Introduction

As part of our annual inspections of police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy (PEEL), Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) assesses the effectiveness of police forces across England and Wales.

What is police effectiveness and why is it important?

An effective police force is one which keeps people safe and reduces crime. These are the most important responsibilities for a police force, and the principal measures by which the public judge the performance of their force and policing as a whole.

To reach a judgment on the extent of each force’s effectiveness, our inspection answered the following overall question:

• How effective is the force at keeping people safe and reducing crime?

To answer this question HMIC explores five ‘core’ questions, which reflect those areas of policing that we consider to be of particular interest and concern to the public:¹

1. How effective is the force at preventing crime, tackling anti-social behaviour and keeping people safe?

2. How effective is the force at investigating crime and reducing re-offending?

3. How effective is the force at protecting those who are vulnerable from harm, and supporting victims?

4. How effective is the force at tackling serious and organised crime?

5. How effective are the force’s specialist capabilities?

HMIC’s effectiveness inspection assessed all of these areas during 2016. More information on how we inspect and grade forces as part of this wide-ranging inspection is available on the HMIC website (www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/peel-assessments/how-we-inspect/). This report sets out our findings for Bedfordshire Police.

Reports on the force’s efficiency, legitimacy and leadership inspections are available on the HMIC website (www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/peel-assessments/peel-2016/bedfordshire/).

¹ HMIC assessed forces against these questions between September and December 2016, except for Kent Police – our pilot force – which we inspected in June 2016.
Force in numbers

Calls for assistance

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bedfordshire Police</th>
<th>England and Wales</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>197</td>
<td>240</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Crime (excluding fraud)

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bedfordshire Police</th>
<th>England and Wales</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>62</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bedfordshire Police</th>
<th>England and Wales</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>+3.0%</td>
<td>+7.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bedfordshire Police</th>
<th>England and Wales</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-6.3%</td>
<td>-3.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Crime outcomes*

Charged/summonsed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bedfordshire Police</th>
<th>England and Wales</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11.0%</td>
<td>12.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Evidential difficulties: suspect identified but victim does not support action

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bedfordshire Police</th>
<th>England and Wales</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10.7%</td>
<td>10.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Investigation completed but no suspect identified

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bedfordshire Police</th>
<th>England and Wales</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>48.1%</td>
<td>47.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figures are shown as proportions of outcomes assigned to offences recorded in the 12 months to 30 June 2016.
### Anti-social behaviour

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Bedfordshire Police</th>
<th>England and Wales</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anti-social behaviour</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>incidents per 1,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>population 12 months</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to 31 March 2016</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anti-social behaviour</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>incidents per 1,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>population 12 months</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to 31 March 2015</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Domestic abuse

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Bedfordshire Police</th>
<th>England and Wales</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Domestic abuse calls</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>for assistance per 1,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>population 12 months</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to 30 June 2016</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic abuse as a</td>
<td>11.2%</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>percentage of all</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>recorded crime (excluding fraud) 12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>months to 30 June 2016</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic abuse as a</td>
<td>10.9%</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>percentage of all</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>recorded crime (excluding fraud) 12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>months to 31 March 2015</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Organised crime groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Bedfordshire Police</th>
<th>England and Wales</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organised crime groups</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>per million population</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>as at 1 July 2016</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Victim satisfaction rate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Bedfordshire Police</th>
<th>England and Wales</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Victim satisfaction</td>
<td>83.2%</td>
<td>83.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>with the overall service</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>provided by the police</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 months to 30 June</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For further information about the data in this graphic please see annex A
Overview – How effective is the force at keeping people safe and reducing crime?

Overall judgment²

Bedfordshire Police is inadequate in respect of its effectiveness at keeping people safe and reducing crime. The way the force prevents crime, tackles anti-social behaviour, keeps people safe and protects vulnerable people,³ is inadequate. The force’s initial investigation of crime and how it tackles serious and organised crime need to improve. Our overall judgment is a deterioration on last year, when we judged the force to require improvement.

Overall summary

How effective is the force at preventing crime, tackling anti-social behaviour and keeping people safe?  
Inadequate

How effective is the force at investigating crime and reducing re-offending?  
Requires improvement

How effective is the force at protecting those who are vulnerable from harm, and supporting victims?  
Inadequate

How effective is the force at tackling serious and organised crime?  
Requires improvement

How effective are the force’s specialist capabilities?  
Ungraded

Overall, Bedfordshire Police’s effectiveness at keeping people safe and reducing crime is inadequate.

² HMIC judgments are outstanding, good, requires improvement and inadequate.

³ A vulnerable person is someone who needs special care, support or protection because of age, disability, or risk of abuse or neglect.
Bedfordshire Police’s effectiveness at preventing crime, tackling anti-social behaviour and keeping people safe is inadequate. The force introduced a new policing model in 2015, which aimed to improve crime prevention and problem-solving activities through new community teams. However, HMIC found that, beyond isolated pockets of good practice, such as the established community cohesion team, the force still does not have enough police officers and police community support officers (PCSOs) to provide effective community engagement and visible targeted foot patrols across the county, or to work consistently with partner organisations (such as local authorities, or health and education services). As a result, the force cannot take the early intervention activity necessary to help prevent crime and anti-social behaviour happening in the first place.

The context within which the force operates is particularly difficult. Bedfordshire Police faces a more acute financial challenge than most other forces and in Luton the complexity and high volume of crime represent a significant operational challenge for a small force with very stretched resources. The overall inadequate grading should not be seen as a reflection on the commitment and hard work of the police officers and staff in Bedfordshire Police who, day to day, are doing their best, with very limited resources, and often under extreme pressure, to keep the public safe. However, once again HMIC has found that in rightly focusing resources to protect its most vulnerable members of the community, the force has exposed its inability to maintain a preventative policing presence across Bedfordshire. However understandable the reasons for this might be, the consequence is that the people of Bedfordshire are not being well served by their police force. The force does not plan to resource its community teams fully until August 2018, three years after they were initially planned. This is unacceptable.

The force has centralised its intelligence teams to provide more focus on vulnerable people, guns and gangs, serious acquisitive crime, and communities, and has devised a plan to address intelligence gaps, but it is too soon to judge the effectiveness of this work. The force needs to review how it records anti-social behaviour so that it has accurate information on which to base a problem-solving approach. Although the force has improved the way it shares knowledge of ‘what works’ among its workforce, it does not yet routinely record and assess local initiatives and needs to do more to evaluate tactics and share effective practice.

The force lacks a full understanding of the communities it serves, although it is now recruiting more officers to increase engagement with local people. The force is involved in some good work with partner organisations to protect communities, but this needs to be consistent across the force area.

Bedfordshire Police’s effectiveness at investigating crime and reducing re-offending requires improvement. The quality of initial investigations needs to improve, as well as of subsequent investigations in cases of stalking and harassment. This is partly
due to the high proportion of new recruits in the force and the lack of sufficient supervisors to provide the support they need.

A significant backlog remains in the forensic examination of digital devices, which means there are unacceptable delays in investigating crime and supporting victims. This was due in part because a number of staff were needed to support a national project. However, the force does ensure that high-risk cases, such as those involving vulnerable children and adults, are prioritised.

The force is good at protecting the public from the most prolific, serious and dangerous offenders. It has a robust and effective system for actively managing and reviewing outstanding suspects, those not yet apprehended, prioritising those who pose the greatest risk. A well-managed integrated offender management scheme now includes a focus on offenders who cause the most harm. We found good work in place to tackle serious youth violence, to reduce re-offending and to divert young people from first-time offending.

Bedfordshire Police’s effectiveness at protecting those who are vulnerable from harm and supporting victims is also inadequate. In particular, HMIC continues to have serious concerns about the force’s overall response to missing children and young people, not just the force control room response. The process of assessing calls about missing children is poor, and the review of the initial risk assessment determining whether the case requires a ‘missing’ or ‘absent’ police response is inconsistent. In addition the force has poor intelligence on those children who repeatedly go missing from care homes, which makes the difficulties in locating them when they go missing, and the time spent doing so, even worse. Some of the most vulnerable children and young people are being left at risk of severe harm as a result of systemic failings in this important area of policing.

The force has made progress in its understanding of vulnerability in its local areas, but gaps remain. It is improving its ability to identify vulnerable people at the first point of contact, people who are vulnerable through their age, disability, or because they have been subjected to repeated offences, or are at high risk of abuse, for example.

On a much more positive note, the force recognises that it is important to respond quickly to victims of domestic abuse and it has a mandatory attendance policy. This means that all domestic abuse incidents will receive an immediate attendance from an officer. The force has worked very hard to improve services and support for victims of domestic abuse and there are some important structural changes that have been put in place over the last year that HMIC would expect, over time, to lead to tangible improvements in the service the force provides to victims of domestic abuse. However, the arrest rate at domestic abuse incidents has fallen by 13 percent, despite an increase in cases identified as domestic abuse. The force also
needs to understand why fewer victims support police action than in many other force areas.

Bedfordshire Police requires improvement in its effectiveness at identifying and tackling serious and organised crime. The force does not yet have a clear understanding of the threat and risk across Bedfordshire and it is therefore poorly placed to tackle it effectively. It has identified a very low number of organised crime groups, and HMIC is concerned that it is not identifying and mapping all groups that are active in the force area. With insufficient resources in community policing, early identification of organised crime groups is less likely.

We found examples of the force working effectively with partner organisations to disrupt organised crime groups. The force is doing good work with schools, communities and families to prevent young people from being drawn into organised crime. However, its approach to managing serious and organised criminals is limited; it does not currently have a clearly defined approach to managing offenders to minimise the risk they pose to local communities.

Bedfordshire Police has the necessary arrangements to ensure that it can fulfil its national policing responsibilities. The force is well prepared to respond to an attack requiring an armed response and is part of a strategic alliance with other forces, which regularly conducts terrorist firearms exercises.

In summary, Bedfordshire Police faces significant challenges because it has low levels of funding compared with other forces, but unusually high levels of serious threats and criminality that are not normally dealt with by a force of its size. The force has had to change its plans over the last year to address risk in the area of vulnerability and has therefore lost its promised focus on crime prevention. However, the force acknowledges the problems that exist and is determined to improve. HMIC is hopeful that the commitment of the new police and crime commissioner to a focus on community policing and crime prevention, and the determination of chief officers and the continued hard work of frontline officers and staff to make improvements, will lead to the changes needed.
How effective is the force at preventing crime, tackling anti-social behaviour and keeping people safe?

The police’s ability to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour and to keep people safe is a principal measure of its effectiveness. Crime prevention is more effective than investigating crime, stops people being victims in the first place and makes society a safer place. The police cannot prevent crime on their own; other policing organisations and organisations such as health, housing and children’s services have a vital role to play. Police effectiveness in this matter therefore depends on their ability to work closely with other policing organisations and other interested parties to understand local problems and to use a wide range of evidence-based interventions to resolve them.

How much crime and anti-social behaviour is there in Bedfordshire?

Although police-recorded crime is by no means a complete measure of the totality of demand for calls on its service that a force faces, it does provide a partial indication of performance across all forces. Crime rates are reported as the number of crimes per 1,000 population in each force area to enable comparison between areas. Total recorded crime is made up of victim-based crime (crimes involving a direct victim such as an individual, a group, or an organisation) and other crimes against society (e.g. possession of drugs). In the 12 months to 30 June 2016, the majority of forces (39 out of 43 forces) showed an annual increase in total police-recorded crime (excluding fraud). This increase in police-recorded crime may have been affected by the renewed focus on the quality and compliance of crime recording since HMIC’s 2014 inspection of crime data in all forces across England and Wales.

In 2010 the Home Secretary set a clear priority for the police service to cut crime. Figure 1 shows how police-recorded crime has fluctuated over the longer term. When compared with the 12 months to 30 June 2011, police-recorded crime (excluding fraud) for the 12 months to 30 June 2016 has decreased by 6.3 percent in Bedfordshire compared with a decrease of 3.4 percent across all forces in England and Wales.

Over this same period, victim-based crime decreased by 5.4 percent in Bedfordshire, compared with a decrease of 0.5 percent for England and Wales as a whole.
Figure 1: Police-recorded crime rates (per 1,000 population) in Bedfordshire, for the five year period to 30 June 2016

Source: Home Office data
For further information about these data, please see annex A

More recently, when compared with the previous 12 month period, police-recorded crime (excluding fraud) in Bedfordshire increased by 3.0 percent for the year ending 30 June 2016. This is compared with an increase of 7.8 percent across all forces in England and Wales over the same period.

The rate of police-recorded crimes and incidents of anti-social behaviour per head of population indicates how safe it is for the public in that police area. Figures 2 and 3 show crime rates (per 1,000 population) and the change in the rate (per 1,000 population) of anti-social behaviour in Bedfordshire compared with England and Wales.

HMIC used a broad selection of crime types to indicate crime levels in the police force area during the inspection. We are not judging the effectiveness of the force on police-recorded crime rates only. The figure below shows police-recorded crime rates in the force area for a small selection of crime types.
Figure 2: Police-recorded crime rates (per 1,000 population) in Bedfordshire, for the 12 months to 30 June 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rates per 1,000 population</th>
<th>Bedfordshire Police</th>
<th>England and Wales</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recorded crime (excluding fraud)</td>
<td>62.0</td>
<td>68.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victim-based crime</td>
<td>56.1</td>
<td>60.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual offences</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assault with injury</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burglary in a dwelling*</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>8.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The rate of burglary in a dwelling is the rate for 1,000 households, rather than population
Source: Home Office data
For further information about these data, please see annex A

Figure 3: Percentage change in the rate of anti-social behaviour incidents (per 1,000 population), by force, comparing the 12 months to 31 March 2016 with the 12 months to 31 March 2015

Source: Home Office data
For further information about these data, please see annex A

In the 12 months to 31 March 2016, Bedfordshire Police recorded 34 incidents of anti-social behaviour per 1,000 population. This is 8 percent more incidents per 1,000 population than the force recorded during the previous 12 months. In England and Wales as a whole, there were 8 percent fewer incidents per 1,000 population in the 12 months to 31 March 2016, than were recorded during the previous 12 months.
How effectively does the force understand the threat or risk of harm within the communities it serves?

It is vital that forces have a detailed understanding of the communities they serve in order to protect them from harm. This understanding should include those communities which may – for a variety of reasons – need the police to work differently to understand their requirements, for example migrant communities, elderly people or groups which might be mistrustful towards the police. A good understanding of what matters to these communities helps the police to gain their confidence and create safer neighbourhoods for citizens.

In order to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour, police forces need to understand the threat and risk faced by communities. Forces must also operate a model of local policing in which police officers and police community support officers (PCSOs) have sufficient time for community engagement, visible targeted foot patrols and working with other policing organisations and other interested parties to promote resolutions that protect communities and prevent crime. Successfully undertaking these three activities leads to crime reduction and increased public confidence.

Does Bedfordshire Police understand the risk posed to its communities?

