2019. This is positive as it means that fewer people are becoming victims of crime, and vulnerable people are being safeguarded.

### **The force works well to support vulnerable victims of hate crime to report**

The force has the highest number of recorded hate crime incidents in England and Wales. The force feels that this is due to the work it has undertaken to raise awareness of hate crime which has resulted in an increase in reporting. It has been recognised nationally for this work in the [National Police Chiefs' Council's National Community Tensions Assessment: Disability Hate Crime](#) report. The force introduced activities through its relationship with the disability charity [United Response](#) in Leeds, where they developed a training programme to help people with disabilities and their carers spot the signs of hate crime. This is good practice as it will enable victims of disability hate crime to have the confidence to report.

### **The force is very effective at identifying high demand and vulnerable locations, including repeat victims**

The force conducts analysis about vulnerable victims and locations, and uses this understanding to inform policing activity. Action takes place through effective working arrangements with other relevant organisations, and we found many examples of teams working in the same buildings as other organisations. These were early intervention teams, cohesion or engagement teams, and safer communities teams. This is positive as it increases the opportunities to share information about people at risk. Patrol officers have access to information through applications on their hand-held devices, including repeat demand, hate crime, and a neighbourhood mapping tool. This means that the workforce can easily see what local policing issues are affecting the area, and the locations of vulnerable people and repeat victims. This will also help them in their local policing and problem-solving activity.

### **The force has a positive evidence-based policing culture**

The force has an evidence-based policing strategy, which it intends to use to develop an innovative culture. The force is part of the Innovation Broker Network, which brings police forces together to share innovative practice, and also of the [N8 Research Partnership](#). Through this partnership the force is involved regularly in research projects. Evidence-based policing champions are in place across the force, and student officers undergo training to take part in police research projects as part of their dissertation. This informs force learning which is provided through its evidence-based policing portal, lessons learned forum, and 'what works well' process. Having an evidence-based policing culture is positive as it will increase the force's ability to prevent and detect crime and to protect communities.

### **The force carries out effective problem-solving to protect vulnerable people and reduce demand**

The force uses its prevention and problem-solving strategy to allocate its resources according to local threats. It uses a structured problem-solving model, and we found evidence of effective problem-solving in neighbourhood teams that was often done together with other bodies. We also found that problem-solving takes place outside neighbourhood policing. This was particularly the case in safeguarding units where there are well-established multi-agency working arrangements. This is positive as it means that the force will be able to reduce harm to communities by addressing the root causes of crime. This will also reduce demand for services.

### **The force is improving its workforce's understanding of what works well**

The force undertakes some evaluation of what works well in its problem-solving activity. Problem-solving plans are reviewed by supervisors before they are finalised and then officers and staff complete a 'what works well' template which is stored on the force's intranet. We found that 'what works well' could be better understood across the force, as some officers and staff we spoke to were unaware of it. Problem-solving plans would also benefit from the problem-solving objective being clearly defined at the outset, as this will help the force to know how successful it has been and whether it worked in achieving the objective. Improving the workforce's understanding of this will mean that good practice can be shared to inform future problem-solving activity.

### **The force is carrying out early intervention with a focus on positive outcomes**

The force has a clear focus on early intervention. Its early intervention strategy is underpinned by the work of the early action forum where the police work together with other agencies, including all five local authorities. This is encouraging as it shows the commitment from all relevant parties towards this important work. There are early intervention teams in each of the five districts. Through these arrangements the force is providing sustainable early intervention programmes. These are supported by the Pol-Ed (Policing and Education) Project Team. Through this project, a programme of age-appropriate lessons and educational resources is provided to schools on topics like crime prevention, personal safety, and respect for women and girls. This is good practice as it will safeguard young people, and promote positive changes in attitude and behaviour.

### **The force has plans in place to professionalise neighbourhood policing through training and accreditation**

Neighbourhood policing officers were provided with problem-solving training by the force in 2019, but the COVID-19 pandemic has affected the provision of refresher training. No specific neighbourhood policing training has been provided. The force is keen to professionalise its neighbourhood policing and has developed a three-day bespoke neighbourhood policing training course that will be given in-house. This will allow officers to be accredited through Skills for Justice (Level 3 accreditation in Understanding Neighbourhood Management and Planning). While the training is not due to start until autumn 2021, there are budgeted plans in place to have all officers trained and accredited by October 2022. This is positive and we look forward to seeing how this progresses.

### **The force values problem-solving and recognises those who perform well**

The force has a culture of recognising and valuing the impact of problem-solving. The contribution of the workforce and volunteers is rewarded through district and force awards programmes and through nominations for national awards. An example of this is when Leeds District and Leeds City Council jointly received the Tilley Award for the problem-solving work they had carried out after the deaths of several rough sleepers. This is positive as it means that the workforce will feel valued by their senior leaders and continue to remain involved in problem-solving for the benefit of communities.

# Responding to the public

Good

West Yorkshire Police is good at responding to the public.

## Innovative practice

### **West Yorkshire Police is collaborating with other relevant bodies to reduce the demand caused by high intensity users**

The force has a dedicated mental health co-ordinator who works alongside the NHS Trust and Regional Ambulance Service to identify vulnerable people in the community who are repeat callers ('high intensity users'). When an individual is identified, they are adopted onto a programme through the Serenity integrated mentoring panel. A dedicated police officer is assigned to the individual and a crisis plan developed. This work is positive as it means that vulnerable people are being monitored and provided with support to reduce their vulnerability to exploitation. It will also reduce demand across services.

## Area for improvement

### **The force should ensure that call handlers provide an effective assessment and structured triage that is consistently applied, and that all risks are identified and recorded on force systems**

Vulnerability is not always identified by callers at the first point of contact. While we found evidence of [THRIVE](#) being used, there was often not a full assessment of the caller's vulnerability. We found that there was a check to see if the victim was vulnerable in only 89 of 169 cases, and a check was carried out to see if they were a repeat victim in only 73 of 174 cases. This means that callers who are vulnerable or who are repeat victims of crime may not always receive appropriate levels of service or response. The force may also miss opportunities to reduce the incidence of repeat victimisation.

## Main findings

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

### **The force understands demand in the force contact management centre and it is well resourced**

The force has the third highest number of recorded incidents per 1,000 population out of all police forces in England and Wales (317.7 per 1,000 population compared to the England and Wales average of 244.8). This means there is significant demand in the force contact management centre. We found that demand was well managed. Calls are risk-assessed using THRIVE and then graded as immediate, priority or standard. The centre is well resourced and while some call handlers have less experience than others, the force has introduced a two-year tenure policy. This means that there will be less turnover of staff, and that skills and experience can be retained.

### **Queues of incidents that have not yet been dealt with are regularly reviewed and any vulnerability is re-assessed during this process**

We found that open incidents are regularly reviewed. Dedicated risk sergeants review all open incidents in dispatch queues. Vulnerability is re-assessed during reviews, and decisions to downgrade the priority level of an incident following a further THRIVE assessment must be authorised by a supervisor. This means there is supervisory oversight of the risk assessment process. This also reduces the risk that vulnerability has been missed.

### **The force provides a timely response to incidents, but appropriate allocation of incidents can sometimes be affected by the THRIVE assessment**

During our victim service assessment, we found that response and attendance times were within the target in 129 of the 143 incidents we looked at. Calls allocated as 'priority' were often attended quickly and well within the one-hour target, and there was a consistent approach to the allocation of incidents. But the absence of an effective THRIVE assessment means that some incidents were prioritised inappropriately and didn't reflect the risks to the victim or others. We found examples of this in domestic abuse incidents that were inappropriately graded as suitable for resolution without deployment through the incident management unit. This means that there may be delays in information-sharing about risk.

