PEEL: Police effectiveness 2016

An inspection of West Midlands Police

Contents

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 West Midlands 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/west-midlands/).

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[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

West Midlands Police	England and Wales
322	240

Crime (excluding fraud)

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

West Midlands Police	England and Wales
67	68

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

West Midlands Police	England and Wales
+6.2%	+7.8%

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

West Midlands Police	England and Wales
-10.8%	-3.4%

Crime outcomes*

Charged/summonsed

West Midlands Police	England and Wales
14.2%	12.1%

Evidential difficulties: suspect identified but victim does not support action

West Midlands Police	England and Wales
8.0%	10.6%

Investigation completed but no suspect identified

West Midlands Police	England and Wales
56.1%	47.4%

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

Anti-social behaviour

Anti-social behaviour incidents per 1,000 population 12 months to 31 March 2016

West Midlands Police	England and Wales
21	31

Anti-social behaviour incidents per 1,000 population 12 months to 31 March 2015

West Midlands Police	England and Wales
23	34

Domestic abuse

Domestic abuse calls for assistance per 1,000 population 12 months to 30 June 2016

West Midlands Police	England and Wales
12	16

Domestic abuse as a percentage of all recorded crime (excluding fraud) 12 months to 30 June 2016

West Midlands Police	England and Wales
10.5%	11.1%

Domestic abuse as a percentage of all recorded crime (excluding fraud) 12 months to 31 March 2015

West Midlands Police	England and Wales
10.0%	10.0%

Organised crime groups

Organised crime groups per million population as at 1 July 2016

West Midlands Police	England and Wales
18	46

Victim satisfaction rate

Victim satisfaction with the overall service provided by the police 12 months to 30 June 2016

West Midlands Police	England and Wales
82.2%	83.3%

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 judgment[2]

Good

West Midlands Police is good in respect of its effectiveness at keeping people safe and reducing crime. It has an effective approach to preventing and investigating crime, but the support and safeguarding it provides to vulnerable victims need to improve. Our overall judgment this year is the same as last year, when we judged the force to be good in respect of effectiveness.

Overall summary

How effective is the force at preventing crime, tackling anti-social behaviour and keeping people safe?	**Good**
How effective is the force at investigating crime and reducing re-offending?	**Good**
How effective is the force at protecting those who are vulnerable from harm, and supporting victims?	**Requires improvement**
How effective is the force at tackling serious and organised crime?	**Good**
How effective are the force's specialist capabilities?	**Ungraded**

Although we found some areas for improvement, West Midlands Police is good at keeping people safe and reducing crime.

The force assesses calls from members of the public using a structured process, which ensures that an appropriate response is provided in the majority of cases. In many cases initial investigations are thorough, but this is not consistent.

Subsequently, the force's investigations make good use of plans to structure investigative work. Managers provide effective supervision and the force gives the

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

majority of victims a good service. The force is working effectively to manage the increased demand for examinations of computers and it is giving effective and timely support to investigations.

Previous causes of concern relating to the force's management of missing persons and its approach to domestic abuse risk assessment have not been alleviated.

The force's revised policy for managing cases of absent or missing persons places greater emphasis on gathering information and assessing risk at the first point of contact. However the force is not accurately assessing risks for missing persons consistently, and in some cases duty inspectors overlook relevant information. This creates the potential for vulnerable missing persons to be unnecessarily exposed to potential harm.

Officers do not consistently complete a domestic abuse risk-assessment when it is appropriate that they should do so. The force cannot be confident that all vulnerable victims of domestic abuse receive a response which has been tailored to their individual needs from all the public services which are able to help them.

The force is effective at recognising vulnerability associated with mental health. Street triage vehicles provide a 24/7 response and mental health professionals work in all of its custody areas. The force gives regular mental health training to front line officers and staff.

The overall number of suspects across the force who are wanted for domestic abuse offences has remained relatively stable for a sustained period. The force has an improved focus on outstanding domestic abuse offenders as part of its routine business.

The force regularly disrupts and investigates serious and organised crime (SOC) in collaboration with a wide range of other public service organisations. Use of all four elements of the 4Ps approach (pursue, protect, prevent, prepare) is increasing but is not yet entirely consistent practice.