Bedfordshire Police demonstrates little understanding of the communities it serves. It does not have a model of policing that allows it to understand the threat and risk faced by communities across the force area, although there are some areas of good practice in Luton. While it does conduct some limited activity to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour, it does not have sufficient resources invested in communities to provide effective community engagement, visible targeted foot patrols, or work with partner organisations. HMIC surveyed a small number of officers and police community support officers (PCSOs) in Bedfordshire, visited community teams, and talked to and observed officers who confirmed that this was the case.

HMIC has been expressing its concern since 2014 about the lack of an effective preventative approach to neighbourhood policing across Bedfordshire. The force has committed itself to improve its approach, but each time we have returned we have been disappointed to find that little or no progress has been made. In HMIC’s 2015 effectiveness report, we recognised that the force was implementing a new model designed to provide greater opportunities for better crime prevention and problem-solving activities through new community teams that the force told us would be fully staffed by March 2016. HMIC recommended that the force should ensure that its community teams were adequately resourced and skilled, to provide an effective policing service to its communities. This year, HMIC is again disappointed to find that community teams are still not adequately resourced and skilled, and that despite some problem-solving training the force still does not have enough police officers and PCSOs able to provide an effective service to communities across Bedfordshire. The force spends only £7 per head of population on neighbourhood policing.
compared to an average of £25 per head for other forces in England and Wales. This is one of the lowest spends as a proportion of total budget when compared to other forces. Also, Bedfordshire has only 2 percent of its police officers in local policing, compared with the England and Wales average of 18 percent.

The force follows guidance to ensure that it deploys PCSOs appropriately. We found no evidence of PCSOs being inappropriately taken away from their work in communities to conduct other activities, such as investigations.

The force’s understanding of the threats facing the communities it serves is poor. It has worked with partner organisations to develop a sexual exploitation profile for Bedfordshire to gain a better understanding of so-called emerging threats such as child sexual exploitation. The current strategic assessment of threat to communities in Bedfordshire is based on police information and contains limited data from partner organisations. While the force has consulted partner organisations to identify what types of crime pose the greatest threats to communities, it should be doing much more at the beginning of drawing up the strategic assessment to consult partner organisations, and to collect and analyse their data to identify risk and threat to communities effectively. The force and partner organisations have given some consideration to making opportunities for analysts from community safety teams and local authorities to work more closely to improve their joint capability and capacity to identify threat and risk. However, this has not yet been achieved.

Since HMIC’s 2015 effectiveness report, Bedfordshire Police has introduced a new approach to gathering intelligence and improving its identification and assessment of risks to communities. In October 2016 it brought its intelligence teams together in one location to provide more focus on vulnerability, guns and gangs, serious acquisitive crime, and communities. The force has completed work to identify the intelligence gaps and devised a plan to focus the intelligence team on closing these gaps. There are early indications that this structure will improve the force’s community policing capability, though it is too early to judge the full effectiveness of this approach.

HMIC commissioned Ipsos MORI to conduct a survey of attitudes towards policing between July and August 2016. The survey indicated that there has been an increase in public satisfaction with Bedfordshire Police. Some 400 people were interviewed and 41 percent were very or fairly satisfied with local policing in their area. This is a 10 percent increase on 2015.

Despite the fact that there has been a small increase in public satisfaction in local policing, the public report seeing both foot and vehicle patrols in their communities

---

4 Serious acquisitive crime is defined as domestic burglary, car crime (theft of or from a vehicle) and robbery.

5 For further details, see annex A
less often than they did last year. This is of concern, as it may reflect a lack of public confidence in policing in those areas of the force where there is little or no visible uniformed presence.

**How does Bedfordshire Police engage with the public?**

HMIC is concerned that the force does not engage with local people effectively across all communities. The force recognises that, as a result of its previous withdrawal of police officers and reduction in PCSOs in neighbourhoods to meet financial challenges, it is having to work hard to recruit more officers to re-engage with local people, and build trust and confidence. It plans to resource the community element of the new policing model (introduced in June 2015) fully by December 2018. The force understands the importance of involving the public and it is increasing the range of ways it does this. Members of the chief officer team, supported by the police and crime commissioner, have recently addressed local communities to identify the top three public priorities. However, at the time of the inspection, action to address community concerns was mainly at the planning stage, and any implementation only at a very early stage. The force website provides only limited information to the public and needs to be improved. The force uses social media as well as some traditional face-to-face meetings, and deploys a mobile police station to encourage local people in rural locations to engage with the police. A small community safety team with limited capacity provides crime prevention across the force area.

The force makes good use of its special constabulary, volunteers and watch schemes. However, the visibility of community policing in rural areas across Bedfordshire is poor, and the force recognises that it needs to do much more to reconnect with communities. This is also a priority for the new police and crime commissioner.

The force’s community cohesion team based in Luton is small, and well established with strong links to most local groups. We found effective engagement following critical incidents, when the independent advisory group (IAG), community representatives and the police ensure two-way communication to identify concerns that can be addressed at a local level. The IAG is also consulted regularly on issues such as stop search, use of Taser, minority ethnic recruitment and for advice on equality impact assessments. The force recognises that this level of community engagement is not replicated consistently across the whole of its area. It plans to address this through its new engagement plan and by fully resourcing the community teams, but this is some way off being implemented.

Since HMIC’s 2015 effectiveness report, the force has invested in a small number of dedicated police officers to work closely with communities to understand the concerns of specific groups such as Travellers, university students, and the lesbian and gay community. It has introduced a small team of police officers in Leighton Buzzard to address the concerns of the rural community. It has also identified seven
community hub locations across Bedfordshire which could provide increased visibility in towns and villages where there is currently no dedicated community police officer resource. While this is positive, it is not yet clear how or when these hubs will be fully resourced, or how effective they will be.

A team of 25 officers known as ‘Operation Sentinel’ provides a response to community problems across Luton and Leighton Buzzard policing hubs. This is an encouraging development and should help to increase police visibility in those areas. The force is planning to increase the size of this team following the imminent arrival of new police officer recruits. HMIC is concerned that this will support the force’s reactive approach rather than develop the capability to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour. The force should consider how it will resource the community teams to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour and keep people safe.

How effectively do force actions and activities prevent crime and anti-social behaviour?

Effective forces use a range of options to prevent crime, tackle anti-social behaviour and keep people safe. They use structured approaches to solving local problems which aim to rid communities of criminal and anti-social behaviour. They also use a range of legal powers and specific tactics which vary depending on the situation. HMIC expects forces to review their activity as well as other sources of evidence in order to improve their ability to protect people over the long term.

Does the force have a problem-solving approach?

Bedfordshire Police is not providing effective problem solving across the force area. It does not have sufficient resources in local communities to implement this approach effectively. It is in the process of providing its current community team with training to improve its skills in problem solving and crime prevention.

Since HMIC’s 2015 effectiveness report, the force has introduced a dedicated intranet site to provide its community teams with effective practice for tackling anti-social behaviour and for problem solving. The force provides regular problem-solving training, and in September 2016 community policing sergeants and watch scheme volunteers received refresher training in problem solving and how to engage effectively with schools, community watch schemes and local councils.

The force has a structured approach to problem solving and uses nationally recognised models. Its principal method of problem solving is the SARA model, although officers and staff also spoke of using the PIERS model and the national

---

6 SARA is an acronym for scanning, analysis, response, and assess. The process is aimed at identifying legal and ethical solutions to policing problems such as anti-social behaviour.

7 The PIERS model (prevent, intelligence, enforcement, reassurance and support) is a way to bring a comprehensive police response to a problem that has been identified.
decision model (NDM).\(^8\) Multi-agency high-risk anti-social behaviour teams systematically share information about high risk anti-social behaviour cases to conduct multi-agency problem solving, using a shared partner database, improving the outcome for people and communities.

**Does the force use effective approaches and tactics to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour?**

Bedfordshire Police has a limited approach to tackling crime and anti-social behaviour. It needs to do more to develop its understanding and use of the predictive patrol policing model to reduce crime and disorder successfully, identifying locations where crimes are likely to occur and then to deploy officers to them. The force is training officers and staff in evidenced-based policing, but the learning from this approach is not yet being used effectively to influence how the force uses tactics and interventions to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour. The force conducted a predictive policing pilot in 2016 with inconclusive results as it was unable to implement a full model due to other priorities in the collaborated ICT department.\(^9\) The force needs to do more to develop its understanding and use of the predictive patrol policing model to reduce crime and disorder successfully, identifying locations where crimes are likely to occur to which it can deploy officers.

When comparing the 12 months to March 2015 with the 12 months to March 2016, the rate of anti-social behaviour incidents per 1,000 population in Bedfordshire has increased by 8 percent. This is one of the highest increase in England and Wales, where there has been a reduction of 8 percent in the rate of anti-social behaviour. The force does not fully understand the reasons behind the increase, and if it is a result of the force failing to take adequate steps to prevent anti-social behaviour from increasing and getting worse, or to deal with repeat incidents of anti-social behaviour, then this is of particular concern. Of further concern, HMIC found that the force is not identifying and recording anti-social behaviour correctly. We found examples of incidents that are not anti-social behaviour, such as a road traffic collision, being classified as anti-social behaviour, and incidents identified as ‘rowdy nuisance’ that had an anti-social behaviour marker removed after an officer had attended the incident. This means that the information recorded on the police systems is unreliable and does not accurately reflect anti-social behaviour in Bedfordshire, as any management information or analysis is flawed. HMIC is also concerned that without accurate recording the force may be missing patterns of worsening behaviour against vulnerable victims. The force needs to review how it

---

8 The National Decision Model is a risk assessment framework, or decision-making process, that is used by police forces across the country. It provides five different stages that officers can follow when making any type of decision.

9 The force is in a strategic alliance with two other police forces. This is a collaborated approach to the provision of policing functions across Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Hertfordshire. This is a mature collaboration and intended to provide services in an efficient and effective way.
records anti-social behaviour to ensure that it has an accurate picture to inform its problem-solving approach and protect vulnerable victims.

However, there are some examples of effective preventative activity. We found some evidence of multi-agency plans to prevent people becoming victims of crime, including child sexual abuse and other serious offences such as gang-related violence. The force also has plans for tackling off-road motorcycle nuisance and burglary. Operation Meteor is a long-standing policing operation (since 2014) specifically targeting off-road motorcycle nuisance. It includes days of multi-agency action and a communications strategy to encourage the public to report incidents. In September 2016 PCSOs were given specific crime prevention responsibilities for their community. The force has recently identified its top 20 vulnerable people and this is communicated to officers and staff on the force’s ‘Know your Community’ intranet page. PCSOs are responsible for undertaking routine engagement with those individuals living in their area to provide support and advice on how to stay safe. Bedfordshire Police has been successful in obtaining a civil injunction preventing Britain First organisers from entering Luton town centre and Bury Park for three years. The injunction was enforced and following a breach, one organiser was taken to court. The force has also had some success in brothel closures, closing 11 in Luton between November 2015 and November 2016.

The force retains a small specialist crime reduction team that includes a force architectural liaison officer and crime reduction officers who provide specialist advice to community teams. They also go into schools and offer crime prevention advice to vulnerable communities on, for example, Asian gold burglaries, burglaries within the Chinese community, and post office robberies. The team also provides expert advice on ‘target hardening’ for victims of domestic abuse and referrals to the Bobby Scheme (which supplies crime prevention devices such as door and window locks) for vulnerable people. We also found well-established support for the Boson team, who tackle organised crime to reduce the threat of harm to those potentially at risk.

Beyond the community safety team, the force has taken steps to increase understanding of crime prevention among all frontline officers and staff by developing a web-based crime reduction ‘toolkit’, which has links to web pages that give details on how to reduce particular crime types. However, we found that a lack of resources in community teams means that there is little capacity to implement meaningful crime prevention across the force.

HMIC found evidence that staff in the joint partnership anti-social behaviour team are trained to use their discretion when deciding how best to deal with perpetrators of anti-social behaviour and to tackle it with criminal behaviour orders, dispersal orders and exclusion notices. In the 12 months to 30 June 2016, Bedfordshire Police used anti-social behaviour powers 464 times per one million population, which is a higher rate than for all forces in England and Wales.
Does the force use evidence of best practice and its own learning to improve the service to the public?

The force is starting to improve how it learns from best practice and established evidence in order to provide better services for the public. For example, it is developing its evaluation and review process to test how effective particular initiatives and operations have been. The crime reduction toolkit described earlier in the report reflects the College of Policing’s research into best practice (published on the College’s ‘What Works’ website) and the force is committed to developing its workforce’s knowledge and confidence in evidence-based policing through its support for places at Cambridge University. The force also has good toolkits on domestic abuse, vulnerability, and stalking and harassment that are easy to find and view. These materials should support officers and staff to provide an improved service to the public. The force recognises that it still needs to improve the way that it shares good practice to provide effective services consistently across the force, and to develop a corporate memory to help support new staff.

Summary of findings

Bedfordshire Police is inadequate in its approach to the prevention of crime, tackling anti-social behaviour, and keeping people safe. In HMIC’s 2015 effectiveness report, we recognised that the force was implementing a new policing model, designed to increase its capacity and capability to focus on the prevention of crime and to tackle anti-social behaviour. Insufficient progress has been made and the force needs to address a number of areas for improvement as it implements the new policing model. However, this year we are concerned and disappointed to find that the community teams have still not been adequately resourced and therefore do not have the capacity to provide an effective service with meaningful crime prevention and problem solving across Bedfordshire. The force also needs to review how it records anti-social behaviour to ensure that it has an accurate picture as a basis for its problem-solving approach, so that it can protect vulnerable victims.

The force has improved its approach to sharing effective practice. It is developing its evidence on the most effective ways to prevent crime and tackle anti-social behaviour. It is making better use of ‘what works’ drawn from other forces, academics and partner organisations. However, it does not yet routinely record and assess local initiatives; it needs to do more to evaluate tactics and share effective practice.
Causes of concern

Community policing teams in Bedfordshire are not well enough resourced to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour effectively.

Recommendations

To address this cause of concern the force must immediately take steps to:

- increase the number of officers and staff carrying out active preventative policing and problem-solving activity; and
- monitor the effect of this increase to ensure that it improves the quality of service provided to the public.

Areas for improvement

- The force should work with local people and partner organisations to improve its understanding of local communities, including those, such as migrant communities or elderly people, who are less likely to complain or take part in traditional forms of engagement.

- The force should review how it records anti-social behaviour to ensure that it has an accurate picture to inform a more structured and consistent problem-solving approach, so that it can identify worsening behaviour and provide effective interventions to protect vulnerable victims.
How effective is the force at investigating crime and reducing re-offending?

When a crime occurs, the public must have confidence that the police will investigate it effectively, take seriously their concerns as victims, and bring offenders to justice. To be effective, investigations should be well planned and supervised, based on approved practice, and carried out by appropriately-trained staff. In co-operation with other organisations, forces must also manage the risk posed by those who are identified as being the most prolific or dangerous offenders, to minimise the chances of continued harm to individuals and communities.

How well does the force bring offenders to justice?