### **Domestic abuse risk assessments by patrol officers are completed to a good standard, but sometimes the level of risk is inappropriately graded as high**

When officers attend a domestic abuse incident, they carry out a [DASH risk assessment](#). We found that these were generally of a good standard, and that officers recorded their observations about children who were present. DASH forms are reviewed by supervisors before they go off duty. However, we found that in some cases, incidents had been inappropriately graded as high risk. Those risk assessments are agreed by supervisors and then not challenged by supervisors in specialist safeguarding teams, meaning that cases were inappropriately referred to a [multi-agency risk assessment conference \(MARAC\)](#). This affects the number of cases

being heard and can potentially dilute the availability of services for genuinely high-risk cases. The force should satisfy itself that there is appropriate and supportive challenge in instances where domestic abuse incidents are inappropriately assessed as high risk.

### **The force is collaborating effectively to reduce demand**

The force has dedicated [mental health triage](#) arrangements in place in each of its districts. Staff work with patrol officers to provide support in incidents where mental health is a factor. This is positive as it ensures that people with mental health conditions are given the right help as early as possible. The triage arrangements also reduce demand for the force. Most people we spoke to were enthusiastic about the mental health triage arrangements and the support that they provide.

### **The wellbeing of staff in the force's contact management centre is a priority**

Staff working within the contact management centre told us that there were effective wellbeing arrangements in place. Most people we spoke to said that the force has a strong focus on wellbeing. We found that supervisors felt able to provide support on welfare issues to staff through multiple channels, and they felt provision was good for their staff. Most supervisors we spoke to believed they could recognise the signs of stress in their staff and had the necessary support to do so.

### **The force is improving the training and CPD of the workforce in its contact management centre**

The force undertakes regular training days for patrol officers as part of their [continuing professional development](#) (CPD). Officers are given protected learning time to attend a training day once every ten weeks. During the COVID-19 pandemic, this training was generally provided virtually, but has since returned to face-to-face training.

The force has been unable to build a full training day into the shift rota for staff working in the contact management centre and is therefore exploring ways to incorporate protected learning time in a way that isn't so resource intensive. The force recognises that it has work to do in this area.

The force is currently exploring options to improve the skills of its initial contact officers as part of formalised career progression. This process would give staff the opportunity to be exposed to other areas within the contact arena, such as the force crime management unit. This is positive, and it is also likely to have a positive impact on staff retention.



# Investigating crime

## Adequate

West Yorkshire Police is adequate at investigating crime.

### Progress on causes of concern

#### **2017 cause of concern: initial enquiries, standards of investigation and supervision**

During our 2017 effectiveness inspection we were concerned about the standard and quality of West Yorkshire Police's initial enquiries, general standards of investigation, and supervision. There were five recommendations associated with this cause of concern.

We have continued to monitor this cause of concern and are satisfied that overall standards of investigation and supervision have improved.

Under the Victim's Journey Review, the force has rolled out several phases of its 'We are all Investigators' training, supported by online resources. The force has an investigations policy and there is effective governance in place with regard to investigative standards. The force has established an investigations governance group to scrutinise and oversee its work to improve investigative standards. It carries out dip sampling of statements, and feeds back to staff where improvements need to be made.

Inspectors conduct dip sampling of overall investigations to ensure that they meet the required standards. The force also undertakes regular monthly crime file audits to assess their quality. During our victim service assessment, we found that of the 107 investigations we examined, 96 were effective. We also found that investigation plans had been created in 93 out of 107 cases, and there was effective supervision in 89 out of 100 cases.

We are satisfied that the force has made significant progress in improving the standards of its investigations and supervision, and we are no longer concerned. But the force must maintain its focus and scrutiny in this area to make sure that standards remain at acceptable levels.



## 2018 cause of concern: investigations involving vulnerability

During our 2018 PEEL inspection we were concerned about the force's capacity and capability to deal effectively with investigations involving vulnerability.

We have monitored progress in this area. The force has undertaken a comprehensive review of its safeguarding units and immediately increased staffing levels. Further increases are planned during 2021/22, and an ambitious training plan is underway. Most people we spoke to felt that they were being listened to and that their wellbeing needs were being met.

While workloads are still high in some areas, the force can demonstrate that it is 'flexing' resources from other areas to support the safeguarding unit.

Significant progress has been made, but it will not be possible to fully understand the impact of this until further planned increases in staffing and training have taken place. We are satisfied that there are plans in place for this, but the force must maintain its focus in this area by implementing the findings of the safeguarding review. While we are no longer concerned, this is still an area for improvement for the force.

## Area for improvement

**The force should take action to ensure that investigators work with and support victims and witnesses to understand their needs. They should consider, record and provide victims and witnesses with any appropriate special measures**

We found that in 26 of the 85 cases we examined, a victim needs assessment would have been applicable but there was no evidence of one being carried out. This means that victims and witnesses are potentially not being provided with available support. This could also lead to them withdrawing support for investigations.

## Main findings

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

### **West Yorkshire Police has effective governance in place to ensure standards of investigation are maintained**

The force has governance arrangements in place and clear lines of accountability to ensure its strategic plans are successfully implemented. Activity specified in the plans is overseen by threat delivery groups. The victim's journey delivery group monitors the force's progress across several themes. This covers every aspect of a victim's journey through the criminal justice process, from initial call to outcome, and compliance with the [Victims' Code](#). There is a clear focus on continuous improvement, and on improving the quality of service to victims, alongside the investigative quality.

## **The force has a good understanding of its crime demand and what resources it needs to meet it effectively**

The force has the third highest crime severity score in England and Wales. This is based on the severity of crimes per 1,000 population, with each crime code given a weighting. More serious crimes are given a larger weighting, so the crime severity score accounts for the harm caused to communities.

Despite a challenging context and high levels of demand, the force has sustained year-on-year crime reductions across most crime types. This trend was evident before the COVID-19 pandemic. At the same time, the force is meeting and often exceeding its targets for call handling and response. Victim satisfaction rates are at their highest levels since 2017 and firearms discharges are at their lowest levels since 2016.

The force has good governance in place for its process of crime allocation through the force crime management unit. This process makes sure that crimes are investigated by staff with the right skills. Our victim service assessment found that crimes were allocated appropriately in 105 of the 106 cases we examined. But we found some examples of crimes having been inappropriately screened as being suitable for telephone resolution due to an inaccurate [THRIVE](#) assessment by call handlers. We commented on the THRIVE assessment above, in the section 'Responding to the public'.

The decision on how to allocate each crime is based on THRIVE, solvability and public interest. Through the daily management meeting process there is additional scrutiny of crime allocation to make sure there is no delay in the allocation of an officer in the case to an investigation. We found this process to be robust across the force.

During our 2018 PEEL inspection we found some inconsistency in the way that the force investigated crime across its five districts. Improvements were needed to make sure that the force had the right structures in place to meet investigative demand.

Since that time the force has reviewed its operating model for investigations and has introduced district investigation teams in four of the five districts. These teams are responsible for crime investigations that would previously have been allocated to patrol officers, freeing up patrol officer capacity. We are encouraged by this approach as it will ensure consistency across the force in how crimes are allocated and investigated. Early indications are that the revised model is having a positive impact, and most people we spoke to were positive about the new arrangements. We look forward to seeing how this progresses.