The force has low numbers of organised crime groups (OCGs) per one million of population, particularly in comparison to other urban forces. The force intends to apply the OCG mapping methodology more broadly to incorporate more organised urban street gangs and other groups engaged in organised crime, which will allow it to target these groups with its SOC partners more effectively. The force has a variety of effective projects in place to deter people from becoming involved in serious and organised crime.

The force has the necessary arrangements in place to ensure its preparedness to respond to the national threats set out in the *Strategic Policing Requirement*. The force is well prepared to respond to a marauding terrorist firearms attack. It is increasing its armed capability, and is making excellent progress with recruitment and training in order to achieve this.

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 West Midlands?

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 10.8 percent in West Midlands compared with a decrease of 3.4 percent across all forces in England and Wales.

Over this same period, victim-based crime decreased by 10.1 percent in West Midlands, 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 West Midlands, for the five-year period to 30 June 2016
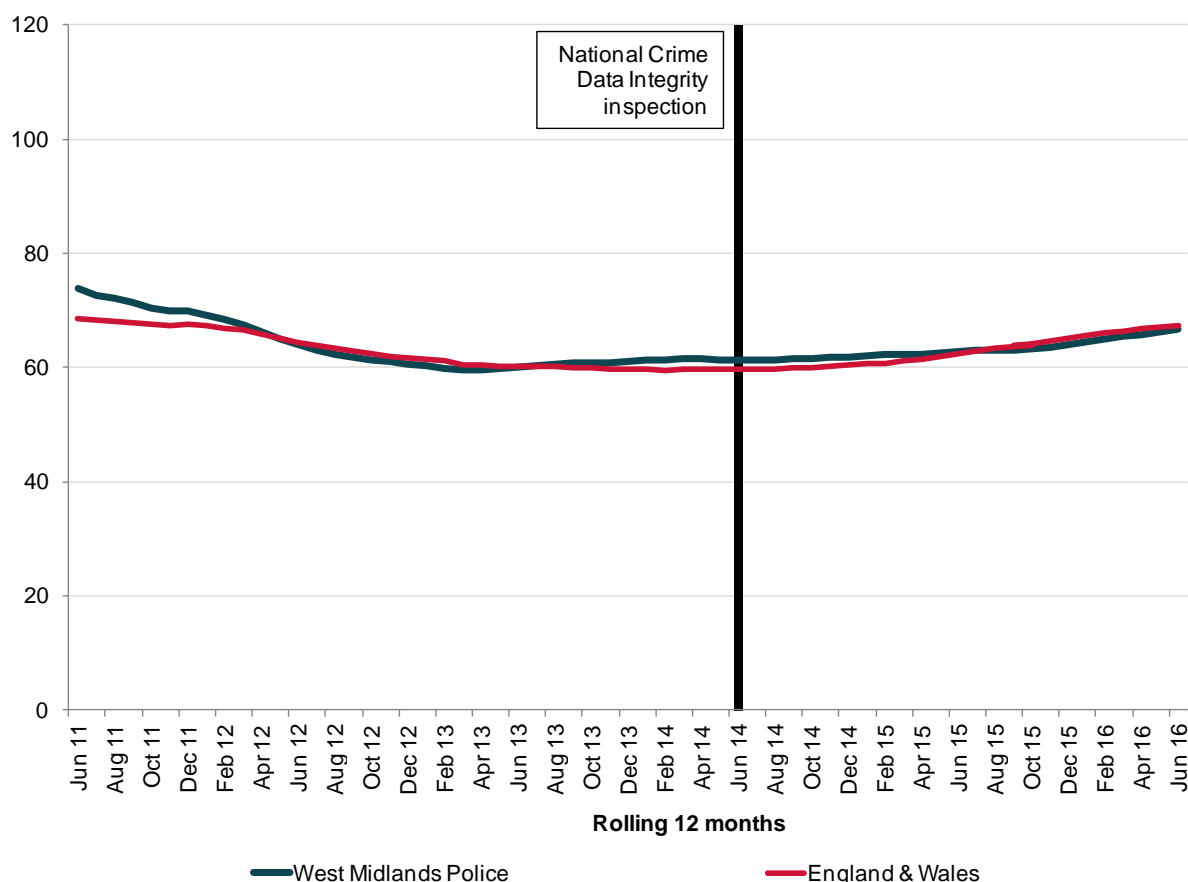
Source: Home Office data
For further information about these data, please see annex A