Since April 2014, police forces in England and Wales have been required to record how investigations are concluded in a new way, known as ‘outcomes’. Replacing what was known as ‘detections’, the outcomes framework gives a fuller picture of the work the police do to investigate and resolve crime and over time all crimes will be assigned an outcome. The broader outcomes framework (currently containing 21 different types of outcomes) is designed to support police officers in using their professional judgment to ensure a just and timely resolution. The resolution should reflect the harm caused to the victim, the seriousness of the offending behaviour, the impact on the community and deter future offending.

Outcomes are likely to differ from force to force for various reasons. Forces face a different mix of crime types in their policing areas, so the outcomes they assign will also vary depending on the nature of the crime. Certain offences are more likely to be concluded without prosecution of offenders; typically these include types of crime such as cannabis misuse. If this type of crime is particularly prevalent in the force then it is likely that the level of ‘cannabis/khat10 warning’ outcomes would be greater. Other offences such as those involving domestic abuse or serious sexual offences, are unlikely to result in a high usage of the ‘cautions’ outcome.

The frequency of outcomes may also reflect the force’s policing priorities. For example, some forces work hard with partner organisations to ensure that first time and low-level offenders are channelled away from the criminal justice system. In these areas locally-based community resolutions are likely to be more prevalent than elsewhere.

It is also important to understand that not all of the crimes recorded in the year will have been assigned an outcome as some will still be under investigation. For some

---

10 A plant native to Africa and the Arabian Peninsula, the leaves of which are frequently chewed as a stimulant. The possession and supply of khat became a criminal offence in England and Wales in 2014.
crime types such as sexual offences, the delay between a crime being recorded and an outcome being assigned may be particularly pronounced, as these may involve complex and lengthy investigations.
### Figure 4: Proportion of outcomes assigned to offences recorded in Bedfordshire Police, in 12 months to 30 June 2016, by outcome type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome number</th>
<th>Outcome type / group</th>
<th>Bedfordshire Police</th>
<th>England and Wales</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Charged/Summonsed</td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td>12.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Taken into consideration</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Out-of-court (formal)</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Caution - youths</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Caution - adults</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Penalty Notices for Disorder</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Out of court (informal)</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Cannabis/Khat warning</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Community Resolution</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*</td>
<td>Prosecution prevented or not in the public interest</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Evidential difficulties (victim supports police action)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Suspect identified</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Evidential difficulties (victim does not support police action)</td>
<td>18.1</td>
<td>13.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Suspect identified</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>10.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Suspect not identified</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Investigation complete – no suspect identified</td>
<td>48.1</td>
<td>47.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Action undertaken by another body / agency</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Further investigation to support formal action not in the public interest</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total offences assigned an outcome</th>
<th>Bedfordshire Police</th>
<th>England and Wales</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>96.7</td>
<td>91.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not yet assigned an outcome</th>
<th>Bedfordshire Police</th>
<th>England and Wales</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Total                             | 100.00              | 100.00            |

*Includes the following outcome types: Offender died, Not in public interest (CPS), Prosecution prevented – suspect under age, Prosecution prevented – suspect too ill, Prosecution prevented – victim/key witness dead/too ill, Prosecution time limit expired*

Source: Home Office crime outcomes data
For further information about these data, please see annex A

In the 12 months to 30 June 2016, Bedfordshire Police’s use of 'not yet assigned an outcome' was among the lowest in England and Wales. However, any interpretation

11 Dorset Police is excluded from the table. Therefore figures for England and Wales will differ from those published by the Home Office. For further details see annex A.

12 ‘Taken into consideration’ is when an offender admits committing other offences in the course of sentencing proceedings and requests those other offences to be taken into consideration.
of outcomes should take into account that outcomes will vary dependent on the crime types that occur in each force area, and how it deals with offenders for different crimes.

Bedfordshire has a slightly lower proportion of people being charged/summonsed than the England and Wales rate, and a higher proportion of outcomes that include so-called evidential difficulties. This suggests there may be a problem with the quality of investigation, which is discussed later in this report. Of particular concern is that Bedfordshire Police has a far higher proportion of cases in which the victim does not support police action than in the rest of England and Wales. This indicates a problem with how the force works with and supports victims.

How effective is the force's initial investigative response?

The initial investigative response is critical for an effective investigation. From the moment victims and witnesses make contact with the police the investigative process should start, so that accurate information and evidence can be gathered. It is important that forces record evidence as soon as possible after a crime. The longer it takes for evidence-recording to begin, the more likely it is that evidence will be destroyed, damaged or lost. Recording this evidence is usually the responsibility of the first officer who attends the scene. After the officer has completed this initial investigation the case may be handed over to a different police officer or team in the force. This process must ensure that the right people with the right skills investigate the right crimes.

Control room response

Bedfordshire Police requires improvement in the way it provides an initial investigative response. In HMIC’s 2015 effectiveness report, we were concerned about the way that the force applied THRIVE,¹³ and in particular about how it assessed risk at the first point of contact. The force has worked hard to train frontline staff and this year we found that the force has made progress. However, one exception is the assessment of missing and absent children and young people, which is still poor. This is covered in more detail in the next section.

The force moved to a ‘fast’ (emergency response) and ‘fixed’ (scheduled appointment) system in June 2015. During this inspection, we found ‘fast’ response attendance times had deteriorated since 1 September 2016 after an initial period of improvement following the introduction of the new response model, increasing the average force response time by over four minutes. This means that victims are not

---

¹³ The threat, harm, risk, investigation, vulnerability and engagement (THRIVE) model is used to assess the appropriate initial police response to a call for service. It allows a judgment to be made of the relative risk posed by the call and places the individual needs of the victim at the centre of that decision.
always receiving a timely response. This may reflect a change in the response officer’s shift pattern and the force needs to understand why there has been a deterioration and quickly address the cause. The appointment system is working well, and its use is monitored effectively, to ensure that the response provided is tailored to victims’ needs. Not all the force’s intelligence systems are available in the control room to help inform THRIVE risk assessments. However, there is 24-hour access to staff in the force’s central intelligence bureau, and they provide good support.

The force now investigates 41 percent of its crime, such as criminal damage, fraud and common assault, within its crime bureau. This includes crimes reported through calls from the public and through scheduled appointments attended by police officers. While we found the majority of investigations are appropriate for telephone resolution, officers attend calls in which vulnerability is identified to provide reassurance to the victim. We identified as an area for improvement the situation in which victims of common assault have withdrawn their support for prosecution but are identified as vulnerable: in these circumstances the police should still pursue action against the perpetrator. The force has systems to ensure effective activity at more serious incidents in the ‘golden hour’ (the time immediately after a crime has occurred when evidence retrieval is more likely), including obtaining advice from specialist investigators such as the public protection unit. A detective sergeant who is on duty overnight can be informed of any serious incidents, and will supervise the actions of the first officers at the scene and send additional specialist resources when needed.

How well do response officers investigate?

The quality of response officers’ initial investigation also requires improvement. In some cases, the first officers to attend the scene record valuable evidence, and this process is supervised. However, the force has a high proportion of probationary officers and not enough supervisors available to provide the support they need. This situation is exacerbated by response teams carrying vacancies, with the result that important information is sometimes missed, and subsequent investigative teams have to spend more time addressing the shortfalls in the initial investigation. Some feedback is given to response officers and supervisors about the quality of investigation handovers, but this is not done as a matter of course. The force recognises that it has a high proportion of inexperienced officers and supervisors. It is planning to align experienced detective constables with response officers to improve the quality of initial investigations, as it will have a cohort of 96 new officers recruited at the end of 2016.

The community crime team, which deals with all ‘fixed’ (scheduled) appointments, volume crime\textsuperscript{14} investigations, and prisoners, is not adequately resourced. We found

\textsuperscript{14} Volume crime is any crime which, through its sheer volume, has a significant impact on the community and the ability of the local police to tackle it. Volume crime often includes priority crimes
a high proportion of officers on restricted and recuperative duties, which means that fully-fit officers carry higher workloads. For example, we found one officer with 19 live investigations. The team is staffed by officers who joined the force more recently and are less experienced, which means that they need more support and supervision. The investigations we reviewed had clear plans drawn up by the supervisor at the point of allocation to the investigating officer. However, the supervisor reviews simply confirmed that the investigation was progressing in a timely manner, rather than documenting a full review of the investigation.

The way in which the force decides who will continue the investigation after the first officers have been to the crime scene ensures that a crime is passed quickly to the most appropriate officer for investigation. Overall, Bedfordshire Police’s gathering of evidence and initial investigation require improvement. However, we found the process of allocation for subsequent investigation is good, as, in general, the right teams with the correct level of skills and experience investigate the right crimes.

How effective is the force's subsequent investigation?

Every day police forces across England and Wales investigate a wide range of crimes. These range from non-complex crimes such as some burglary and assault cases through to complex and sensitive investigations such as rape and murder. HMIC referred to national standards and best practice in examining how well forces allocate and investigate the full range of crimes, including how officers and staff can gather evidence to support investigations. These include the more traditional forensics, such as taking fingerprints, as well as more recently developed techniques like gathering digital evidence from mobile telephones or computers to find evidence of online abuse.

Quality of the investigation

Overall the public can have confidence that Bedfordshire Police investigates crimes effectively. HMIC reviewed 60 police case files across crime types for: robbery, common assault (flagged as domestic abuse), grievous bodily harm (GBH), stalking, harassment, rape and domestic burglary. Files were randomly selected from crimes recorded between 1 January 2016 and 31 March 2016 and were assessed against several criteria. Due to the small sample size of cases selected, we have not used results from the file review as the sole basis for assessing individual force performance but alongside other evidence gathered. Our review found that generally the force investigates crimes well, across a range of crime types. However, we found too few supervisor reviews. Although these are essential for investigations of more serious sexual assaults such as rape and of grievous bodily harm, the force needs to ensure that it supervises all investigations effectively to ensure that the victim
receives the best outcome. We found good victim support in most cases. However, we found weaknesses in how the force investigates stalking and harassment cases. The force needs to ensure that it identifies the risk in such cases correctly and allocates them to people with the right skills for investigation.

In HMIC’s 2015 effectiveness inspection, we found a well-managed high-tech crime unit (HTCU), which was responsible for retrieving evidential data from tablets, computers and mobile phones. The HTCU had an effective prioritisation process for dealing with the most serious offences first. In high-risk cases involving vulnerable children and adults, the HTCU examined vital evidence immediately. The force had ensured local staff were able to deal with lower-priority cases by equipping them with the skills to examine devices themselves to retrieve intelligence and information, without having to submit them to the HTCU. However, this year in 2016, we were disappointed to find that the force has chosen not to continue training local staff to examine mobile phones, because of the new mandatory national iSO standard due to come into effect in October 2017. This means that there are fewer local staff capable of examining devices and more devices submitted to the HTCU for examination, causing a delay.

Support to investigations

At the time of the inspection, the backlog of mobile phones awaiting examination was 194, with 56 computers. The oldest submission went back to June 2016, although this had been negotiated with the officer in the case. An urgent ‘999’ process prioritises submissions relating to high-risk cases. The HTCU has taken on two more staff and conducts a weekly review of the backlog, but at the time of the inspection some staff were off sick, some were needed to support a national project, and those remaining were working overtime in an attempt to reduce the backlog. The force needs to address the capacity of the unit, training for local staff, and provision of equipment to download mobile phones. Backlogs cause delays in bringing prosecutions, which means that offenders may escape justice, and victims may be placed at risk.

Bedfordshire Police shares a forensic function with Hertfordshire Constabulary and Cambridgeshire Constabulary. The current system cannot differentiate between the three forces in terms of how many forensic submissions each has waiting to be processed. However, in the 12 months to June 2016, the three forces had submitted 15,572 forensic recoveries and 248 were outstanding. The three forces are jointly buying a new system to improve management information. During our inspection we found an effective approach to arresting offenders identified as a result of forensic analysis. These cases are reviewed at the daily management meeting and allocated to the appropriate officer.
Supporting victims

The new outcomes framework introduced in 2014 includes some outcomes where there were evidential difficulties,\textsuperscript{15} which had not previously been recorded. This was to gain an insight into the scale of crimes that the police could not progress further through the criminal justice process due to limited evidence. Furthermore, these outcomes can be thought of as an indicator for how effective the police are at working with victims and supporting them through investigative and judicial processes, as they record when victims are unwilling or unable to support continued investigations or when they have withdrawn their support for police action.

\textsuperscript{15} Evidential difficulties also includes where a suspect has been identified and the victim supports police action, but evidential difficulties prevent further action being taken.
For all offences recorded in the 12 months to 30 June 2016, Bedfordshire Police recorded 18.1 percent as ‘Evidential difficulties; victim does not support police action’. This compares with 13.8 percent for England and Wales over the same period. However, it should be noted that not all of the offences committed in the 12 months to 30 June 2016 were assigned an outcome and consequently, these figures are subject to change over time.

The force has improved the way it supports victims. Last year HMIC identified that the force should improve its compliance with the Code of Practice for Victims of

---

16 Percentages of evidential difficulties can be affected by the level of certain types of crime within a force, such as domestic abuse related offences.

17 Dorset Police is excluded from the graph. Therefore, figures for England and Wales will differ from those published by the Home Office. For further details see annex A.
Crime,\(^{18}\) and in particular how it offers victims personal statements and completes these. The force has adopted several approaches to improve its compliance with the code and provide a better service for victims. For instance, the force has refreshed its crime management policy to mandate taking a victim’s personal statement in all cases where an evidential statement is obtained. We found a robust audit process for dip-sampling investigations to check that a victim’s personal statement had been taken, and the requirement to do so is also supported by regular internal communication through the force intranet. The force has a strong focus on file quality and compliance with the code. This approach ensures that officers receive individual feedback on how they are performing in this area. In September 2016, of 340 files reviewed by the criminal justice unit, only one was highlighted for lack of a victim’s personal statement. This is very positive.

The force is now better at making sure it offers victims the opportunity to make a victim personal statement, which means they can explain how the crime has affected them, strengthening their voice in the criminal justice system.

Of those who have been the victim of a crime in Bedfordshire in the 12 months to 30 June 2016, 83.2 percent were satisfied with their whole experience with the police. This is similar to the England and Wales victim satisfaction rate of 83.3 percent over the same period. There has been a rise between June 2011 and 2016 in Bedfordshire. However, the outcomes for the public in Bedfordshire differ from those in England in Wales. Proportionately there are more outcomes which include so-called evidential difficulties. In the 12 months to 30 June 2016, the ‘evidential difficulties; victim does not support police action’ outcome was assigned to 18.1 percent of offences recorded in this period, compared to 13.8 percent for England and Wales. This is disturbing as it suggests there may be a problem with the quality of investigation. Bedfordshire assigned a higher proportion of offences an outcome in which the victim does not support police action than the proportion across England and Wales as a whole. This indicates a problem with how the force works with and supports victims. The force has recognised this fundamental problem and is working to improve matters.

**How effectively does the force reduce re-offending?**

We assessed how well the force works with other policing authorities and other interested parties to identify vulnerable offenders and prevent them from re-offending, and how well it identifies and manages repeat, dangerous or sexual offenders.