Demand across the force is high, including in high harm investigations. However, the force can demonstrate that it has been 'flexing' its investigative resources. Examples include seconding investigators from criminal investigation department (CID) into domestic abuse teams or proactive teams and moving investigators into teams that investigate non-recent child [sexual exploitation](#) and abuse. This is encouraging.

## **The force is making progress in addressing investigator resilience**

The force understands about the number of vacant investigator roles it currently has and what it will need in the future. It has a comprehensive local investigator resilience plan in place. It has recently secured an external training venue to provide [PIP2](#) training to investigators, and anticipates that its 'investigator gap' will be closed by summer 2022. This is positive as it means that the force is making sure it has the right people in place with the right skills to investigate crime and protect vulnerable people.

## **The force has reduced the backlogs in its digital forensics unit**

In 2018/19 the force was issued with an area for improvement because of backlogs in its [digital forensics](#) unit. This was causing delays in investigations. Since then, the force has made significant investment. Through a combination of increasing the capacity and capability of its digital media investigators, routine on-scene triage, and outsourcing, the force has reduced the unit's queues by half. The force has budgeted for a further increase in staff numbers so that it can introduce a 'hub and spoke' model, and it anticipates that this will enable it to end outsourcing within 12 months. This represents a £4.2m investment in uplift and infrastructure. The force has achieved [ISO 17025](#) accreditation and is now seeking to secure [ISO 17020](#).

## **The force is improving its understanding of its outcome data and of why victims sometimes withdraw support for prosecutions**

The force's [outcome 16](#) rate of 60.2 percent is higher than the average for England and Wales. To understand the reason for this, the force carried out an audit of 250 domestic abuse cases to find out whether outcome 16 codes had been correctly applied. In all but one case the outcome had been correctly applied. The audit also looked at the standards of the initial investigation and victim engagement and found that they were effective in 90 percent of cases. This is positive as it shows that officers are working effectively with victims to encourage them to support prosecutions.

In our victim service assessment, we looked at 20 cases where there were opportunities for the force to move forward with an evidence-led prosecution (a prosecution made without the support of the victim). Attempts to secure an evidence-led prosecution were only made on eight occasions.

During inspection fieldwork activity, we were provided with numerous positive examples of evidence-led prosecution by the force. We were reassured by this, but it does show that there is some inconsistency. We would encourage the force to make sure the workforce is taking opportunities to secure evidence-led prosecutions when appropriate. This will mean that vulnerable victims can still get justice even when they don't feel able to support a prosecution.

# Protecting vulnerable people

Good

West Yorkshire Police is good at [protecting vulnerable people](#).

## Area for improvement

**The force should ensure that when it is sharing information with children's social care organisations about vulnerable children, a full picture of information is shared**

We found that the force does not routinely screen referrals that are sent to children's social care about children at risk of harm. This means that referrals are often made based on information about a single incident rather than the family history. This means that there is a risk that single-agency decision-making by relevant agencies is not based on a full picture of the potential cumulative risk to that child. It also means that agencies may be missing opportunities to intervene early in that child's life to prevent an escalation of risk into significant harm.

## Main findings

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

**The force has effective governance in place to make sure that vulnerable people are protected**

The force has a [chief officer](#) lead for safeguarding, and governance through the protecting vulnerable persons' board. The progress of work is monitored through threat delivery groups in areas like the victim's journey, and domestic abuse and rape. The force has a centralised safeguarding governance unit which provides quality assurance for safeguarding standards and carries out safeguarding-themed audits. This is encouraging as it provides additional scrutiny and makes sure that good practice is shared.

### **The force analyses patterns of offending to identify vulnerable people**

Force analysts carry out work to understand threats and risks to vulnerable people. This work helps the force to assess where to place its resources. An example of this is the work it did to understand the scale of non-recent child sexual exploitation and abuse across West Yorkshire. This analysis was used as evidence to help the force secure funding from the Home Office to increase the number of investigators working to address the problem.

### **The force has made improvements to the way it shares information about vulnerable people with local authorities**

We found that until recently the force was inconsistent in the ways it shared information with relevant local authorities about vulnerable people at risk. In one district public protection notices are used as an automated way to refer information, which means that there is an audit trail. This was not the case elsewhere. We are encouraged to see that the force has since introduced a temporary 'gatekeeper' role. The gatekeeper is responsible for checking whether concerns have been referred to the right organisations. We are also encouraged to see that the force has plans in place with relevant local authorities to introduce public protection notices in all districts. This is positive as it means there will be an audit trail for referrals.

### **The force has processes in place to share information with children's social care organisations about children who go missing, but this does not always happen**

The force has [missing persons](#) co-ordinators in place to make sure information is shared with children's social care when a child has been missing. This information is shared on a form called a MISPER 7. We found that in some cases where a child had returned home before a police officer had been able to attend, the MISPER 7 was not completed. This means that the missing person co-ordinator is not aware of the incident. Hub inspectors in each district review these incidents to ensure that there is no vulnerability or risk and decide whether an officer should still attend. We found that sometimes hub inspectors had assessed missing incidents as not needing an officer's attendance if the child had already returned home. This means the force is missing opportunities to understand why a child had been missing and to make sure there are no safeguarding concerns. We are reassured that the force is reviewing its missing persons policy and has begun refresher training of hub inspectors. This is positive and we look forward to seeing the impact that this has.

### **The force is working with schools to share information about children at risk of child criminal exploitation**

In Kirklees District, the force is carrying out a pilot called Operation Safehaven. When a child is believed to be at risk of child criminal exploitation, the force shares information about the risk with the child's school. This is good practice as it means that teachers will be able to spot the signs and symptoms of exploitation and provide support to safeguard vulnerable children and young people from harm.

**The force has [multi-agency safeguarding hubs \(MASHs\)](#) in place, but there is a lack of clarity about working practices**

There are multi-agency safeguarding arrangements in place across the force. While the force refers to the local arrangements as 'MASH arrangements', it appears that some local authorities refer to them as 'police only'. We found officers and staff working together in partnership, and evidence of positive working relationships and information-sharing. But there was a lack of clarity about the working practices within the MASHs. We are encouraged that the force has plans to review its MASH working arrangements in liaison with local authorities. This will make sure that there is clarity of purpose and, where appropriate, consistent ways of operating within the police element of the MASH.

**The force is improving its awareness and understanding of adult vulnerability**

There are well-established arrangements to safeguard vulnerable children from harm, but vulnerable adult safeguarding arrangements have not progressed as well. In 2020 the force carried out an audit of vulnerable adult incidents and found that sometimes information about adults at risk wasn't recorded accurately or referrals weren't made to adult social care organisations when they should have been. This means that opportunities may be missed to provide vulnerable people with support. We are encouraged that the force has been working since then to raise awareness of adult vulnerability. But the force should satisfy itself that its workforce's understanding of adult vulnerability has improved as a result, and that good quality adult safeguarding referrals are being made in a timely fashion.

**The force is undertaking work to divert young people away from [serious and organised crime](#)**

We found several examples of the positive work that the force is carrying out to prevent young people from becoming involved in serious and organised crime. An example of this is Operation Squaredets. This is focused on young people who have been targeted by money launderers linked to organised gangs and persuaded to allow their bank accounts to be used, leaving them vulnerable to being groomed by the gangs. The force is proactive in working with banks to identify potential victims by examining suspicious activity reports linked to young people's bank accounts. This is good practice as it will enable young people to be safeguarded and prevent them from being encouraged into criminality.