More recently, when compared with the previous 12 month period, police-recorded crime (excluding fraud) in West Midlands increased by 6.2 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 West Midlands 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 West Midlands, for the 12 months to 30 June 2016

Rates per 1,000 population	West Midlands Police	England and Wales
Recorded crime (excluding fraud)	66.7	68.2
Victim-based crime	60.3	60.4
Sexual offences	1.6	1.9
Assault with injury	7.5	7.0
Burglary in a dwelling*	11.0	8.1

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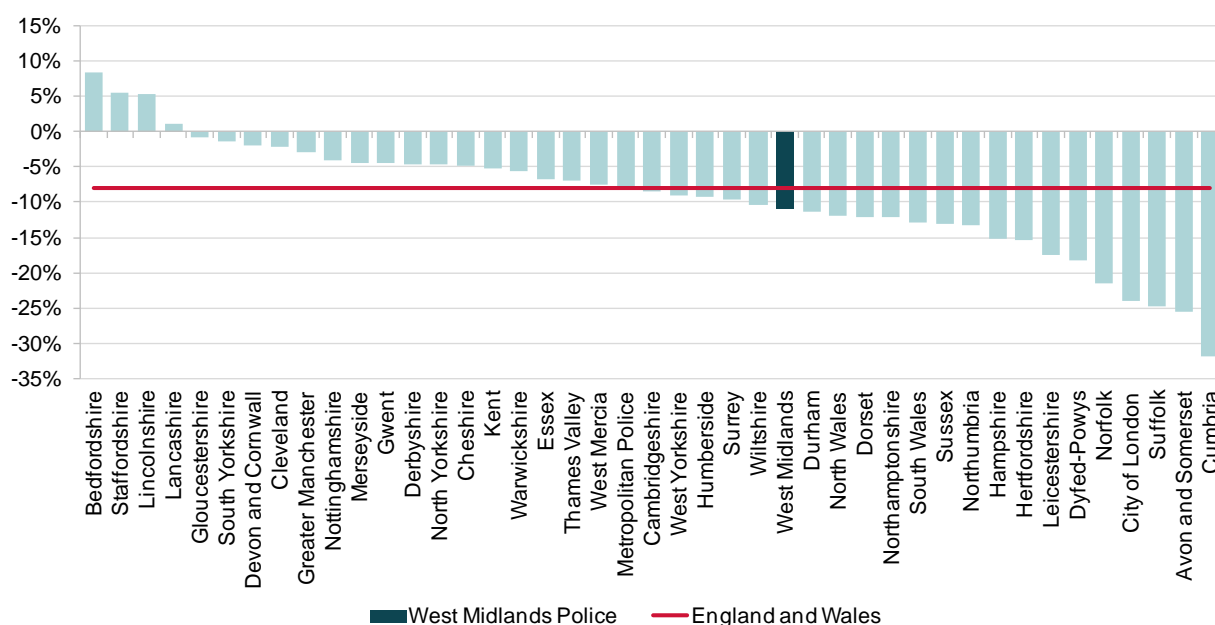
Source: Home Office data
For further information about these data, please see annex A

In the 12 months to 31 March 2016, West Midlands Police recorded 21 incidents of anti-social behaviour per 1,000 population. This is 11 percent fewer 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 West Midlands Police understand the risk posed to its communities?

In order to effectively understand the threat and risk faced by communities to conduct effective activity to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour police forces need a model of local policing that means police officers and PCSOs can devote sufficient time to community engagement, visible targeted foot patrols and working with partners to promote resolutions that protect communities and prevent crime. It is the successful undertaking of these three activities that lead to crime reduction and increased public confidence.

West Midlands Police demonstrates a good understanding of the communities that it serves and the threats that they face. In conjunction with other public services it is assessing some complex, emerging and hidden threats.

The force's 2015/16 estimate of expenditure on neighbourhood policing is £32 per head population. This is above the £25 per head population average for England and Wales. This has increased by 4 percent between 2013/14 and 2015/16, which is slightly higher than the 1 percent increase in England and Wales as a whole over the same period.