How well does the force pursue suspects and offenders?

Bedfordshire Police is good at pursuing known suspects and it identifies foreign national offenders to protect the public. The force completes a Police National Computer check on all arrested suspects. In the 12 months to 30 June 2016, the force made 11,920 arrests, and of these arrests 3,074 involved foreign nationals, with 3,012 requests for criminal record checks. The force’s procedure is that all arrested foreign nationals should be subject to an ACRO check,¹⁹ which provides enhanced information on criminality and allows the force to identify and manage risk better. The force is slightly below the England and Wales rate for the total number of outstanding suspects. The force has a robust system for actively managing and reviewing outstanding suspects, prioritising those who pose the greatest risk, and during our inspection we found evidence of this working effectively.

How well does the force protect the public from the most harmful offenders?

The force protects the public well from the most harmful offenders. It operates an integrated offender management (IOM) unit with a clear framework and governance.²⁰ At the time of our inspection, there were 220 individuals on the IOM scheme. The IOM teams and partners from housing, health (drugs and alcohol), probation, and the local council are co-located, which supports the exchange of information and intelligence, as well as a very positive multi-agency one-team approach, resulting in effective management of offenders. During our inspection we saw the weekly review meeting of the IOM cohort, where all partner organisations actively contribute to discussions and decision making. While the majority of the IOM cohort are serious and acquisitive crime offenders,²¹ the cohort now includes 71 domestic abuse offenders; 7 are both violent and acquisitive criminals, and some are members of an organised crime group (OCG). This year the cohort reflects force priorities more accurately, which is positive.

We found good work to tackle serious youth violence, to reduce re-offending and to divert young people from first-time offending. Operation Boson, for example, includes a multi-agency panel, linked to the local borough council, to discuss intelligence from schools about young people at risk. Luton Borough Council is assessing how effective this approach is and reports to the community safety partnership management board.

---

¹⁹ ACRO Criminal Records Office manages criminal record information and improves the exchange of criminal records and biometric information for UK law enforcement agencies.

²⁰ Integrated offender management brings a multi-agency response to the crime and reoffending threats faced by local communities. The most persistent and problematic offenders are identified and managed jointly by partner agencies working together.

²¹ Serious acquisitive crime is defined as domestic burglary, car crime (theft of or from a vehicle) and robbery.
The force identifies and monitors those who pose the greatest risk to the community well, although it could involve local teams more fully. There are 504 registered sex offenders in Bedfordshire, of whom one is very high risk and 35 are high risk. Sexual harm prevention orders (SHPOs) are designed to protect the public from serious sexual harm from an offender by detailing a series of prohibitions designed to protect the community from future offending; for example, an order may prohibit certain activities on the internet or a particular type of employment such as the tuition of young people. Breach of an SHPO is a criminal offence. In the 12 months to 30 June 2016, Bedfordshire Police issued 79 SHPOs and reported that 3 SHPOs had been breached. All registered violent and registered sexual offenders are managed by officers in the violent and sexual offender management team (VSOMT), which is managed alongside IOM as part of community safety. There are internal risk assessment trainers, but not everyone has been trained in the management of sexual and violent offenders. The majority of officers and staff who are trained are skilled and accredited, and they have developed clear plans, with supervision and governance arrangements, to reduce the risk from registered sex offenders. The offender managers we interviewed each had just over 50 offenders to manage. While this is fewer than last year, they found their workload difficult to manage, and the force needs to ensure that there is sufficient capacity within the unit to protect the public from harm.

The VSOMT uses ‘Know your Community’, a dedicated page on the force briefing system, to highlight to local officers any high-risk sex offenders living in their area. There are also comprehensive intelligence logs of all sex offenders on the force system to provide officers with additional information, as well as markers on the Police National Computer to alert officers when they stop and check individuals. The team receives intelligence about offenders from local officers. Despite this, we found that local officers have only limited knowledge of sex offenders living within their neighbourhoods. The force could do more to ensure frontline staff understand how they can contribute more effectively to the management of sex offenders.

The force’s multi-agency public protection arrangements (MAPPAs) are conducted in partnership with probation and other agencies. The team is now managed by the force’s intelligence function rather than the public protection unit.

---

22 MAPPAs are in place to ensure the successful management of violent and sexual offenders. Agencies involved as responsible bodies include the police, probation trusts and the prison service. Other agencies may become involved; for example, the youth offending team is responsible for the care of young offenders.
Summary of findings

Bedfordshire Police’s approach to investigating crime and reducing re-offending requires improvement. The standard of initial investigation, supervision and handover of investigations to specialist teams has declined since 2015, largely due to a higher proportion of inexperienced officers and supervisors. The way call handlers assess whether calls require an officer to attend has improved. Disappointingly, this is not the case for missing and absent children. Decision making is inconsistent, which means that some children and young people are not protected.

A recent decline in response times (officers attending 999 calls), means there is a delay in the recovery of evidence and support to victims. The force also has a significant backlog in examining digital devices for evidence.

The force has worked hard to improve the service it offers victims, particularly in the area of compliance with the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime and the completion of victims’ personal statements. However, we found that fewer victims support police action than in other force areas.

Bedfordshire Police is generally good at protecting the public from the most prolific, serious and dangerous offenders. Its integrated offender management scheme is well managed, and now includes a focus on offenders who cause most harm.

Areas for improvement

- Where victims of common assault have withdrawn their support for prosecution and they are identified as vulnerable, the police should pursue action against the perpetrator.
- The force should ensure that it responds with appropriate promptness to reports of crime.
- The force should ensure that all evidence is retrieved at the earliest opportunity, to increase the likelihood of investigations being concluded successfully, providing appropriate support to inexperienced officers as necessary.
• The force should ensure that there is regular and active supervision of investigations to improve quality and progress.

• The force should improve its ability to retrieve digital evidence from mobile phones, computers and other electronic devices quickly enough to ensure that investigations are not delayed.
How effective is the force at protecting those who are vulnerable from harm, and supporting victims?

Protecting the public, particularly those who are most vulnerable, is one of the most important duties placed on police forces. People can be vulnerable for many reasons and the extent of their vulnerability can change during the time they are in contact with the police. Last year HMIC had concerns about how well many forces were protecting those who were vulnerable. In this section of the report we set out how the force’s performance has changed since last year.

Has the force improved since HMIC’s 2015 vulnerability inspection?

Bedfordshire Police has made some improvements since HMIC’s 2015 effectiveness (vulnerability) report and our revisit in April 2016. However, in this inspection, we judged Bedfordshire Police to be inadequate because there are still serious weaknesses in the way the force keeps safe those vulnerable children who go missing.

In 2015 we recommended that the force should immediately review its approach to reports of missing children and make arrangements to assess and safeguard them effectively. During our revisit we were disappointed to find that the force was still not adequately identifying, assessing and responding to risk for missing children. As a result, some children and young people were put at serious risk, and we found examples of this during our inspection. Some of the intelligence checks and THRIVE assessments were not thorough, and in some cases we considered the categorisation by the control room inspector to be incorrect, in particular in a number of cases in which a child was categorised as absent rather than missing.

The force has addressed several areas, although in some cases it is too early to see the results in terms of positive outcomes for vulnerable people. Examples include:

- We recommended that the force should immediately ensure that all its frontline staff understand THRIVE and are able to apply it reliably and effectively. During our revisit we found some progress in this area, with training on THRIVE and a new audit process for checking the quality of THRIVE decision making. The approach to risk assessment in the force control room now allows officers and staff to identify and respond to vulnerability more consistently, and deploy the right person. However, this is not the case for missing and absent children and young people.
How effectively does the force identify those who are vulnerable and assess their level of risk and need?

In order to protect those who are vulnerable effectively forces need to understand comprehensively the scale of vulnerability in the communities they police. This requires forces to work with a range of communities, including those whose voices may not often be heard. It is important that forces understand fully what it means to be vulnerable, what might make someone vulnerable and that officers and staff who come into contact with the public can recognise this vulnerability. This means that forces can identify vulnerable people early on and can provide them with an appropriate service.

Understanding the risk

Forces define a vulnerable victim in different ways. This is because there is not a standard requirement on forces to record whether a victim is vulnerable on crime recording systems. Some forces use the definition from the government’s Code of
Practice for Victims of Crime,23 others use the definition referred to in ACPO guidance24 and the remainder use their own definition.

Bedfordshire Police uses the definition from the ACPO guidance and defines a vulnerable adult as:

"any person aged 18 years or over who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental, physical, or learning disability, age or illness AND is or may be unable to take care of him or herself or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation."

In addition, the force reviews all vulnerability and looks for the following under THRIVE assessment:

- repeat victimisation (not restricted to type of crime/anti-social behaviour reported);
- family circumstances (e.g. child at risk, carer for vulnerable child or adult);
- personal circumstances (consumption/dependency upon drugs/alcohol);
- health (physical / mental / emotional wellbeing);
- equality and diversity (e.g. race, age, gender, disability, religion, nationality, lifestyle choice); and
- economic circumstances.

In addition the force is aiming to have a VRAC (vulnerable and repeat adults’ and children’s) process which would look at vulnerability in its widest terms.

Data returned by forces to HMIC show that in the 12 months to 30 June 2016, the proportion of crime recorded which involves a vulnerable victim varies considerably between forces, from 3.9 percent to 44.4 percent. For the 12 months to 30 June 2016, 23.0 percent of all recorded crime in Bedfordshire was identified as having a vulnerable victim, which is above the England and Wales figure of 14.3 percent.

---


Bedfordshire Police has made some progress in understanding the nature and scale of vulnerability in its local areas, but gaps remain. It has recently invested in a new centralised intelligence bureau, as well as commissioning additional ‘problem profiles’. A problem profile uses intelligence and information to gain a better understanding of a particular crime type or of emerging crimes. Bringing together data and intelligence in a problem profile can help the force identify possible victims, intelligence gaps, and prevention or reassurance opportunities. The force has developed problem profiles for vulnerable people, such as those at risk of sexual exploitation, and repeat domestic abuse victims.

In response to the force’s relatively high repeat victim rate for domestic abuse, it has sought to increase its understanding of the scale and extent of domestic abuse risks. It has commissioned a domestic abuse repeat victim profile. While this is not a full domestic abuse profile and therefore limits the force’s understanding of the totality of all victims, offenders and locations, it should increase the force’s understanding of this specific area of vulnerability. This analysis has recently been shared with partner organisations, including the local safeguarding children board, and it will be the subject of further work by the pan-Bedfordshire domestic abuse group. The force has also identified its top 20 most vulnerable repeat victims. Each vulnerable person has

25 City of London, Devon and Cornwall, Essex, Gloucestershire and Lancashire forces were unable to provide data for recorded crimes with a vulnerable victim identified. Therefore, these forces’ data are not included in the graph or in the calculation of the England and Wales rate.
an 'owner' in the force, with the aim of helping the force to respond more appropriately and to work with partner organisations to reduce the vulnerability.

Analysts on the new vulnerability desk in the central intelligence bureau use an automated report to undertake daily scanning of all new information about child sexual exploitation recorded on the force incident, intelligence, or crime systems. In addition, through a ‘federated search’, intelligence staff are able to access other information systems that might contain information about child sexual exploitation. They are also able to access intelligence reports submitted by partner agencies. This has allowed the force to gain a good understanding of locations in its area where there may be child sexual exploitation, and of people who may be at risk of child sexual exploitation. It could improve its understanding further by identifying the locations of missing or absent children who have been found. When children at risk are identified or locations are recognised as being linked to child sexual exploitation, this information is shared with partner organisations at a regular child sexual exploitation partnership meeting. The force is still developing its understanding of child sexual exploitation and would like to share information with partner organisations through a joint database. The force and partners are working to ensure that information is sent into an appropriate searchable database and to ensure partners who complete the ‘return to home checks’ submit this information to police. There is a willingness from all chief executives through the child sexual exploitation group to join up databases and solutions are being explored. HMIC considers that these initiatives would improve the effectiveness of the force’s response to child sexual exploitation.

As outlined earlier, the force continues to use the definition of a vulnerable person from the national guidance to inform its work in this area.\(^\text{26}\) In addition, the force’s THRIVE assessment takes into consideration six features of vulnerability:

- repeat victimisation;
- family circumstances;
- personal circumstances;
- health;
- equality and diversity; and
- economic circumstances.

At the time of the inspection, a chief officer with specific expertise had personally given face-to-face vulnerability training to 70 percent of frontline teams. All officers and staff will be trained by Easter (April) 2017. The force is also planning to develop a more comprehensive vulnerable and repeat adults’ and children’s process to review vulnerability in its widest terms. And, at the time of the inspection, the force distributed a new ‘Vulnerability Handbook’ to every officer and member of staff to increase awareness and understanding.

Bedfordshire Police’s recognition of mental health problems is good. The force recorded 4,919 incidents that included a mental health element in the 12 months to 30 June 2016, and 1,109 crime reports over the same period where the offender or suspect had a mental health warning marker. A mental health triage team made up of a paramedic, a police officer, and a mental health nurse work between the hours of 3.00pm and 1.00am seven days a week. The team can be contacted by staff in the control room for specialist advice, or sent to an incident, where they can assess an individual’s mental health and ensure the force provides the most appropriate response. Mental health is one of the priorities of both the force and the police and crime commissioner.

Staff in the control room receive effective training in the THRIVE (threat, harm, risk, investigation, vulnerability and engagement) risk identification technique. They also have access to the force’s computer system, which contains additional information, including warning markers on individuals, so they can use a wide range of information when deciding whether someone is vulnerable. The force continues to put a specific ‘flag’ on its system to identify people and incidents where vulnerability is a concern, to indicate that they need additional attention. Some bespoke flags are also in use, including one for child sexual exploitation.

Bedfordshire Police is improving its ability to identify vulnerable people at the first point of contact. In the 12 months to 31 March 2015 the force flagged 2.0 percent of all its calls with a vulnerable marker. In the 12 months to 30 June 2016, it has identified 5.7 percent, which is higher than the England and Wales rate of 3.8 percent. The force can identify repeat victims, but only by address and telephone number rather than by name. This means that if a repeat victim calls from a new location or uses a new telephone, they will not necessarily be recognised as a repeat victim. The risk is reduced by call handlers’ questioning, application of THRIVE and access to INSPIRE, the force performance management system which can identify victims by name, date of birth, as well as address and telephone number.

Bedfordshire Police is good at identifying repeat victims. In the 12 months to 30 June 2016, 14 percent of incidents on the crime system in Bedfordshire were flagged to identify a repeat victim. This is in line with the 12 percent rate for England and Wales as a whole.
The force deploys resources appropriately to incidents that involve vulnerable people, and its grading policy for incidents is directly linked to the THRIVE assessment conducted by staff. It has a good review process to keep control room staff to the right standards. The review includes an assessment of the accuracy of grading based on threat, risk and vulnerability, and of attitude to, and empathy with, the caller.