**The force has multi-agency risk assessment arrangements in place to assess domestic abuse incidents, but safety planning could be more robust**

The force has a daily risk assessment meeting in most districts, in which information about domestic abuse is discussed with relevant agencies. This is positive as it means that safety planning for victims can be arranged quickly and that there is multi-agency decision-making about risk. But in the two meetings we observed there was little evidence of safety planning. This means that sometimes victims may not get the support they need. The force may wish to review its arrangements for these meetings to ensure that safety planning discussions are robust in all cases.



**Domestic Violence Protection Orders (DVPOs) are used by the force, but this is inconsistent between districts**

The force uses DVPOs as a way of protecting vulnerable victims of domestic abuse. A centralised team of DVPO officers make the applications at court, and this ensures that they are of a good quality and consistent standard. Successful applications are sent to districts for monitoring. While the use of DVPOs is positive, we found that their use was less consistent in some districts than others. The force may wish to make sure that there is a consistent level of understanding of DVPOs across all districts and that opportunities to secure them are taken when they should be.

**The force is working in partnership to safeguard vulnerable pregnant women and their unborn babies**

In Wakefield District the force works collaboratively with relevant organisations in the multi-agency pregnancy liaison group to provide holistic health care and safety planning to vulnerable pregnant women and their unborn babies. This takes place in cases where there is concern that the child might be at an increased safeguarding risk after birth. In all cases a referral was made to local authority children's social care teams, and in almost half of cases, babies were removed from their mothers' care shortly after birth. This work is good practice as it shows that multi-agency early intervention has protected new-born babies from future harm.

**The force has a good understanding of its safeguarding demand**

In our last inspection we were concerned about the capacity of the force to investigate vulnerability. We comment on this in section 5 of this report (Investigating crime). We are satisfied that the force has made progress in this area, which has been driven by its comprehensive safeguarding review. While we found that caseloads were still high in some specialist teams, we are satisfied that the force has already begun implementing plans to increase resources across its safeguarding units. This will mean that caseloads should return to manageable levels. This will have a positive impact on staff wellbeing.

**The force understands which roles in safeguarding pose a high risk to wellbeing, and is focused on ensuring the workforce receives the support it requires**

The force has identified many high-risk roles that should be eligible for enhanced wellbeing support. This equates to around 3,000 individuals across the force. Those officers and staff will be encouraged to attend an annual psychological assessment commencing in the summer of 2021. This is encouraging, but most people we spoke to felt that the annual assessment should be mandatory, as they felt it was unlikely they would use it otherwise. This means that officers and staff working in high-risk roles may not get access to the support they need. The force may wish to review the take-up of the annual assessment after a defined period, and consider making the assessment compulsory, depending on the findings.

# Managing offenders and suspects

Good

West Yorkshire Police is good at managing offenders and suspects. In this section, we set out our main findings.

## Main findings

### **The force effectively pursues offenders and manages outstanding suspects to protect the public from harm**

The force's district intelligence units review all outstanding wanted persons. Subjects that are at risk of causing high harm are placed on district 'most wanted' pages, and when additional resources are required to locate suspects, responsibility is allocated through the daily management meeting process. We found the daily management meetings to be robust, with a clear focus on risk and vulnerability. Each district has dedicated police officers each day who are given the job of locating outstanding suspects. These include catch and convict teams, 'be on the look-out for' (BOLO) cars, and neighbourhood impact teams. Patrol officers receive daily briefings on most wanted suspects, but they can also find out information using the CORVUS briefing system and the 'most wanted' app on their hand-held devices. Most people we spoke to demonstrated a good understanding of processes for wanted suspects.

### **The force is effective at managing the risk posed to the public by the most dangerous offenders**

The force uses nationally recognised risk assessment tools to risk-assess registered sex offenders (RSOs). These are the [active risk management system \(ARMS\)](#) and the [Risk Matrix 2000](#). Risk assessments are undertaken in line with the [College of Policing's Authorised Professional Practice \(APP\)](#). We note Risk Matrix 2000 was replaced on 1 March 2021 with OASys Sexual Reoffending Predictor (OSP). Following notification of the planned change in February 2021 the force was proactive in developing guidance which was subsequently used as the basis for national guidance. We found that staff assessing risk were properly trained in the use of the assessment tools. We also saw that decisions by supervisors were well recorded. The force has the highest completion rates nationally for ARMS risk assessments. This is positive as it means that risk assessments are timely, well understood and well managed.



We were encouraged to see that the force had operated a 'business as usual' approach to the management of RSOs during the COVID-19 pandemic. This meant that backlogs in risk assessments did not develop during this time. This is positive.

Management of offenders by West Yorkshire Police, including reactive management of offenders, is in line with the APP. We also found that [multi-agency public protection arrangements](#) were in line with national guidance.

We found that the force doesn't comply with the APP regarding double crewing of visits to RSOs. Instead it adopts a risk-based approach to double crewing. We were reassured that a clear policy and safeguards are in place for this and, importantly, we are satisfied that decisions to single crew were not a result of inadequate resourcing levels.

### **Offender managers aren't always following force policy when viewing mobile phones**

We found that offender managers sometimes viewed RSOs' mobile phone content even though there was not an order in place to allow them to do this. While this is appropriate if consent is given by the offender, there are strict parameters to follow. These are outlined in West Yorkshire Police's force policy, which requires that the consent of the RSO is recorded. We found that this was not always being done. The force should ensure that reviews of devices on a voluntary basis are completed with careful consideration. The offender must give informed consent and there should be an accurate record made of the content viewed, and the consent of the offender. This will make sure that the civil liberties of the offender and the people they are legitimately communicating with are protected. It will also mean that any future investigations will not be compromised.

### **The force routinely considers preventative or ancillary orders to protect the public from the most dangerous offenders; breaches are monitored, and action taken**

Effective governance is in place for the use of preventative and ancillary orders. The force routinely considers these. It has recruited caseworkers to support this work in applying for civil orders such as [sexual harm prevention orders](#). Compliance with orders is monitored through the force's district-based [public protection units](#). This is supported by digital tools such as eSafe.

The force uses creative tactics to monitor RSOs, such as implementing polygraph tests and the use of 'Digi Dog', a police dog that has been trained to search for electronic devices. Digi Dog has been used successfully to recover electronic devices from the homes of offenders. An example was provided where the dog recovered several devices hidden in an offender's home, resulting in them being charged with seven further offences. These ways of proactively monitoring RSOs are good practice, as the force is better able to manage the risk posed by such offenders and protect vulnerable people from harm.

## **Neighbourhood policing teams are aware of RSOs in their area**

When we spoke to [neighbourhood policing teams](#) they were aware of sex offenders living in their area. They had been briefed by the public protection unit.

Supervisors we spoke to were positive about the role neighbourhood policing teams can play in managing risk around sex offenders. They do not encourage visits unless they are specifically for crime investigation, but they actively encourage neighbourhood officers to be their 'eyes and ears'. An example was provided where four young girls had been assaulted by a sex offender in a play park. A neighbourhood officer had spoken to the girls and they were able to tell him the name of the offender's dog. This intelligence led to the offender being identified.