The force is about to change its operating model so that its response teams become a single force resource operating from five centres. The force plans to introduce the changes in two phases. The first began in November 2016. The second will begin early in 2017. The chief constable's ambition is that the new model should continue

to maintain the values of the past, but with a focused and determined approach to prevent crime and disorder, and to manage demand. The force intends to maintain a strong concentration on neighbourhood policing, and the new operating model retains a dedicated neighbourhood policing team in each local policing area. Since April 2016, the force has reassessed its financial position and has made a decision to maintain and possibly increase PCSO numbers.

The force's strategic assessment describes the threats faced by the public and examines the changes in crime over the last three years. It concentrates on the demand associated with people who are vulnerable and who have complex needs. It uses 'Craig's story', a case study of a young violent man. This case study has informed the force's approach to tackling crime and anti-social behaviour when it works with other public service organisations, including both the decisions to continue with its priority of reducing violence, and to invest in early intervention strategies.

The force's analysts produce problem profiles, offender profiles and victim profiles that support effective interventions for both police and other public services. These profiles, supported by joint assessments with other public services, help the force to identify and assess a range of strategic threats and risks. This includes hidden and emerging threats such as modern day slavery, terrorism and community tensions.

The force makes use of the MORILE process developed by the National Police Chiefs' Council to help it assess threat and harm for a limited number of problems such as domestic abuse, child sexual exploitation, troubled families and volume crime. To help with its overall assessment of risk and harm, the force is planning to expand its use of MORILE to analyse a greater range of threats.

The force is using a neighbourhood typology model developed as part of Next Generation Local Policing[3] with the support of Cardiff University. It maps out the level and complexity of harm in individual neighbourhood areas in order to determine the level of resources which each area requires, and which areas the force needs to prioritise.

The force produces local neighbourhood profiles, which include information from other public services, and demographic data to help neighbourhood teams to understand the make-up of the community. However, in some parts of the force we found that these profiles are not being used to their full extent, with neighbourhood teams relying on local knowledge and experience. With the rapidly changing demographics of West Midlands, this has the potential to limit the force's wider understanding of its communities.

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[3] Next Generation Local Policing is one of the areas of change work within the force's overall change programme WMP 2020.

The force has plans to develop greater insight from the information it holds and has a data-driven insight project underway as part of its WMP 2020 change programme. This involves the development of a new data platform to draw together information from multiple internal and external IT systems.

How does West Midlands Police engage with the public?

In order to understand and prioritise what matters most to the public, West Midlands Police makes good use of a very broad range of tailored activities to communicate with the public. Many of these activities are innovative and involve representatives from groups which are hard to reach.

The force has an engagement steering group, chaired at chief officer level, which meets every two months. Different methods of communication with the public have an identified force lead and there is an engagement lead for each local policing area. The force's engagement strategy emphasises the force's focus on 'engagement with purpose', namely to increase public confidence and to encourage active citizen participation in local policing.

The force has a long-established framework of direct methods of communicating with the public via the more traditional means such as independent advisory groups, networks of people representing their local communities (called 'key individual networks'), community meetings and beat surgeries. These established methods are now supplemented by digital communications such as neighbourhood team websites, social media, web chats and live streaming. Data collected by the force show that many people who contact the police prefer to do this online. As a consequence, the force conducted a pilot study with a third party company to develop prototype 'apps' which will improve the ways in which the public can communicate with the police digitally.

The force ensures that many of its communication methods are adapted to meet the needs of different communities, which ensures quality communication with groups that are otherwise difficult to reach. These include meetings with community leaders in a variety of different faith centres, open-air surgeries in the summer months, and a reference group for people of Jamaican descent. The force reaches out to women and young people who would otherwise have no contact with police, by running interactive campaigns called 'our families, our future' and 'speak for yourself'.

Many of the force's projects are run jointly with other public services, which helps the force to reach groups who would not routinely talk directly to the police. For instance, the force conducts city centre 'walkabout patrols' with Salvation Army volunteers to improve the force's understanding of the problems associated with homelessness. The force works with specialist nurses in community medical centres to identify and support potential victims of female genital mutilation. The force supports the 'mentors in violence prevention programme' which aims to reduce violence and bullying by supporting young people to influence the attitudes and behaviour of their peers.