Bedfordshire Police recognises that it is important to respond quickly to victims of domestic abuse and it has a mandatory attendance policy. In the few circumstances where police do not attend a domestic abuse incident in a ‘fast’ response, the control room inspector authorises a ‘fixed’ scheduled response. We considered all the fixed appointment domestic abuse cases that we reviewed to be appropriate for this type of response.

While the force has made some positive progress since HMIC’s 2015 effectiveness report and the revisit in spring 2016, we continue to have serious concerns about the quality and consistency of decision making in the force control room in relation to missing and absent children. The process of assessing calls about missing children, with call handlers completing a structured question set and recording a THRIVE assessment, is poor. The incident is referred to the control room inspector, who reviews the assessment and determines whether the case demands either a missing or absent response. This decision dictates whether the police attend.

During the inspection, we conducted a review of 16 cases and were concerned about the number not dealt with appropriately. Some of the intelligence checks were badly delayed, and in some cases officers did not consider them at all when undertaking the THRIVE risk assessments. The control room failed to categorise some cases correctly, assessing a number of them as ‘absent’ rather than ‘missing’. In one recent example, a vulnerable 16-year-old girl who was reported missing on multiple occasions over a period of 3 years, and was known to be drug and alcohol dependent. She had been assessed previously by the police as at high risk of sexual exploitation and was known to be depressed. An initial control room THRIVE assessment correctly identified the girl as a high-risk missing person, but the assessment was reviewed by a control room inspector, who determined that there was ‘no reason to suggest risk of high harm’ and the girl was categorised as absent.

The following morning, and nine hours later, the day shift inspector reviewed the assessment, correctly identified the girl as a missing person, but still did not recognise the level of risk. The response to this vulnerable girl was poor, and HMIC considers that the force failed to identify the degree of risk to her and to provide her with the protection that she clearly needed. In another recent case involving a

27 A person is classified as absent if they are not where they are expected to be but they are not considered at risk. Whereas, if they are classified as missing the police are obliged to take steps to locate them, as the level of perceived risk is higher.
vulnerable 16-year-old girl missing from a children’s home for seven days, the control room initially correctly assessed the girl as a high-risk missing person. The force control room inspector subsequently assessed the girl as missing, but low risk, with no intelligence checks having been completed. It was not until the following day that intelligence checks revealed that the missing girl was vulnerable, suffering from poor mental health, known to self harm, and drug and alcohol dependent. This girl was also recorded on police systems as at risk of sexual exploitation and frequently travelled into London, where she met older men. During the period that the girl had been missing, she had been seen by British Transport Police, but not detained for her own safety as she had not been recorded as a missing person. This is another example of a failure to respond effectively to safeguard a vulnerable young person.

Bedfordshire Police’s failings in respect of missing and absent children are not confined to inappropriate practices in the control room, but remain systemic. The force lacks plans for children who are missing persistently and for children identified as at higher risk of child sexual exploitation. HMIC’s review of cases found a number in which the initial police response and the safeguarding of the child or young person would benefit from a prepared list of priority actions, known as trigger plans. These plans alert the police to known associates of the child, contact telephone numbers, and locations where they might be found, including means of transport such as trains, buses, and previous theft of cars or motor bikes. The force control room holds a list of trigger plans, but we found that these were out of date and few related to missing persons. To improve its response, the force should make better use of trigger plans in the control room for persistently missing children and adults, and for children at risk of sexual exploitation.

HMIC remains concerned that some children are still being exposed to potential risk of harm and that, despite some assessments being changed from absent to missing in subsequent reviews, there are delays in ensuring an appropriate and timely police response to safeguard vulnerable children. We are also concerned that our reviews do not accord with the findings of the force’s quality assurance processes and dip checks, which indicate a much higher standard of decision making. The force should take immediate action to address the concerns we have highlighted in this year’s and the previous year’s inspection.

**How effectively does the force initially respond to vulnerable victims?**

The initial work of officers responding to a vulnerable person is vital, because failure to carry out the correct actions may make future work with the victim or further investigation very difficult. This could be the first time victims have contacted the police after suffering years of victimisation or they may have had repeated contact with the police; either way, the response of officers is crucial. The initial response to a vulnerable victim must inspire confidence that the victim’s concerns are being
taken seriously as well as provide practical actions and support to keep the victim safe. The officer should also assess the risk to the victim at that moment and others in the same household, and collect sufficient information to support the longer-term response of the force and other partner organisations.

**Do officers assess risk correctly and keep victims safe?**

The Home Office has shared domestic abuse related offences data, recorded in the 12 months to 30 June 2016, with HMIC. These are more recent figures than those previously published by the Office for National Statistics. These data show that in the 12 months to 30 June 2016, police-recorded domestic abuse in Bedfordshire increased by 6 percent compared with the 12 months to 31 March 2015. This compares with an increase of 23 percent across England and Wales. In the same period, police-recorded domestic abuse accounted for 11 percent of all police-recorded crime in Bedfordshire, compared with 11 percent of all police-recorded crime across England and Wales.

The rate of arrest for domestic abuse offences can provide an indication of a force’s approach to handling domestic abuse offenders. Although for the purpose of this calculation arrests are not directly tracked to offences, a high arrest rate may suggest that a force prioritises arrests for domestic abuse offenders over other potential form of action (for further details, see annex A). HMIC has evaluated the arrest rate alongside other measures during our inspection process to understand how each force deals with domestic abuse overall.

In Bedfordshire Police, for every 100 domestic abuse related offences recorded in the 12 months to 30 June 2016, there were 59 arrests made in the same period.
Figure 7: Domestic abuse arrest rate (per 100 domestic abuse crimes), by force, for the 12 months to 30 June 2016

Bedfordshire Police needs to do more to ensure that it consistently responds well to the immediate and longer-term needs of vulnerable victims, particularly children. The force has established processes to ensure that officers’ response to vulnerable victims is appropriate and reflects their needs. These include procedures within the public protection support unit, whose role is to share information quickly and efficiently with partner organisations. The link between missing children and the risks of child sexual exploitation and human trafficking has been recognised across the force. The force has given staff awareness training on child sexual exploitation and mental health problems. However, as previously discussed in this report, this awareness is not applied consistently when assessing vulnerable children at risk, and the force needs to do much more to provide a consistent approach to keeping vulnerable victims safe.

Frontline staff follow a clear process when assessing risk and addressing the nature of a victim’s vulnerability. Staff identify potential safeguarding problems through the DASH form, which officers complete at all domestic abuse incidents. The forms are

---

28 Derbyshire, Durham and Gloucestershire forces were not able to provide domestic abuse arrest data. Therefore, these forces’ data are not included in the graph or in the calculation of the England and Wales rate.

29 The DASH form is a risk identification tool for frontline officers when responding to victims of domestic abuse, stalking and harassment.
subject to supervision and scrutiny to ensure accuracy. However, the force recognises that the quality of the initial DASH form is not good enough and, although it has trained new police officers and initial contact officers, it needs to provide additional training for frontline officers and staff. The force DASH form now contains eight additional questions specifically relating to children, which should ensure that attending officers assess risk effectively.

During our revisit to Bedfordshire in spring 2016, we found that the identification, assessment, and referral of children to external partner organisations had improved. However, during this inspection we found the quality of the child referral forms received in the newly-formed public protection unit hub, and initial actions completed by frontline officers, to be poor. A recent case involved a member of the public who had witnessed a female punching a baby on the back. Police had attended and conducted a 'safe and well' check. Officers looked at the baby in the cot from the doorway, and when they submitted the form they recorded the wrong information, providing another family member's details as those of the potential perpetrator. As a result of this information, a joint police and partnership specialist team visited the wrong address and spoke to a family member who was unconnected with the incident. This incident was brought to the attention of senior managers, and the force is planning additional training for frontline officers and staff to improve awareness and the quality of referrals.

The force has invested in body-worn video cameras and all frontline officers have a personal-issue handheld device for gathering evidence. The use of the cameras at domestic abuse incidents is mandatory, and the force is currently devising a technical solution to enable it to audit compliance. Officers are positive about additional technical support for gathering evidence at incidents.

The arrest rate for domestic abuse incidents in the 12 months to 30 June 2016 has fallen to 59.4 percent from 72.0 percent in the 12 months to 31 March 2015. Over the same period, crimes identified as domestic abuse have increased from 4,280 to 4,548. The force does not yet understand why there has been a 12.6 percentage point decrease in the arrest rate and the newly formed domestic abuse scrutiny group is examining this.

The force is taking steps to support children and young people who witness domestic abuse. In two of the three local authority areas, Central Bedfordshire and Bedford Borough, the force operate a local authority-led domestic abuse notification scheme (called Relay) by which it notifies schools of children living in households where domestic abuse incidents have been reported. This is a positive approach, but it should be force-wide rather than limited to two boroughs. The force is encouraging the third local authority, Luton Borough Council, to adopt Relay.

Additional support is offered to high-risk domestic abuse victims through the Bobby Van scheme, which offers practical advice on improving the security of their home.
How effectively does the force investigate offences involving vulnerable victims and work with external partners to keep victims safe?

Those who are vulnerable often have complex and multiple needs that a police response alone cannot always meet. They may need support with housing, access to mental health services or support from social services. Nonetheless, the police still have an important responsibility to keep victims safe and investigate crimes. These crimes can be serious and complex (such as rape or violent offences). Their victims may appear to be reluctant to support the work of the police, often because they are being controlled by the perpetrator (such as victims of domestic abuse or child sexual exploitation).

Bedfordshire Police is improving the way it identifies and safeguards vulnerable people. However, our review of stalking and harassment case files found that the investigations in these cases were less effective than for other offences.

Accredited investigators, or those undertaking continuous professional development to become detectives, are responsible for investigating offences affecting a vulnerable person in need of protection. Specialist officers from the public protection command are available all day, every day. The force is developing procedures for monitoring the caseloads of detectives and those within the public protection command, such as police online investigation team officers.

The force has increased and combined its specialist resources for the investigation of all domestic abuse, rape and serious sexual assaults, now known as Emerald; and increased resources in the child sexual exploitation team and missing investigation team. The new Emerald team is located in two locations in the north and south of the county. The teams have 17 percent fewer investigators than planned, due to some vacancies and the need to support priority safeguarding investigations. The south Emerald team, with a higher proportion of trainee investigators, is carrying more vacancies. Of the investigators, 46 percent are fully accredited detectives, while the remainder are trainee investigators at various stages of the development programme. Some staff expressed a lack of confidence in dealing with certain cases, for example, rape and sexual offences, while others had limited knowledge of domestic abuse legislation, including domestic violence protection orders (DVPOs) and rules of disclosure relating to the Criminal Procedures and Investigations Act. HMIC recognises that the Emerald teams are newly formed and are drawn from staff with various backgrounds. The new head of the Emerald team is fully aware of the challenges and has identified the learning and development requirements for these staff.

Workloads were reported to have increased in the weeks before our visit, and HMIC inspectors noted some strain on staff. Staff reported that dealing with arrested suspects in lower-risk cases reduced their capacity to deal with some high-risk and
serious sexual offence investigations. HMIC saw examples of victim appointments for serious offences being re-scheduled because specialist officers were dealing with lower-risk demands. The force is aware that workloads in this under-resourced specialist team are increasing; it needs to draw up contingency plans to ensure victims receive the right level of service at the right time.

This report has already commented on concerns about the quality of handovers. HMIC has similar concerns about cases dealt with by the newly formed Emerald teams; poor handovers compromise the timely investigation of high-risk and serious cases. We found evidence of statements not being obtained from some victims because response and community crime teams lack the time to take them. Instead officers produced an initial account note, which meant that the Emerald investigator would have to take a statement, potentially resulting in further delays to the investigation.

The force has taken action to increase the number of initial contact officers specially trained in achieving best evidence, to improve their response and support to vulnerable victims.

HMIC examined the force’s use of legal powers to protect victims. In the year to 30 June 2016, 21 domestic violence protection notices (DVPNs) were authorised by a superintendent, and 20 domestic violence protection orders (DVPOs) were granted by the courts. The force reported that two DVPOs were breached during the same time period. The force’s use of DVPNs and DVPOs has decreased since HMIC’s 2015 effectiveness (vulnerability) report, which means that fewer victims are being given protection. The force recognises that it under uses these powers and that it could do more to protect victims. It is planning to train new staff in the Emerald team in how they can do so. One positive development is that there are now independent sexual violence advisors and independent domestic violence advisors working in the Emerald teams to support victims of domestic abuse, sexual assaults, and rape. The force reports that there has been a recent increase in the number of offenders.

---

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

31 DVPOs are designed to provide protection to victims by enabling the police and magistrates courts to put in place protection in the immediate aftermath of a domestic abuse incident. Where there is insufficient evidence to charge a perpetrator and provide protection to a victim via bail conditions, a DVPO can prevent the perpetrator from returning to a residence and from having contact with the victim for up to 28 days, allowing the victim time to consider their options and get the support they need.
charged; this may reflect increasing victim confidence and the additional support provided to them. It is too early to judge whether this is a sustained improvement, but it is promising.

Bedfordshire Police also uses the domestic violence disclosure scheme (Clare’s Law).32 In the 12 months to 30 June 2016, the force used the right to ask if a partner has a violent past 17 times and it used the right to know 9 times. However, the uptake of Clare’s Law is low and the force accepts that it is not making the best use of the scheme. It could do more to use this safeguarding tactic to keep victims better informed and to prevent serious harm. The force policy for the scheme has clear timelines and the multi-agency risk assessment conference (MARAC)33 is the decision-making forum, but the force is failing to follow its own policy. It recognises that it needs to raise awareness and has arranged a planning meeting to discuss the correct procedures.

The force contributes well to multi-agency work with external partner organisations to safeguard vulnerable victims. The public protection support team makes a referral to the MARAC in all high-risk cases, and the Emerald team will prepare a comprehensive report to share with all partner organisations. At the time of the inspection, we found a backlog of high-risk assessments, due to staff sickness. Staff had worked overtime to ensure these were completed. The force is in the process of reviewing the resources available to process the assessments and ensure that victims receive timely support.

During our inspection we found that the force contributes effectively to the multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH)34 in a way that is highly valued by partner organisations. A member of police staff located in the MASH provides rapid access to police information for social care staff, attends and makes effective contributions to strategy meetings, and has ‘read only’ access to social care information. Information sharing between the force and partner organisations is good, as are the working practices.

---

32 The domestic violence disclosure scheme, also known as Clare’s Law, increases protection for domestic abuse victims and enables the police to better identify domestic abuse perpetrators. For more information, see: www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/major-investigation-and-public-protection/domestic-abuse/leadership-strategic-oversight-and-management/#domestic-violence-disclosure-scheme-clares-law

33 Multi-agency risk assessment conference(s) are local meetings where information about high-risk domestic abuse victims (those at risk of murder or serious harm) is shared between local agencies.