**The force has systems in place to proactively identify the sharing of indecent images of children from all sources. It understands the benefits of, and how best to use, specialist software to proactively identify people sharing indecent images of children. It takes appropriate action in a timely manner and based on an assessment of risk**

West Yorkshire Police uses the Child Protection System to proactively identify people who are sharing indecent images of children. The force has a centralised abusive images assessment hub, supported by district-based police online investigations teams (POLIT). Both units are well established and appear to be working effectively. The force abusive images hub uses the KIRAT risk assessment tool to understand the risk around an offender and then prepare enforcement packages that are allocated to POLIT teams. We were pleased to see that actions relating to indecent images of children offences are usually progressed in a timely manner.

**The force has an effective [integrated offender management \(IOM\)](#) programme; however, working practices are not always consistent**

West Yorkshire Police has a well-established IOM programme. Prolific offenders who commit high levels of serious acquisitive crime such as burglary can be referred to the programme. The force then works with other agencies to divert offenders away from committing crime by addressing the root causes of their offending.

The force recently reviewed its IOM work and found that the ways of working across its five districts have become inconsistent over time. Even though the programme had been shown to be successful, there was no clear performance management framework in place. The force has since begun phased implementation of a new model of operating. This will make sure that the work is more consistent, and that performance is monitored.

The force has recently introduced the intelligence-driven integrated offender management tool. This is a web-based offender tracking tool that is used to monitor re-offending rates and to assess the cost of offending by the people being managed via IOM arrangements. In Wakefield District, for example, over a 12-month period the crime 'cost' for its serious acquisitive crime cohort was almost £7m. Being able to calculate crime costs in this way is positive as it shows the impact that an effective IOM programme can have on reducing offending.

# Disrupting serious organised crime

## Outstanding

West Yorkshire Police is outstanding at managing serious and organised crime.

### Innovative practice

**West Yorkshire Police has a whole-systems approach to combating serious and organised crime (SOC) under its 'programme precision' brand**

Programme precision is West Yorkshire Police's platform for the implementation of SOC activity at each level of the organisation. The centrally based programme precision hub has strategic responsibility for working with the force's partner organisations to implement the prevent, protect and prepare strands of SOC activity. A strategic governance framework feeds into a programme precision executive steering group. The highest harm SOC threats are allocated to the centrally based protective services crime command for investigation. District-based precision teams are allocated the next tier of investigations. Neighbourhood teams are responsible for tackling lower harm SOC threats that have a community impact. This practice is innovative as it shows that the force is tackling SOC at every level of the organisation.

**West Yorkshire Police is innovative in its use of SOC local profiles**

SOC local profiles have been produced at district level. Local profiles identify the threat, vulnerability, and risk from SOC in a local area. The force uses a crime severity index to rank the highest-scoring wards in each district so that it can focus efforts to combat SOC in the areas of highest harm. The force revisits the crime severity index score every six months to review what impact its activity is having within the community. This is innovative practice.

### Main findings

In this section we set out our main findings that relate to how well the force manages serious and organised crime.

## **The force makes good use of a range of intelligence to identify, understand and prioritise SOC activity**

The force has successfully implemented SOC system tasking. This has included expanding its understanding of SOC threats beyond that of organised crime groups (OCGs) to include 'priority individual nominals', locations and other vulnerabilities. This is positive as it means that the force is using [management of risk in law enforcement \(MoRiLE\)](#) scoring to assess a broad range of SOC threats. We are encouraged to see that this has helped the force to prioritise threats that might otherwise not have been fully understood. For example, the force has identified encrypted communications platforms as being one of its threats.

In most areas, it was evident that neighbourhood policing teams were aware of their OCGs and that they had an understanding of SOC. Officers and staff have access to [4P](#) plans, and neighbourhood teams are responsible for carrying out activity to disrupt SOC through intelligence meetings and daily and weekly management meetings. Neighbourhood staff are also involved in disrupting OCGs and are often given the job of carrying out disruption activity. Lower tier OCGs are managed by inspectors and sergeants in neighbourhood teams, and we found that these were being managed effectively. Neighbourhood teams were also focused on identifying vulnerability and safeguarding issues when gathering SOC [intelligence](#).

The force uses community champions to contact hard-to-reach groups. They pass on messages about the risks of SOC, [county lines](#) and child criminal exploitation. The force recorded the champions providing important SOC messages in several languages, and these were distributed via social media.

## **The force works well in partnership with other organisations to tackle SOC**

We found numerous examples of the force working with other relevant organisations to address the SOC threat. In Bradford District, the force has been working with Bradford Youth Service and Safer Bradford on a project called 'Breaking the Cycle'. The project is funded through the [violence reduction unit](#) and was established to work with young people who are involved in SOC, [urban street gangs](#) and county lines. The team work alongside young people to protect, support and safeguard them. They also play an active role with partners in intelligence-gathering and disrupting perpetrators of exploitation. At the time of our inspection, more than 600 young people had been referred into the project. The project is good practice as intervening in this way to divert young people from SOC will improve their life chances.

## **The use of clear-hold-build methodology is good practice**

When we spoke to partners in other agencies, we found they were aware of and understood the impact of SOC and the need to work together to address it. The force's methodology for tackling SOC is based on a 'clear-hold-build' strategy, which takes its name from a strategy used in military operations. Most people we spoke to referred to this methodology and understood their joint role in the 'holding' phase of SOC activity. Clear-hold-build appeared to have become a common language between the force and the organisations it works with. The use of clear-hold-build is good practice and is likely to have long-term positive impacts within communities.

## **The introduction of the role of SOC co-ordinator is good practice**

The force is participating in a Home Office pilot to introduce the role of SOC co-ordinator to improve its 'prevent' response to SOC. This is good practice as it means that there is a single point of contact to co-ordinate SOC prevent activity and to make sure that other relevant agencies are contributing to tackling SOC. The pilot was initially focused in one district, but because of the funding coming to an end, the force has decided to retain the post and extend the remit of the role across the force. It is important that the force provides continued support to this role to make sure there is capacity and resilience to tackle SOC across the force. The force intends to have a dedicated resource in each district to support the SOC co-ordinator role. We would welcome this.

## **The force has the right systems, processes and people in place to tackle the SOC threat**

We found that specialist SOC operators are nationally accredited and well trained, for example in source handling and surveillance. The force anticipates that there will be future problems with some training due to the COVID-19 pandemic, such as surveillance and specialist driving qualifications. However, this issue is likely to be reflected nationally.

The force has nominated [lead responsible officers](#) (LROs) for each OCG, but we found that sometimes there was a lack of clarity about the purpose of the role and who should undertake it. We were pleased to see that the force is being proactive in working with the College of Policing to develop LRO guidance to ensure that there is greater clarity nationally about the role.

The force has effective links with other SOC system organisations and regularly holds a commissioning covert services meeting to make decisions about specialist capabilities within the force, as well as regionally and nationally. A covert strategy meeting oversees the use of [covert tactics](#) and makes sure that access and knowledge is limited only to those for which it is necessary.

To respond to requests for assistance by investigators targeting SOC, the force has adopted a 'triple A' (advise, assist, adopt) approach, in order to provide the most appropriate level of response and to make sure there is support and guidance for practitioners.

The 4P plans for each OCG are accessible on the force intelligence system. These are well designed to capture actions and end results, but they vary in quality, consistency and maintenance. We would encourage the force to make sure there is greater discipline and scrutiny around its 4P plans. This will mean that LROs are held more accountable and will assist in identifying good practice and learning.

### **The force has highly effective ways to prevent people being drawn into SOC, and it works with other relevant agencies to implement ‘prevent’ initiatives**

The force has well-established child vulnerable exploitation teams who provide support to children and young people at risk of child sexual exploitation and abuse. A daily risk management meeting reviews children who have been identified as being at risk of exploitation. Following a risk assessment, young people can be referred into the multi-agency child exploitation process for their risk to be managed and to make sure safeguarding measures are in place.