34 A multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH) brings together into a single location key safeguarding agencies to better identify risks to children (and in some areas, vulnerable adults), and improve decision-making, interventions, and outcomes. The MASH enables the multi-agency team to share all appropriate information in a secure environment, and ensure that the most appropriate response is provided to effectively safeguard and protect the individual.
Victims of domestic abuse

In April 2015, the Home Office began collecting information from the police on whether recorded offences were related to domestic abuse. Crimes are identified by the police as domestic abuse related if the offence meets the government definition of domestic violence and abuse.35

The rate of outcomes recorded in the 12 months to 30 June 2016 for domestic abuse offences is shown in figure 8. Domestic abuse crimes used in this calculation are not necessarily those to which the outcomes have been assigned and are only linked by the fact that they both occur in the 12 months to 30 June 2016. Therefore, direct comparisons should not be made between general outcomes in figure 4, where each crime is linked to its associated outcome (for further details see annex A).

Figure 8: Rate of outcomes recorded in 12 months to 30 June 2016 for domestic-related offences in Bedfordshire Police36

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome type / group</th>
<th>Bedfordshire Police</th>
<th>England and Wales</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Charged / Summoned</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>23.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caution – adults</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caution – youths</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community resolution</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidential difficulties prevent further action; victim supports police action</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>24.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidential difficulties prevent further action; victim does not support police action</td>
<td>43.1</td>
<td>35.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: HMIC data return, Home Office data
For further information about these data, please see annex A

In the 12 months to 30 June 2016, Bedfordshire Police’s use of outcomes for domestic abuse flagged offences was in line with those in England and Wales as a whole. However, any interpretation of outcomes should take into account that outcomes will vary dependent on the crime types that occur in each force area, and how it deals with offenders for different crimes.

The force has taken considerable steps to improve services and support for victims of domestic abuse, as detailed throughout this report. However, this is yet to

---

35 Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality.

36 Dorset Police and Nottinghamshire Police were unable to submit domestic abuse outcomes data. Therefore, these forces’ data are not included in the graph or in the calculation of the England and Wales rate.
translate into improved outcomes for victims. As figure 8 shows, the outcomes for domestic abuse victims in Bedfordshire are worse than for other domestic abuse victims in England and Wales. Domestic abuse victims in Bedfordshire are also less likely to support the police in progressing a case. The force needs to understand why so many victims lack confidence in the service it provides. Since fewer victims support the police in progressing cases, fewer domestic abuse suspects are charged and have their cases heard in court.

**Summary of findings**

Inadequate

HMIC continues to have serious concerns about the quality and consistency of decision making within the force control room in relation to missing and absent children. Given the seriousness of these shortcomings and the risk posed to very vulnerable young people, HMIC considers the force is inadequate in how protects vulnerable people. The process of assessing calls about missing children is poor, and the review of the initial risk assessment determining whether the case requires a ‘missing’ or ‘absent’ police response is inconsistent. In some cases, assessments are being determined without the information from intelligence checks that could have led to immediate police action to locate and safeguard vulnerable missing young people. Additionally, the control room is categorising some cases incorrectly, with a number of them being categorised as ‘absent’ rather than ‘missing’. HMIC remains concerned that some children and young people are still being exposed to potential risk of harm, and that serious delays prevent the force from providing an appropriate and timely police response to safeguard vulnerable children and young people.

Bedfordshire Police does some things well to protect those who are vulnerable. It has improved its understanding of the nature and scale of vulnerability, specifically sexual exploitation, but recognises that it needs to do more to understand repeat domestic abuse victims, and missing and absent children.
**Cause of concern**

The force’s response to missing and absent children and young people – and in particular the way it determines whether a case should be treated as ‘missing’ or ‘absent’ – is exposing some children and young people to potential risk of harm.

**Recommendation**

To address this cause of concern the force should:

- immediately review its approach to reports of missing children and ensure they risk assess them correctly and respond appropriately.

**Areas for improvement**

- The force should make better use of trigger plans for persistently missing children, adults, and children at risk of sexual exploitation, to improve the force response.

- The force should provide DASH training to frontline staff to improve the quality of the assessments and ensure an improved quality of service to victims.

- The force should ensure that it has sufficient resources in the domestic abuse Emerald team to deal effectively with demand and provide specialist training to staff to increase the specialist capability.

- The force should ensure that it understands and addresses the cause of the decline in the arrest rate and the high outcome rate where the victim does not support police action.
How effective is the force at tackling serious and organised crime?

Serious and organised crime poses a threat to the public across the whole of the UK and beyond. Individuals, communities and businesses feel its damaging effects. Police forces have a critical role in tackling serious and organised crime alongside regional organised crime units (ROCUs), the National Crime Agency (NCA) and other partner organisations. Police forces that are effective in this area of policing tackle serious and organised crime not just by prosecuting offenders, but by disrupting and preventing organised criminality at a local level.

How effectively does the force understand the threat and risk posed by serious and organised crime?

In order to tackle serious and organised crime effectively forces must first have a good understanding of the threats it poses to their communities. Forces should be using a range of intelligence (not just from the police but also from other partner organisations) to understand threats and risks, from traditional organised crime such as drug dealing and money laundering to the more recently-understood threats such as cyber-crime and child sexual exploitation.

Bedfordshire Police’s understanding of the threat and risk posed by serious organised crime requires improvement. The force adopts a structured process (MoRiLE)\(^ {37} \) to identify and assess threats and risks in Bedfordshire. In the last year, the force has made good progress in improving its understanding of some so-called newer threats linked to organised crime, in particular sexual exploitation. The force has identified where sexual exploitation has been concentrated and it has taken targeted action with partner organisations to reduce crime in these locations.

The force intends to complement this picture with the identification of high-risk child sexual exploitation perpetrators. While HMIC recognises that the sexual exploitation problem profile does incorporate serious and organised crime, it will not provide the force with a full picture. HMIC identified that the local profile the force completed in 2015, although it was shared with local partner agencies after it was completed, did not contain partnership data and as a result the force did not have a complete understanding of serious and organised crime. The force is planning to incorporate a wide range of data from partner organisations in the 2017 iteration. The force has consulted the College of Policing and the national analyst working group to ensure that the profile it produces will fit with emerging best practice. HMIC highlighted the

---

\(^ {37} \) MoRiLE the ‘management of risk in law enforcement’ process developed by the National Police Chiefs’ Council. This tool assesses the types of crimes, which most threaten communities and highlights where the force does not currently have the capacity or capability to tackle them effectively.
profile as an area for improvement last year, and we are disappointed that the force has not yet updated the 2015 version.

In HMIC’s 2015 effectiveness report we recommended that the force should exploit the full range of intelligence sources to provide the best possible understanding of serious and organised crime, including the Government Agency Intelligence Network (GAIN). This year we found that the force has made 11 referrals in the 12 months to 30 June 2016. This is the same number as last year. While this represents a level of usage in line with England and Wales, the force could make better use of GAIN.

The force has recently introduced a central intelligence bureau (CIB), bringing together its intelligence functions to close the intelligence gap for serious and organised crime. The ‘guns and gangs’ intelligence desk will focus on intelligence development for current and emerging organised crime groups (OCGs) across Bedfordshire. While this is a positive plan, it is currently hampered by not having enough officers in the local community teams to allow them routinely to engage with local people and identify emerging threats. The CIB is based in a partnership building but does not currently work with partner organisations to seize the opportunity for more effective intelligence gathering. The interaction of intelligence and operational officers and staff is likely to be less frequent because the team is sited away from police premises. The force should consider whether its new location will support the aim of increasing intelligence to address the current gaps.

As at 1 July 2016, Bedfordshire Police was actively disrupting, investigating or monitoring 23 OCGs per one million of the population. This is low compared to the 46 OCGs per one million of the population across England and Wales, and is partly because the force has chosen to archive OCGs which would remain subject to formal management in other forces. The force should ensure that all OCGs are mapped promptly following identification, and subject to appropriate management in order to protect the public from harm.

When a police force identifies a group of individuals it suspects may be involved in organised crime, it goes through a nationally standardised ‘mapping’ procedure. This involves entering the details of the group’s known and suspected activity, associates and capability into a computer system, which assigns a numerical score to each OCG and places each group into one of several bands according to the severity of harm the group can cause.

The force’s process for mapping organised crime groups is compliant with national guidance. Once mapped, OCGs are re-scored at regular intervals, in compliance with national guide lines. The analyst responsible for OCG mapping examines

---

38 The Government Agency Intelligence Network (GAIN) is a large network of partners, including all police forces in England and Wales, which shares information about organised criminals.

39 For further details see annex A.
intelligence submissions and makes relevant adjustments to the OCG scoring matrix. The senior analyst audits the scoring of OCGs. All OCG scores are examined at a monthly moderators’ meeting held two days before the monthly force tactical task assignment and co-ordination group meeting, which is chaired by a chief officer. OCG scoring is aligned to the force THRIVE assessment and a record of the re-scoring of OCGs is retained on the force systems.

The force shares information on OCGs with community safety partnerships (CSPs). The head of intelligence chairs monthly OCG management meetings that the three CSP single points of contact attend. The CSP representatives review partner data and information relating to anti-social behaviour, housing and social services. The meeting reviews the progress of operations and focuses on the ‘4Ps’ approach (prevent, pursue, prepare, protect), in accordance with the government’s Serious and Organised Crime Strategy.40 The force has yet to establish an effective strategic partnership response to serious and organised crime through a serious and organised crime partnership board.

The force recognises that it needs to improve its intelligence collection, and the new intelligence desk system should start to address this. However, without sufficient resources in community policing, the early identification of OCGs is less likely. This means that the force does not have a full understanding of serious and organised crime and is therefore poorly placed to tackle it effectively.

40 4Ps provides a national framework for tackling serious and organised crime that has been developed for national counter-terrorist work and has four thematic pillars, often referred to as the 4Ps:
– Pursue - prosecuting and disrupting people engaged in serious and organised crime
– Prevent – preventing people from engaging in serious and organised crime
– Protect – increasing protection against serious and organised crime
– Prepare – reducing the impact of this criminality where it takes place
Figure 9: Organised crime groups per one million population, by force, as at 1 July 2016

Forces categorise OCGs by the predominant form of criminal activity in which the group is involved. Although OCGs are likely to be involved in multiple forms of criminality (for example groups supplying drugs may also be supplying firearms and be involved in money laundering), this indicates their most common characteristic. ‘Drug activity’ was the most common predominant crime type of the OCGs managed by Bedfordshire Police as at 1 July 2016. This was also the most common OCG crime type recorded by all forces in England and Wales.

Many of the OCGs predominantly involved in drug activity in Bedfordshire are also involved in sexual offences, human trafficking and other, newer threats. Recently the serious organised crime team supported joint police and partnership operations to tackle rogue landlords on offences including human trafficking and modern slavery. Four of the mapped OCGs are targeted by the Boson team, which specifically focuses on organised crime in Luton. Operation Grangemouth was a ‘test purchase’ operation in which police officers posed as drug addicts to identify drug dealers travelling in from London and other counties and operating in the Bedford area.

Source: HMIC data return

For further information about these data, please see annex A

City of London Police data have been removed from the chart and the England and Wales rate as its OCG data are not comparable with other forces due to size and its wider national remit.
force also identifies and manages local gangs who do not meet the OCG mapping threshold.

Figure 10: Active organised crime groups by predominant crime type in Bedfordshire, as at 1 July 2016

![Pie chart showing the distribution of active organised crime groups in Bedfordshire Police and England and Wales.]

Source: HMIC data return
Note: Figures may not sum to 100 percent due to rounding. For further information about these data, please see annex A.

How effectively does the force respond to serious and organised crime?

An effective force will pursue and prosecute offenders and disrupt organised criminality at a local level. The force will use specialist capabilities, both in the force and at regional level, and non-specialist capabilities such as its neighbourhood teams. While it can be complex for a force to assess the success of its actions against serious and organised crime, it is important that the force understands the extent to which it disrupts this crime and reduces harm.

Bedfordshire Police’s response to serious and organised crime is adequate. Every month it reviews OCGs, on the basis of analytical reports that score the OCGs against national criteria to assess the risk and harm they could cause to communities. However, the force recognises that its understanding of organised crime is not good enough, and this is reflected in the low number of OCGs identified.
by the force. To identify OCGs effectively the force needs to gather intelligence from a wide range of sources, including from officers working in local communities. However, the force cannot do this well as it has so few officers dedicated to local communities. During our inspection, we found evidence of the serious and organised crime team being underused in their specialism, and often used to monitor sex offenders instead. While this is an important role, HMIC consider that this specialist team would be better employed in identifying and tackling current and emerging OCGs. The force is about to review the team’s terms of reference.

In local policing areas, investigations into OCGs are managed by lead responsible officers (LROs), who oversee and direct local activity. The force ensures that LROs are using up-to-date management plans based on the 4Ps structure and regularly holds them to account. LROs routinely engage with partner organisations, as is evidenced in the monthly returns submitted by the LRO and scrutinised at the OCG moderation meetings and at OCG management group. Each LRO is expected to liaise directly with relevant partner organisations and with, at the very least, the CSP manager, who will identify opportunities to implement the 4Ps. We reviewed the plans for Operation Avicenna in Leighton Buzzard, together with a number of recent monthly updates to the force OCG meetings, all of which showed a consistent application of the 4P’s.

We found examples of the force working effectively with partner organisations to disrupt OCGs. In Luton, Operation Boson is a long-term response to guns and gangs involving a wide range of partner organisations who exchange information and intelligence effectively. This operation also identifies the street sex trade and organised crime. From September 2016, this grew into the Boson team, with its focus on reducing the threat of harm to those potentially at risk. Operation Lostock is a modern-day slavery operation that has taken out a serious crime prevention order (SCPO) through collaboration with the probation service and close liaison with Her Majesty’s Revenue and Customs’ ‘Hidden Economy’ team. Another serious organised crime unit-led operation was Operation Cresta, which targeted a child sexual exploitation OCG identified by social services and referred to the force by the CSP manager.

Good joint partnership work is in place in schools, which entails the police, schools, the youth offending scheme, and other agencies working closely together to identify young people who may be drawn into organised crime groups. A good example of the force tackling serious youth violence is the campaign ‘Before it’s too late’, which includes traditional and digital media, a knife amnesty, mystery shopping to test knife

---

42 A serious crime prevention order (SCPO) is a court order that is used to protect the public by preventing, restricting or disrupting a person’s involvement in serious crime. An SCPO can prevent involvement in serious crime by imposing various conditions on a person; for example, restricting who he or she can associate with, restricting his or her travel, or placing an obligation to report his or her financial affairs to the police.
sales with follow-ups, former gang members giving presentations, and a blog by the mother of a murdered 14-year-old.

The Eastern Region Special Operations Unit (ERSOU) provides specialist support to disrupt OCGs, as well as a range of capabilities in areas such as intelligence, and specialist policing tactics and techniques, such as surveillance. This regional team can enhance the force capability: for example, it can add its own intelligence, perhaps from other forces and partner organisations, to that held by the force. This should help the force to produce a more accurate and detailed picture of serious and organised criminality.

Bedfordshire Police works closely with ERSOU and other forces in the region to tackle an OCG operating across several force areas. Staff in the force serious organised crime unit have effective working relationships with ERSOU and they are able to access specialist capabilities, including specialist resources such as covert and technical support, when they need it. The force has not completed an action plan to set out how it will continue to improve the way it works in the region, as HMIC recommended in 2015. The force should work with ERSOU and its other constituent forces to complete an action plan as soon as possible. This should help it to make the best use of specialist capabilities, minimise duplication, and protect the public from serious and organised crime more effectively.