The force is proactive in diverting young people from SOC offending by working with schools and youth clubs and enlisting the support of organisations such as Leeds United and Huddersfield Town football clubs. Many of these programmes are well resourced and effectively managed. The force has worked with the [St Giles Trust](#) to provide awareness training to [senior investigating officers](#) about how young people can be offered pathways out of SOC, particularly county lines offending.

### **The force is highly effective at [lifetime offender management \(LOM\)](#)**

The force has a long-established LOM capability and is called on by other forces to provide guidance and share good practice. The LOM team works closely with the probation and prison service (HMPPS). They are experts on SOC offences and oversee the application and management of [Serious Crime Prevention Orders](#). The team is proactive in identifying opportunities to disrupt offenders in prison and the community. Most people we spoke to understood the role of the LOM team.

### **The force is effective at working in partnership to reduce risk and vulnerabilities in communities**

We found numerous examples of the force working with other relevant organisations as part of its clear-hold-build strategy to support and improve communities that have been affected by SOC. Examples include bringing in clean-up crews and removing overgrown shrubbery.

In Bradford District the force secured funding to reduce SOC through a ‘pathway out for children’ programme. Children and young people at risk of being drawn into SOC are allocated a peer mentor who works with the young person to help them develop the tools to say no to OCGs. The team also map their criminal activity over the course of their work with the young person to see what the impact has been.

The force has invested money it has recovered under the terms of the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 to develop workshops with third sector organisations to raise community awareness of the risks regarding SOC – in particular county lines, urban street gang activity, and child sexual abuse and exploitation. This is positive as it means that communities will be better able to spot the signs and symptoms of exploitation and intervene to prevent young people from being drawn into SOC.



# Meeting the strategic policing requirement

We don't grade forces on this question. In this section, we set out our main findings for how well West Yorkshire Police meets the [strategic policing requirement](#) (SPR).

## Main findings

### **The force understands its expected contribution to the SPR and plans accordingly**

The West Yorkshire Police [force management statement \(FMS\)](#) outlines the force's analysis and understanding of its position against the national threats specified in the SPR. Of the six national threats, three have been identified as strategic priorities for the force: terrorism; [serious and organised crime](#); and child sexual exploitation/abuse. Each threat is scored as part of the combined FMS and strategic threat assessment using the [MoRiLE](#) methodology. There are action plans in place to guide the work.

The force maintains a community resilience risk register which has been updated to reflect the risks associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. This shows the force's organisational capacity and capability to deal with a national emergency/strategic threat.

The force contributes to several regional forums including the Regional Business Continuity Working Group and the Counter Terrorism North East Group. It shares learning relating to its planning responses and good practice through its well-established relationships with business continuity and contingency partners in other regional police forces.

It works effectively through the West Yorkshire Resilience Forum to develop multi-agency emergency operational response plans.

### **The force routinely assesses its capacity and capability to address the SPR threats and adjusts accordingly**

The force has workforce plans in place to make sure it is building capacity to respond to the SPR threats. Examples include the force's safeguarding review and the increase in numbers of staff investigating non-recent child sexual exploitation and abuse.

## **The force works with other relevant organisations to plan its response to civil emergencies**

One of West Yorkshire Police's assistant chief constables jointly chairs the West Yorkshire Resilience Forum (WYRF) with the chief executive of Calderdale District Council and the assistant chief officer of West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service. We found that senior leaders attend the WYRF and interoperability meetings and contribute to discussions about threat and risk.

The WYRF works with neighbouring [local resilience forums](#) to carry out cross-border exercises and training. Numerous examples were provided, including the Standedge Tunnel cross-border training exercise, and 'Exercise Nix Tempatas', a cross-border severe weather exercise.

The WYRF has a policy framework to ensure readiness to respond to civil emergencies. The force can demonstrate a willingness to meet its obligations under the SPR, and it works effectively as part of the WYRF to develop multi-agency emergency operational response plans across many areas.

Through West Yorkshire Prepared, the force has well-established and mature relationships with other blue light services and organisations to respond effectively to civil emergencies. West Yorkshire Prepared is about emergency responders working together to develop consistent responses and recovery. It regularly tests its multi-agency response through 'table-top' and live exercises.

The force demonstrated an effective multi-agency response during the COVID-19 pandemic under Operation Jinmen. The WYRF met frequently under a 'gold, silver and bronze' command structure to develop the response to COVID-19. The force worked with other local resilience forum members to respond quickly and showed flexibility in being able to respond to dual risks that emerged alongside the pandemic. These included a major incident and severe weather.



# Protecting the public against armed threats

We don't grade forces on this question.

## Innovative practice

### **The force use of digital video recording in armed operations is innovative practice**

The force makes good use of digital video recording in its armed operations. Multiple camera positions are utilised, ensuring near 360-degree footage. This supports prosecutions and allows for organisational learning.

### **The force's approach to firearms training is innovative**

The force has split its firearms training into modules. The impact of this is that it is encouraging more officers into armed policing and reducing course wastage.

## Main findings

In this section we set out our other findings that relate to how well the force protects communities from armed threats.

### **The force has an important role in national armed policing**

West Yorkshire Police has a significant role in armed policing in the North East of England. As well as responding to threats in West Yorkshire, it hosts the regional hub of the national Counter Terrorist Specialist Firearms Officers (CTSFO) network.

### **The force has an understanding of the firearms threats of its communities but improvements need to be made**

The threats are set out in the force's [armed policing strategic threat and risk assessment \(APSTRA\)](#) which is published once a year. It is accompanied by a register of risks. The force has responded positively to our previous comments about the content of the APSTRA. For example, data for the response times to armed incidents is now routinely gathered. However, there is still work to do to ensure the APSTRA fully complies with the national guidance issued in 2019. This includes a four-year projection of demand.

## **The force is well prepared to respond to incidents requiring armed officers**

The force has defined the minimum number of [armed response vehicles \(ARVs\)](#) required to respond to APSTRA threats. Their deployment is carefully thought through and, in the areas of highest demand, ARVs are available to support unarmed officers within a specified number of minutes.

The force has enough well-trained [senior officers](#) to command armed operations in West Yorkshire and the North East of England. Enough chief inspectors, chief superintendents and assistant chief constables are available to take tactical and strategic command of armed operations. They take responsibility for local armed operations, and some specialist commanders lead counter-terrorism operations in the North East of England.

The chief officer with designated responsibility for armed policing takes personal responsibility for the training, accreditation and professional development of firearms commanders. Accreditation standards exceed national minimum requirements – for example, firearms commanders all have access to a mentor support programme.

## **The force complies with national approval procedures for acquiring weapons and specialist munitions**

The force has effective procedures in place if it needs to consider selecting new weapons or specialist munitions. Such decisions are authorised by the chief officer at the force's firearms steering group. We established that the force has replaced its carbines and armoured vehicles in strict compliance with the national approval process.

## **Effective procedures ensure that firearms commanders lead armed operations that are in line with their skills and experience**

Senior officers command firearms officers either on a full-time basis or as an additional requirement of their day-to-day responsibilities. In terms of capacity, this brings flexibility and means demand is well managed. Commanders who are designated as having an enhanced status or trained to a national specialist level take responsibility for higher threat armed operations.