In HMIC’s 2015 effectiveness report we identified that the force needed to improve its understanding of the impact of its activity on serious and organised crime, and learn from experience how to maximise the force’s disruptive effect on this activity. This year we found that the force still needs to improve its approach to identifying the impact of its activity on serious and organised crime. It recognises that while it now records 4Ps’ plans for all OCGs, the quality of these plans could be improved. The force formally records all disruptions of OCGs in accordance with national guidance, but its analysis of the longer-term impact of the disruption is limited. It records learning as part of the closing report and tracks actions that arise through the force tasking meeting. However, we found on examining a number of closing reports that their lack of content did not support learning. The force should improve the quality of closure reports so that they identify common themes, and share this learning more widely with partner organisations.

This year we found an improvement in the knowledge and understanding of community teams about OCGs. For example, a local team dealt with a group of drug dealers identified as an OCG, developing intelligence and executing a number of warrants (Operation Grangemouth). Local officers were also charged with gathering intelligence on OCGs, for example, officers were asked to look for and report back on named individuals and vehicles on a Traveller site known to contain OCG members. Community officers have some knowledge of other types of OCG activity, such as modern-day slavery, through computer-based training packages, but their
effectiveness in identifying and responding to this type of activity is limited due to their actual capacity to be able to do the training.

How effectively does the force prevent serious and organised crime?
A force that effectively tackles serious and organised crime needs to be able to stop people being drawn in to this crime. Many of these people may be vulnerable and already involved in gang and youth violence. It should also be using a range of approaches and powers to prevent those known criminals continuing to cause harm. HMIC expects a force’s approach to prevention to be a significant element of its overall strategy to tackle the harm that serious and organised crime causes communities.

Bedfordshire Police works with communities to help prevent young people from being drawn into gangs or organised criminality, but it could do more. The force is involved in the ‘Troubled Families’ programme, led by its public protection command, to identify people at risk of being drawn into organised crime, and it seeks to intervene where necessary. The CSP manager for each local authority has a Troubled Families programme that includes a dedicated co-ordinator, and a responsible officer who leads a team supporting the families. The force has an agreement that the OCG co-ordinator will periodically map OCG members across the Troubled Families database to see if there are any crossovers and referral opportunities. The force also continues to use a variety of media, including social media and more traditional means, to let the public know about the success it has had in dealing with OCGs.

The force runs a number of good initiatives targeted at ending gang and youth violence and seeking to deter people from being drawn into organised crime. It has recently secured a £46,000 grant from the Home Office for a project it is undertaking with a third-sector organisation called Stepping Stones, which works with vulnerable women. The project will provide support to women with links to OCG members. The Boson team identifies suitable women through its detailed knowledge of gang activities and undertakes joint assessments with Stepping Stones to ensure the women meet the eligibility criteria. The project offers support and mentoring to the young women. Another project, Practivate, is a 12-week diversionary programme aimed at developing young people’s business skills; Youthscape is a mentoring and support programme for gang members in the Luton area; and Reactive8 is a

---

43 Troubled families is a programme of targeted-intervention for families with multiple problems, including crime, anti-social behaviour, mental health problems, domestic abuse and unemployment. Local authorities identify ‘troubled families’ in their area and usually assign a key worker to act as a single point of contact. Central government pays local authorities by results for each family they ‘turn around’.
Bedford-based programme looking to use team-building programmes to bring opposing gangs together and defuse conflict.

The force’s approach to the management of serious and organised criminals is limited. Responsibility for tracking organised criminals in prison rests with ERSOU, which notifies the force of the pending release of a member of an OCG from prison so that it can review the intelligence it currently holds on the OCG member to decide whether further operational activity is warranted. The force has sought and obtained additional orders (known formally as ancillary orders) designed to deter organised criminals from future offending. However, it does not have a systematic approach to the management of these individuals or to monitoring their compliance. The force recognises that this remains an area for improvement.

The force should make more of additional (ancillary) orders to prevent serious crime. As of 1 July 2016, ten individuals were being managed by serious crime prevention orders (SCPOs). The force should ensure that all serious crime operations routinely include a review to seek an SCPO at the point of charging the suspect. The force does not currently have a clearly defined approach to managing offenders subject to SCPOs or other ancillary orders. Responsibility for managing them is allocated to the senior investigating officer (SIO) when the offender is convicted and the order secured. However, the force has no system to ensure continuity should the SIO move to a different post, or to monitor compliance with the orders. The force is currently researching best practice to identify a solution based on offender management or the sex offender management processes. It is making use of ancillary orders, and has taken out 11 criminal behaviour orders (CBOs) on offenders identified through by the Boson team; these orders place restrictions on movements, associations, and the acquisition and possession of unregistered phones. The unit has good processes for monitoring these offenders on their release from custody. However, the use of CBOs does not appear to be consistent across the force area.

Last year in 2015, we reported that many frontline officers we spoke to in Bedfordshire had little knowledge or understanding of local OCGs, and most could not identify OCG members in their area. During this year’s inspection, we found that frontline officers’ knowledge of local OCGs still needs to be improved. While the force has provided better information, these officers have little knowledge or understanding of what they could do to identify, disrupt or engage in the OCG management process. We could not find any evidence of a geographically-based list of offenders on whom orders had been served. This means that local police officers

---

44 Serious crime prevention order (SCPO) is a court order that is used to protect the public by preventing, restricting or disrupting a person's involvement in serious crime. A SCPO can prevent involvement in serious crime by imposing various conditions on a person; for example, restricting who he or she can associate with, restricting his or her travel, or placing an obligation to report his or her financial affairs to the police.
or PCSOs could observe an offender breaching an order but not be aware of it because of a lack of information.

**Summary of findings**

![Requires improvement](image)

Bedfordshire Police requires improvement in its approach to identifying and tackling serious and organised crime. It does not yet have a clear understanding of the threat and risk across Bedfordshire, and it needs to update its serious and organised crime profile. It has completed some positive work aimed at understanding the threat of sexual exploitation in its area.

The force does not fully understand the threat posed by serious and organised crime. It is managing a low number of organised crime groups (OCGs) and its approach to identifying them could improve. The introduction of the new intelligence desk system is a positive step. But without sufficient resources within its community policing teams, the force cannot effectively gather local intelligence against organised crime. Once it has identified OCGs, it uses good plans to manage them. It also conducts a regular monthly review of OCGs and ensures that it consistently applies the national assessment criteria.

The force has access to an extensive range of specialist capabilities provided by the Eastern Region Specialist Operations Unit. It carries out some good work with schools and universities to identify vulnerable young people who may be at risk of being drawn into serious and organised crime.
Areas for improvement

- The force should further develop its serious and organised crime local profile in conjunction with partner organisations to enhance its understanding of the threat posed by serious and organised crime and to provide the basis for joint activity aimed at reducing this threat.

- The force should ensure that it maps all organised crime groups promptly following identification and re-assesses them at regular intervals in line with national standards.

- The force should improve the awareness of organised crime groups among neighbourhood teams, to ensure that they can reliably identify these groups, collect intelligence, and disrupt their activity.

- The force should improve its understanding, across the government’s national 4P framework, of the impact of its activity against serious and organised crime, and ensure that it learns from experience to maximise the force’s disruptive effect on this activity.

- The force should complete an action plan to make maximum use of regional organised crime unit (ROCU) capabilities, minimise duplication at force level, and ensure that the use of shared ROCU resources is prioritised effectively between forces in the Eastern region.

- The force should enhance its approach to the 'lifetime management' of organised criminals to minimise the risk they pose to local communities. This approach should include routine consideration of ancillary orders, and the use of partner agency powers and other tools to deter organised criminals from continuing to offend.
How effective are the force’s specialist capabilities?

Some complex threats require both a specialist capability and forces to work together to respond to them. This question assesses both the overall preparedness of forces to work together on a number of strategic threats and whether forces have a good understanding of the threat presented by firearms incidents and how equipped they are to meet this threat.

How effective are the force's arrangements to ensure that it can fulfil its national policing responsibilities?

The Strategic Policing Requirement (SPR)\(^\text{45}\) specifies six national threats. These are complex threats and forces need to be able to work together if they are to respond to them effectively. These include serious and organised crime, terrorism, serious cyber-crime incidents and child sexual abuse. It is beyond the scope of this inspection to assess in detail whether forces are capable of responding to these national threats. Instead, HMIC has checked whether forces have made the necessary arrangements to test their own preparedness for dealing with these threats should they materialise.

Bedfordshire Police has the necessary arrangements to ensure that it can fulfil its national policing responsibilities. These include a joint protective services board for the forces in the strategic alliance, which is made up of the Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Hertfordshire forces. Chief officers understand their responsibilities under the Strategic Policing Requirement (SPR) and take responsibility for specific threats. The force has carried out assessments of the national threats specified within the SPR.

Analysis is conducted on all the national threats at both force and regional level to identify and assess vulnerabilities, and the outcome of this analysis is published in a document called a problem profile. Regionally, the ERSOU has a good understanding of regional threats and is rigorous and inclusive in its approach to assessing these. We found a good alignment between force activity and national and regional priorities. The force profile brings together intelligence and makes sound assessments.

\(^{45}\) The SPR is issued annually by the Home Secretary, setting out the latest national threats and the appropriate national policing capabilities required to counter those threats. National threats require a co-ordinated or aggregated response from a number of police forces. Forces often need to work collaboratively, and with other partners, national agencies or national arrangements, to ensure such threats are tackled effectively. Strategic Policing Requirement, Home Office, March 2015. Available at: 
Bedfordshire Police has good procedures for testing its own preparedness for responding to national threats specified within the SPR. It regularly exercises and tests its public order, firearms and civil emergencies response across the region and with partner organisations. As part of the local resilience forum, a community risk register for Bedfordshire provides guidance to the community on a range of potential risks, including detailed local plans to respond to flooding and fuel shortages. The force has business continuity plans for critical areas, for example, in its control room, so that 999 and 101 calls can be answered if there is a loss of power or IT systems, or if there is a pandemic that prevents staff attending the workplace. The force tests its IT systems regularly to ensure they cannot be compromised and they are resilient to a cyber-attack.

How well prepared is the force to respond to a firearms attack?

Following the terrorist attacks in Paris on 13 November 2015, the government allocated £143 million to the 43 England and Wales police forces to increase their armed capability. This funding has enabled some forces to increase the number of armed police officers able to respond to a terrorist attack. These attacks include those committed by heavily armed terrorists across multiple sites in quick succession, as in Paris. These attacks are known as marauding terrorist firearms attacks. The funding is for those forces considered to be at greatest risk of a terrorist attack. This also has the effect of increasing the ability of the police service to respond to other forms of terrorist attacks (and another incident requiring an armed policing response). Forces have begun to recruit and train new armed officers. This process is due to be completed by March 2018.

Bedfordshire Police is well prepared to respond to an attack requiring an armed response. The force is part of a well-established collaboration with Cambridgeshire and Hertfordshire forces (the strategic alliance). Specialist firearms, roads policing and dog patrol officers, and staff from the forces work together as part of the joint protective services (JPS). The JPS has developed a strategic threat and risk assessment that complies with the College of Policing guidelines and the Home Office codes of practice. It uses all appropriate intelligence sources to assess threat and risk and includes an analysis of iconic sites and crowded places. It refers to the increase in threat levels and national plans to increase the number of armed response vehicles (ARVs).

The assessment was last reviewed in January 2016, in light of revised armed policing assumptions following the attacks in Paris in October 2015. There is an evidence link between threats and the number of firearms officers and their capability. Although the strategic alliance is not part of the national armed policing uplift programme, it made a decision to increase the number of authorised firearms officers (AFOs) to provide resilience and to support the national response. The JPS
roads policing unit will provide the additional capability, and the training is already well under way.

The assessment actively addresses the threat of a contemporaneous marauding terrorist firearms attack (MTFA) incident at multiple sites. The strategic alliance regularly conducts terrorist firearms exercises. The alliance also holds regular tabletop and live exercises involving the military and emergency services to test skills and interoperability. We found that call handlers are confident that they would recognise a MTFA incident and immediately refer it to a supervisor, but the exercises conducted so far have not tested the control room function. The forces in the strategic alliance should ensure that the question prompts for call handlers are capable of supporting them in the event of an MTFA. Control room staff should take part in local and regional exercises to test the control room response. Although the firearms commanders in control rooms are confident in their response and know the requirements for providing mutual aid support to respond to regional and national threats, they should receive additional support in the form of more concise instructions and aide memoires. We found good awareness and testing of plans when resources are required from outside the strategic alliance area.

Summary of findings

Ungraded

Bedfordshire Police has appropriate plans for mobilising specialist resources in response to The Strategic Policing Requirement threats. These plans are tested on a regular basis and amendments made following the lessons learned from such tests. The force is well prepared to respond to a firearms attack. The assessment of threat, risk and harm has been reviewed recently and it explicitly includes the threats posed by marauding firearms terrorists. The force, together with its strategic alliance partners Cambridgeshire Constabulary and Hertfordshire Constabulary, is increasing its firearms capacity and capability, and it making progress in doing so.

Areas for improvement

- The forces in the strategic alliance should ensure that:
  - question prompts for call takers are sufficient to support them in the event of a marauding terrorist firearms attack;
  - control room staff take part in local and regional exercises to test the control room response; and
  - control room inspectors have access to more concise instructions and memorandums.
Next steps

HMIC assesses progress on causes of concern and areas for improvement identified within its reports in a number of ways. We receive updates through our regular conversations with forces, re-assess as part of our annual PEEL programme, and, in the most serious cases, revisit forces.

HMIC highlights recurring themes emerging from our PEEL inspections of police forces within our national reports on police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy. These reports identify those issues that are reflected across England and Wales and may contain additional recommendations directed at national policing organisations, including the Home Office, where we believe improvements can be made at a national level.

Findings and judgments from this year’s PEEL effectiveness inspection will be used to direct the design of the next cycle of PEEL effectiveness assessments. The specific areas for assessment are yet to be confirmed, based on further consultation, but we will continue to assess how forces keep people safe and reduce crime to ensure our findings are comparable year on year.
Annex A – About the data

The information presented in this report comes from a range of sources, including published data by the Home Office and Office for National Statistics, inspection fieldwork and data collected directly from all 43 geographic police forces in England and Wales.

Where HMIC has collected data directly from police forces, we have taken reasonable steps to agree the design of the data collection with forces and with other relevant interested parties such as the Home Office. We have given forces several opportunities to check and validate the data they have provided us to ensure the accuracy of our evidence. For instance:

- We checked the data that forces submitted and queried with forces where figures were notably different from other forces or were internally inconsistent.
- We asked all forces to check the final data used in the report and correct any errors identified.

The source of the data is presented with each figure in the report, and is set out in more detail in this annex. The source of Force in numbers data is also set out below.