We also noted that the training and development of firearms commanders includes familiarisation with new weapons, specialist munitions and other emerging technology. This means they are familiar with the risks and benefits of these devices and how they contribute to the successful conclusion of armed operations.

## **The force has plans in place to address foreseeable threats**

The force has detailed operational plans to protect vulnerable sites and respond to known threats. For example, it will work with other forces and airport authorities if an aircraft is forced to land because of a terrorist incident. The force co-ordinates a rolling programme of exercises to test its capabilities. A recent focus has been on marauding terrorist attacks. ARV officers work alongside CTSFOs, unarmed officers and [control room](#) staff to test the response to this kind of attack.

### **The force routinely debriefs after armed operations to identify areas for improvement**

West Yorkshire Police has introduced new systems to debrief after armed operations. This addresses a criticism we made in our last inspection. Armed operations are reviewed daily and learning points are addressed through better training and adjustments to operational procedures.

A good example involves vehicle stopping tactics. As a result of comments raised by ARV officers, the force now trains with scrap cars in vehicle stopping drills. This gives officers a more realistic appreciation of the tactics used to confront hostile subjects in vehicles.

### **The force has ambitions to develop better working with other forces in the region**

The force is keen to develop the CTSFO hub in conjunction with neighbouring South Yorkshire Police. This would alleviate recruitment problems as there is currently a shortfall in CTSFO numbers. Training is exacting, and recruitment is difficult; however, there are solid plans to boost recruitment. In the interim this shortfall is to the detriment of the national counter-terrorism network.

# Building, supporting and protecting the workforce

Good

West Yorkshire Police is good at building and developing its workforce.

## Area for improvement

**The force should ensure that the workforce understands the relevance of the internal ethics panel, and that its findings are better communicated**

During our last inspection, the force was issued with an area for improvement about its internal ethics panel. The force has since re-launched the panel with an independent chair, and it was able to show that the panel has considered a range of ethical dilemmas. An intranet page has been developed for the workforce to promote the work of the panel. However, the number of people accessing the page appears to be declining. Most people we spoke to were unaware of the ethics panel or of how to refer ethical dilemmas. The force still needs to raise awareness of the panel among the workforce and make sure its findings are better communicated. This remains an area for improvement.

## Main findings

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

### **The force has an ethical and inclusive culture at all levels**

Senior leaders in the force promote ethical behaviour. This is led by the chief officer team who communicate regularly with the workforce about conduct and behaviour. Standards of ethical behaviour form part of the annual performance development reviews for officers and staff.

The force's diversity, equality and inclusion strategy is its response to the National Police Chiefs Council's EDI (equality, diversity, and inclusion) strategy. The aim of the force's strategy is for "West Yorkshire Police to become an organisation where the workforce reflects its communities, and has a more inclusive culture that keeps West Yorkshire safe and feeling safe".

Most people we spoke to told us they feel included and valued and have a sense of belonging. The culture in the force was described as one of learning and not of blame, and leaders were described as positive and supportive. Most people we spoke to said they felt proud to work for West Yorkshire Police.

All force networks and associations are represented in the diversity, equality and inclusion board and also at gold and silver boards. Most people we spoke to felt that they had a voice in the forums and that they were listened to. This is positive as people felt their contributions had resulted in change.

### **The force understands the wellbeing of its workforce and uses this understanding to develop effective plans for improving workforce wellbeing**

The force has a comprehensive and achievable employee wellbeing strategy to improve the wellbeing of its workforce. This is underpinned by a framework and action plan that are aligned to the indicators in the College of Policing's [Blue Light Wellbeing Framework](#). When wellbeing issues are identified by the workforce, 'You said, we did' methodology is used to feed back to the workforce. The consultation methods that the force adopts are inclusive of volunteers. There are Citizens in Policing Liaison Officers in post who are responsible for communicating with members of the special constabulary on a range of issues including wellbeing, and the special constabulary have their own wellbeing leads.

The force recognises the wellbeing risk to officers and staff working within high-risk areas such as safeguarding and public protection. It has used the National Police Wellbeing Service ([Oscar Kilo](#)) to carry out a [peer review](#). There are a good range of preventative and supportive measures in place to improve wellbeing. Everybody we spoke to was aware of the wellbeing arrangements and how to access them. Examples provided were peer support, the employee assistance programme, [trauma risk management \(TRiM\)](#), wellbeing champions, the force's chaplaincy, and wellbeing rooms/suites. This is encouraging as it means that the wellbeing needs of the workforce are being met.

### **The force is supporting the workforce to become resilient**

The force has developed a 'resilience i-learn' training package. This is positive as it will support the workforce in developing ways to become more resilient. But we found that only 16 percent of the workforce had accessed the training. The force would benefit from encouraging more people to undertake the training. This would mean that the force was developing a workforce fit for the future.

### **The force understands its recruitment needs**

The force understands its recruitment needs and has an effective plan in place to meet them. There is a rolling three-year resourcing projection and the force uses a workforce analysis and resourcing forecast to help decide its resourcing plans.

## **The force is taking action so that its workforce better reflects its communities**

BAME people are underrepresented among the force's officers and staff at all levels. Even though West Yorkshire is an area with many diverse communities, 93.8 percent of the workforce has a self-defined ethnicity of white.

Currently 11.9 percent of people applying to join West Yorkshire Police are BAME. This is above the national average, but the force recognises that there is still work to do to reach a point where its joiners reflect the communities of West Yorkshire. The force is developing this work through its positive action programme team, and it has developed a positive action communications plan. If the force receives an expression of interest from a BAME applicant, the positive action team track their progress through the process. They run welcome seminars for candidates on myth-busting, the role of the officer, and completing application forms. Follow-up sessions are provided alongside support with the police assessment centre and the final interview. The force also carries out targeted advertising as part of its positive action campaign.

This is encouraging as the force has recently experienced an increase in the percentages of BAME candidates who were successful in their application to join the force. This means that the force is making positive progress in its efforts to make sure that the workforce is reflective of its communities.

## **The force is making good progress against the [Policing Education Qualifications Framework \(PEQF\)](#)**

West Yorkshire Police's allocation from the Government's police uplift programme is 835 officers, and it is on track to meet this target because of its longstanding association with Leeds Trinity University.

The assessment of PEQF Student Officers is supported by a dedicated central assessment unit throughout the duration of the respective educational programme in relation to performance and competency. This is good practice as it will make sure there is more consistency of assessment, as well as economies of scale.

## **The force is good at managing the vetting of its workforce**

We are confident that the overwhelming majority of the workforce have the correct level of vetting for the role they occupy. Vetting processes are well managed. But when we tested activities against the [Authorised Professional Practice \(APP\)](#) relating to vetting, we found there is more work for the force to do before we can say it is fully compliant. The force tries to identify whether there is any disproportionality in decision-making about vetting and the reasons for it. But the current approach does not extend to understanding all [protected characteristics](#). The force would benefit from finding ways to fully understand disproportionality in all of its decision-making about vetting.

The vetting unit currently use an in-house system to manage vetting, called VMS. While the system is used well, it is not fit for purpose as it has limited functionality. This means that the force must carry out manual activity to manage the vetting workload. The force has an achievable plan to address this and is implementing a

system called Corevet. We are satisfied that once implemented this will help address some of the current inefficiencies.

### **The force has the capability to monitor most of its IT systems**

During our review of intelligence about potential corruption, we found extensive use of IT monitoring software. But we identified a gap in auditing capability that hampers the force's ability to audit all of its IT systems. This is likely to be a software problem for all forces. We are encouraged that the force is working with suppliers to ensure that all new devices adopted by the force can be audited.