Methodology

Data in the report

The British Transport Police was outside the scope of inspection. Therefore any aggregated totals for England and Wales exclude British Transport Police data and numbers will differ from those published by the Home Office.

Where other forces have been unable to supply data, this is mentioned under the relevant sections below.

Population

For all uses of population as a denominator in our calculations, unless otherwise noted, we use Office for National Statistics (ONS) mid-2015 population estimates. These were the most recent data available at the time of the inspection.

For the specific case of City of London Police, we include both resident and transient population within our calculations. This is to account for the unique nature and demographics of this force’s responsibility.
Survey of police staff

HMIC conducted a short survey of police staff across forces in England and Wales, to understand their views on workloads, redeployment and the suitability of tasks assigned to them. The survey was a non-statistical, voluntary sample which means that results may not be representative of the population. The number of responses varied between 8 and 2,471 across forces. Therefore, we treated results with caution and used them for exploring further during fieldwork rather than to assess individual force performance.

Ipsos MORI survey of public attitudes towards policing

HMIC commissioned Ipsos MORI to conduct a survey of attitudes towards policing between July and August 2016. Respondents were drawn from an online panel and results were weighted by age, gender and work status to match the population profile of the force area. The sampling method used is not a statistical random sample and the sample size was small, varying between 331 to 429 in each force area. Therefore, any results provided are only an indication of satisfaction rather than an absolute.

The findings of this survey will be shared on our website by summer 2017:
www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/data/peel-assessments/

Review of crime files

HMIC reviewed 60 police case files across crime types for: robbery, common assault (flagged as domestic abuse), grievous bodily harm (GBH), stalking, harassment, rape and domestic burglary. The file review was designed to provide a broad overview of the identification of vulnerability, the effectiveness of investigations and to understand how victims are treated through police processes. Files were randomly selected from crimes recorded between 1 January 2016 and 31 March 2016 and were assessed against several criteria. Due to the small sample size of cases selected, we have not used results from the file review as the sole basis for assessing individual force performance but alongside other evidence gathered.

Force in numbers

A dash in this graphic indicates that a force was not able to supply HMIC with data.

Calls for assistance (including those for domestic abuse)

These data were collected directly from all 43 forces. In 2016, the questions contained a different breakdown of instances where the police were called to an incident compared to the 2015 data collection, so direct comparisons to the equivalent 2015 data are not advised.
Recorded crime and crime outcomes

These data are obtained from Home Office police-recorded crime and outcomes data tables for the 12 months to 30 June 2016 and are taken from the October 2016 Home Office data release, which is available from:


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

Figures about police-recorded crime should be treated with care, as recent increases are likely to have been affected by the renewed focus on the quality and compliance of crime recording since HMIC’s national inspection of crime data in 2014.

For crime outcomes, Dorset Police has been excluded from the England and Wales figure. Dorset Police experienced difficulties with the recording of crime outcomes for the 12 months to 30 June 2016. This was due to the force introducing the Niche records management system in Spring 2015. Problems with the implementation of Niche meant that crime outcomes were not reliably recorded. The failure to file investigations properly meant that a higher than normal proportion of offences were allocated to ‘Not yet assigned an outcome’. During 2016, the force conducted additional work to solve the problem. In doing so, some crime outcomes from the 12 months to 30 June 2016 were updated after that date and are reflected in a later period. This makes Dorset Police’s crime outcome data inconsistent with that provided by other forces. HMIC has decided not to use Dorset Police’s outcome data in the interests of consistency of data use and to maintain fairness to all forces.

Other notable points to consider when interpreting outcome data are listed below and also apply to figure 4.


- Crime outcome proportions show the percentage of crimes recorded in the 12 months to 30 June 2016 that have been assigned each outcome. This means that each crime is tracked or linked to its outcome.

- These data are subject to change, as more crimes are assigned outcomes over time. These data are taken from the October 2016 Home Office data release.
• Providing outcomes data under the new framework is voluntary if not provided directly through the Home Office Data Hub. However, as proportions are used, calculations can be based on fewer than four quarters of data. For the 12 months to 30 June 2016, Derbyshire Constabulary and Suffolk Constabulary were unable to provide the last quarter of data. Therefore, their figures are based on the first three quarters of the year.

• Leicestershire, Staffordshire and West Yorkshire forces are participating in the Ministry of Justice’s out of court disposals pilot. This means these forces no longer issue simple cautions or cannabis/khat warnings and they restrict their use of penalty notices for disorder as disposal options for adult offenders, as part of the pilot. Therefore, their outcomes data should be viewed with this in mind.

• It is important to note that the outcomes that are displayed in figure 8 are based on the number of outcomes recorded in the 12 months to 30 June 2016, irrespective of when the crime was recorded. Therefore, the crimes and outcomes recorded in the reporting year are not tracked, so direct comparisons should not be made between general outcomes and domestic abuse related outcomes in this report. For more details about the methodology for domestic abuse outcomes please see explanatory notes below, under figure 8.

Anti-social behaviour

These data are obtained from Office for National Statistics data tables, available from:
www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/datasets/policeforceareadatatables

All police forces record incidents of anti-social behaviour reported to them in accordance with the provisions of the National Standard for Incident Recording (NSIR). Incidents are recorded under NSIR in accordance with the same ‘victim focused’ approach that applies for recorded crime, although these figures are not subject to the same level of quality assurance as the main recorded crime collection. Incident counts should be interpreted as incidents recorded by the police, rather than reflecting the true level of victimisation. Other agencies also deal with anti-social behaviour incidents (for example, local authorities and social landlords); incidents reported to these agencies will not generally be included in police figures.

When viewing this data the user should be aware of the following:

• Warwickshire Police had a problem with its incident recording. For a small percentage of all incidents reported during 2014-15 and 2015-16 it was not possible for the force to identify whether these were anti-social behaviour or other types of incident. These incidents have been distributed pro rata for
Warwickshire, so that one percent of anti-social behaviour in 2014-15 and two percent of anti-social behaviour in 2015-16 are estimated.

- From May 2014, South Yorkshire Police experienced difficulties in reporting those incidents of anti-social behaviour that resulted from how it processed calls for assistance, specifically for scheduled appointments. In November 2016, South Yorkshire Police resolved this problem and resubmitted anti-social behaviour data to Office for National Statistics. HMIC has used corrected data for South Yorkshire Police which are available in the November 2016 release of anti-social behaviour incidents data in the link above.

- Bedfordshire Police resubmitted anti-social behaviour data to Office for National Statistics for the 12 months to 30 June 2016. This was because data had been double counted for the second quarter of the financial year. HMIC has used corrected data for Bedfordshire Police which are available in the November 2016 release of anti-social behaviour incidents data in the link above.

**Domestic abuse**

Data for domestic abuse flagged offences were provided by the Home Office for the 12 months to 30 June 2016. These are more recent figures than those previously published by Office for National Statistics.

Data relating to domestic abuse arrests, charges and outcomes were collected through the HMIC data collection.

Further information about the domestic abuse statistics and recent releases are available from:

[www.ons.gov.uk/releases/domesticabuseinenglandandwalesyearendingmarch2016](http://www.ons.gov.uk/releases/domesticabuseinenglandandwalesyearendingmarch2016)

**Organised crime groups (OCGs)**

These data were collected directly from all 43 forces. City of London Police is excluded from the England and Wales rate as its OCG data are not comparable with other forces due to size and its wider national remit.

The number of OCGs in the Warwickshire Police and West Mercia Police force areas is a combined total of OCGs for the two force areas. The OCGs per one million population rate is based upon their areas’ combined population figures.

OCGs which are no longer active – for example because they have been dismantled by the police – can be archived. This means that they are no longer subject to disruption, investigation or monitoring. From 1 September 2014 to 31 December 2015, forces were given a directive by the National Police Chiefs' Council to suspend archiving, pending a review of OCG recording policy. This directive was removed on
1 January 2016, but resulted in many forces archiving more OCGs than they otherwise would have in the 12 months to June 2016. Therefore, direct comparisons should not be made with OCG figures from previous years.

**Victim satisfaction**

Forces were required by the Home Office to conduct satisfaction surveys with specific victim groups. Force victim satisfaction surveys are structured around principal questions exploring satisfaction responses across four stages of interactions:

- initial contact;
- actions;
- follow-up;
- treatment plus the whole experience.

The data used in this report use the results to the question relating to the victim’s whole experience, which specifically asks, “Taking the whole experience into account, are you satisfied, dissatisfied, or neither with the service provided by the police in this case?”

The England and Wales average is calculated based on the average of the rates of satisfaction in all 43 forces.

**Figures throughout the report**

**Figure 1: Police-recorded crime rates (per 1,000 population) for the five year period to 30 June 2016**

Please see ‘Recorded Crime and Crime Outcomes’ above.

**Figure 2: Police-recorded crime rates (per 1,000 population) for the 12 months to 30 June 2016**

Please see ‘Recorded Crime and Crime Outcomes’ above.

**Figure 3: Percentage change in the rate of anti-social behaviour incidents (per 1,000 population), by force, comparing the 12 months to 31 March 2016 with the 12 months to 31 March 2015**

Please see ‘Anti-social behaviour’ above.

**Figure 4: Proportion of outcomes assigned to offences recorded, in 12 months to 30 June 2016, by outcome type**

Please see ‘Recorded Crime and Crime Outcomes’ above.
The outcome number has been provided to improve usability across multiple publications and is in line with Home Office categorisation.

For these data, we state whether the force’s value is ‘one of the highest’, ‘one of the lowest’ or ‘broadly in line with’ all forces in England and Wales. This is calculated by ranking the usage of outcomes and then highlighting the top and bottom 25 percent of forces. All other forces will be broadly in line with England and Wales. However, any interpretation of outcomes should take into account that outcomes will vary dependent on the crime types that occur in each force area, and how the force deals with offenders for different crimes.

This methodology is not comparable with figure 8, so direct comparisons should not be made between the two tables.

**Figure 5: Percentage of ‘Evidential difficulties; victim does not support action’ outcomes assigned to offences recorded in the 12 months to 30 June 2016, by force**

Please see ‘Recorded Crime and Crime Outcomes’ above.

In addition, it is important to understand that the percentages of evidential difficulties can be affected by the level of certain types of crime within a force, such as domestic abuse related offences. The category of evidential difficulties also includes where a suspect has been identified and the victim supports police action, but evidential difficulties prevent further action being taken.

**Figure 6: Percentage of police recorded crime with a vulnerable victim identified, by force, for the 12 months to 30 June 2016**

Please see ‘Recorded Crime and Crime Outcomes’ above.

The number of offences identified with a vulnerable victim in a force is dependent on the force’s definition of vulnerability.

City of London, Devon and Cornwall, Essex, Gloucestershire and Lancashire forces were unable to provide data for the number of recorded crimes with a vulnerable victim identified. Therefore, these forces’ data are not included in the graph or in the calculation of the England and Wales rate.

When viewing this data the user should be aware of the following:

- Suffolk Constabulary was only able to provide eight months of vulnerability data to the 30 June 2016 due to transferring to a different crime management system. Its previous system did not record vulnerability. Therefore, these are the most reliable data it can provide.
Figure 7: Domestic abuse arrest rate (per 100 domestic abuse crimes), by force, for the 12 months to 30 June 2016

Please see ‘Domestic abuse’ above.

Derbyshire, Durham and Gloucestershire forces were unable to provide domestic abuse arrest data. Therefore, these forces’ data are not included in the graph or in the calculation of the England and Wales rate.

The arrest rate is calculated using a common time period for arrests and offences. It is important to note that each arrest is not necessarily directly linked to its specific domestic abuse offence recorded in the 12 months to 30 June 2016 in this calculation. It is also possible to have more than one arrest per offence although this is rare. In addition, the reader should note the increase in police-recorded crime which has affected the majority of forces over the last year (39 out of 43). This may have the effect of arrest rates actually being higher than the figures suggest. Despite this, the calculation still indicates whether the force prioritises arrests for domestic abuse offenders over other potential forms of action. HMIC has evaluated the arrest rate alongside other measures (such as use of voluntary attendance or body-worn video cameras) during our inspection process to understand how each force deals with domestic abuse overall.

When viewing this data the user should be aware of the following:

- Cambridgeshire Constabulary identified a recording issue and that it could only obtain accurate data from a manual audit of its custody records. This means its data may indicate a lower arrest rate. However, at the time of publication this was the most reliable figure the force could provide for the 12 months to 30 June 2016. The force plans to conduct regular manual audits while the recording issue is resolved. HMIC will conduct a further review to test this evidence when more data are available.

- Lancashire Constabulary experienced difficulties in identifying all domestic abuse flagged arrests. This affected 23 days in the 12 months to 30 June 2016. The force investigated this and confirmed that the impact on data provided to HMIC would be marginal and that these are the most reliable figures it can provide.

Figure 8: Rate of outcomes recorded in 12 months to 30 June 2016 for domestic-related offences

Please see ‘Domestic Abuse’ above.

Dorset Police is excluded from our data for the reasons described under ‘Recorded Crime and Crime Outcomes’ above.

Nottinghamshire Police has been excluded from domestic abuse outcomes data. The force experienced difficulties with the conversion of some crime data when it
moved to a new crime recording system. This means that the force did not record reliably some crime outcomes for domestic abuse related offences. The force subsequently solved the problem and provided updated outcomes figures. However, this makes Nottinghamshire Police’s outcomes data for domestic abuse related offences inconsistent with that provided by other forces. HMIC has decided not to use Nottinghamshire Police’s outcomes data for domestic abuse related offences in the interests of consistency of data use and to maintain fairness to all forces.

In April 2015, the Home Office began collecting information from the police on whether recorded offences were related to domestic abuse. Crimes are identified by the police as domestic abuse related if the offence meets the government definition of domestic violence and abuse:

“Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality.”

In figure 8, the rate is calculated by the number of each outcome recorded for domestic abuse flagged offences in the 12 months to 30 June 2016, divided by the total number of domestic abuse offences recorded in the 12 months to 30 June 2016. The domestic abuse-related crimes used in this calculation are not necessarily those to which the outcomes have been assigned. Therefore, direct comparisons should not be made between general outcomes in figure 4, where each crime is linked to its associated outcome, and domestic abuse outcomes in figure 8.

For these data, we state whether the force’s value is ‘one of the highest’, ‘one of the lowest’ or ‘broadly in line with’ all forces in England and Wales. This is calculated by ranking the usage of outcomes and then highlighting the top and bottom 25 percent of forces. All other forces will be broadly in line with England and Wales. However, any interpretation of outcomes should take into account that outcomes will vary dependent on the crime types that occur in each force area, and how the force deals with offenders for different crimes.

**Figure 9: Organised crime groups per one million population, by force, as at 1 July 2016**

Please see ‘Organised Crime Groups’ above.

**Figure 10: Active organised crime groups by predominant crime type, as at 1 July 2016**

Humberside Police was unable to provide the full data for predominant crime types in the time available. Therefore, this force’s data are included in the graph or in the calculation of the England and Wales proportion.

Numbers may not sum to 100 percent due to rounding.