The force has improved communication between the [anti-corruption unit](#) and the ICT department, increasing awareness of the need for auditing/monitoring capability when considering IT procurement and software upgrades. This communication should be maintained.

### **The force is good at developing and investigating potential counter-corruption intelligence**

We reviewed 60 pieces of potential counter-corruption intelligence and found that all but 2 of them had been categorised in line with the national corruption categories. This is essential as the data is used to produce the national threat assessment. The force currently has sufficient resources to meet demand in its anti-corruption unit, although we would encourage the force to monitor this as it may need to be reviewed should the proactive use of the IT monitoring lead to an as-yet unidentified increase in demand.

# Strategic planning, organisational management and value for money

## Outstanding

West Yorkshire Police is outstanding at operating efficiently.

### Innovative practice

#### West Yorkshire Police has innovative business planning processes

The force has combined the development of its annual [force management statement \(FMS\)](#) with its strategic assessment. All areas have been scored using [MoRiLE](#). This means that the force's assessment of current and future demand is understood alongside its strategic threat, harm, and risk assessment. The FMS is the foundation of all strategic and business planning. This includes financial planning, change and demand reduction programmes, workforce planning, and mayoral planning. Demand prediction charts are essential to the force's understanding in this area, and it uses a comprehensive range of data for demand analysis. This includes empirical data and 'horizon scanning' exercises from local councils and the Fire and Rescue Service. Of note is that it also includes data from the Institute of Fiscal Studies about the impact of financial constraints on public services after the COVID-19 pandemic. This includes what that will mean for the local authorities of West Yorkshire, and the consequences for policing.

### 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 management framework, making sure that it tackles what is important both locally and nationally**

West Yorkshire Police's 'plan on a page' sets out the force's objectives clearly. Most people we spoke to were familiar with its content. Force objectives are prominent in the force's performance management programme, and governance arrangements are robust at every level of the organisation. Accountability meetings focus on a performance scorecard that includes budgets, crime levels, outcome rates, and people. We found the performance regime to be supportive.

The force has a wide range of engagement methods in place. At the time of our inspection, the new mayoral arrangements had not been established, and the [police and crime commissioner](#) was still in place. The needs assessment adopted by the office of the police and crime commissioner was therefore used to inform the development of the FMS. This assessment includes the views of local communities and is supported by satisfaction data collated by the force. The force also uses the [Crime Survey for England and Wales](#) public confidence data 'Your Views' to inform force planning.

## **The force's analysis of information and data helps it to make sure it can operate effectively and efficiently**

The force has carried out a pilot with the Home Office to examine the unit cost of policing. This is a sophisticated cost-benefit analysis of a range of policing activities. This is good practice as early involvement in national projects places the force at the forefront in terms of understanding its demand and the costs associated with it. It is evident that this activity is providing a valuable insight into how the force can streamline areas of work to improve efficiency and effectiveness.

## **The force has a comprehensive understanding of all areas of demand**

The force has sophisticated systems to manage current demand, and there are performance researchers in each district. This provides fresh performance data to the district commanders each day. This investment means that demand pressures can be identified early on, which allows the force to plan for performance management and monitoring.

The understanding of demand in West Yorkshire Police is comprehensive, which allows it to make sure it is allocating resources to current and emerging needs.

## **The force makes sure it has the capacity and capability to meet current demands**

We were encouraged to see that where there are operational pressures, the force is taking prompt action to address them. For example, the FMS forecasts a rise in online offending. As a result, prompt action has been taken by the force in developing a new digital forensic unit.

The force has demonstrated a drive to improve. It responded positively to our previous finding that it didn't have enough capacity and capability to complete vulnerability investigations effectively. A safeguarding review was implemented, and this is being used to improve performance. The work identified the need for additional resources, and the force has taken immediate steps by reallocating officers and staff to boost safeguarding units and to improve its response to investigating complex, non-recent child sexual exploitation and abuse investigations.

### **The force understands its future demand and has plans in place to address it**

West Yorkshire Police has a £4.3m grant to recruit more officers, and of the 20,000 extra officers pledged by the Government, West Yorkshire Police's officer numbers will increase by 835. This uplift is staged over four years. To manage this demand, the force is providing 30 percent of student training online, and all new officers are provided with a laptop when joining. This is good practice as it has helped the force to operate as usual for student officers during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Development plans are in place to make sure there is the right mix of skills and experience in the workforce. Like many forces, in West Yorkshire there are not enough investigators in post. A training and accreditation programme has been developed, and by November 2021 the force will have trained an additional 160 trainee investigators, with the remaining 'investigator gap' likely to be closed by 2022.

### **The force is making the best use of the finance it has available, and its plans are ambitious and sustainable, but it is facing financial challenges**

The force's financial plans are ambitious and strike a good balance between investment in priority areas and making savings. Over the lifespan of the mid-term financial plan, the revenue budget will increase by 8 percent (from £512m to £556m). There are several reasons why financial pressures will continue despite this increase. These pressures, if not addressed, are expected to leave a shortfall of £24m at the end of 2024/25. While this is not insignificant, West Yorkshire Police has already removed £140m from its budget since 2010 – more than 20 percent.

As part of identifying savings in response to its anticipated budget shortfall, the force has introduced a vacancy control panel to assess and manage its vacancies. The panel assesses any vacancy before it is advertised and explores the possibility of deploying a uniformed officer to fill the gap. This means that the force can realise savings by using existing uniformed officers to back-fill office functions rather than hiring new employees.

## **The learning and development of the workforce is a priority for West Yorkshire Police**

The force is committed to the learning and development of its workforce. It understands the workforce's learning and development needs. It has carried out a comprehensive analysis of its training needs, and has a detailed, costed training plan in place. At the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, the force continued to provide essential statutory training and paused all other training due to social distancing restrictions. Where possible, non-essential training was moved to online platforms such as Skype and Microsoft Teams. Training provision re-commenced at the end of the first lockdown within a shortened timeframe of nine months. The force has since provided more than 4,000 courses through a mixture of physical and virtual learning methods to over 35,000 students. This is encouraging as it will make sure that the skills of the workforce remain current.

## **The force actively seeks opportunities to improve services through collaboration**

West Yorkshire Police has an excellent track record of collaboration and it contributes at various levels including locally, regionally and nationally. Examples of its collaborations include those with the National Police Air Service, with the North East Counter Terrorism Unit, and on the video identification software [VIPER](#).

There is strong evidence that the force has assumed 'lead force' responsibility when other forces have declined to collaborate. Examples include the staffing of the North East Counter Terrorism Unit hub, maintaining staffing levels in the [regional organised crime unit](#), and the command of counter-terrorist operations in the North East of England.

Through an effective collaboration between West Yorkshire Police, the Fire and Rescue Service and the Ambulance Service, the force has reduced the amount of time officers and staff need to wait for ambulances at incidents by more than 70 percent. This is positive as it shows that by diverting demand to a more appropriate service, demand on West Yorkshire Police is reduced, and workforce time is freed up to deal with other incidents that require a policing response.

## **The force can demonstrate it is continuing to achieve efficiency savings**

The force has a good track record of meeting its financial commitments. Since 2010, the force has balanced its budgets each year despite a £140m reduction in gross revenue expenditure.

In planning for the £24m savings it will need to find by 2024/25, the force has developed business cases that will allow it to make the savings it needs. This is encouraging as it means that the force is being run efficiently for the benefit of communities in West Yorkshire.

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