The force has initiated an 'Active Citizen's project' which is paid for with monies received by the force through the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002, and by the office of the police and crime commissioner. This encourages people to come forward with ideas to help address their concerns, such as communication with the Chinese student community in Birmingham to address crime and road safety, and a community voting event in Perry Barr.

In response to this broad range of communications the force adopts a 'you said, we did' approach to provide feedback. We found evidence of the force using its web site and social media to provide regular updates on progress about tackling specific community concerns.

HMIC commissioned Ipsos MORI to conduct a survey of attitudes towards policing between July and August 2016. The survey indicated that there has been a decrease in public satisfaction with West Midlands Police. Some 407 people were interviewed and 47 percent were very or fairly satisfied with local policing in their area. This is a 4 percent decrease on 2015.[4]

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?

The force ensures that officers and staff routinely dedicate time to proactive preventative policing. It regularly uses neighbourhood officers and staff to supplement response teams, but the force has a policy to limit such abstraction to a maximum of 33 percent.

The force's approach to solving problems in the community could be improved with a more structured 'problem solving approach' such as the SARA model (scan, analyse, respond, assess). The force encourages neighbourhood teams to use this model or an alternative model of PIER (prevention, intelligence, enforcement, reassurance) to structure their approach. However HMIC found only isolated examples of neighbourhood teams structuring their problem-solving work using SARA or PIER.

In some areas of the force we found that officers and PCSOs are trying to solve problems without a full understanding of any structured problem-solving model. We

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[4] For further details, see annex A.

found an emphasis on the response element. Local problem-solving plans consisted merely of a list of actions being undertaken. Little analysis is taking place of local problems using the problem analysis method of victim, offender and location. This means that the force is not concentrating on the underlying causes of problems and then tailoring its responses accordingly. The force is also not evaluating the success of the work it has done to tackle local problems. For problem-solving to be successful, a force should assess the effectiveness of its interventions continuously, so that interventions can be modified if necessary. The lack of analysis, and the absence of any assessment of interventions means that the force cannot be confident that the work it is doing to solve problems in its communities is effective. This is an area for improvement for the force.

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

In our 2015 PEEL inspections, HMIC found that West Midlands Police demonstrated a strong commitment to reducing crime and anti-social behaviour. The force recognised the importance of working continuously in conjunction with other public services. This is consistent with what we found this year and the force is consistently using a range of innovative tactics and interventions. In particular the force has a strong emphasis on early intervention, working in conjunction with other public service organisations.

A central strand of the force's change programme is being 'geared to prevent harm'. The force's ambition is to move from a reactive style of policing to one which is more preventative in its approach. The force's strategic assessment recognises the importance of intervening early, especially with families and individuals who have complex needs. The chief constable's ambition is to achieve this by using shared data more effectively, and also by developing a greater depth of partnership working.

The force's approach to tackling crime and anti-social behaviour is overseen by an intervention and prevention board chaired by a chief officer with responsibility for local policing. This board focuses on troubled families, early help, young people, substance misuse, mental health, priority areas and managing offenders.

HMIC found that the force is consistently working in collaboration with local public service organisations. A broad range of arrangements for working with other public and private sector organisations is in place throughout the force area. The force routinely shares data and other information with other public services and this supports joint prioritisation. For example a two-way flow of information with a range of organisations supports the troubled families programme. Data sharing is enhanced though shared arrangements for agreeing priorities, plans and decisions, such as those in place for the business district in Wolverhampton.

The force is actively engaged with other public services in planning how it will work with other agencies in the proposed West Midlands combined authority and also with

seven individual local authorities. The force recognises the problems that this poses and acknowledges that its plans to increase integration with other public services must be developed alongside its own change programme.

The force works well with other organisations in a variety of ways in order to keep people safer in local neighbourhoods. For example, the force works closely with Public Health England as part of the West Midlands Violence Prevention Alliance developing both criminal justice and health interventions for violence. The force works with local authorities to tackle families who undermine neighbourhoods (TFUN). This uses robust enforcement to manage priority families where rehabilitation has failed. The force recently introduced a tool for intervention and prevention triggers (TIPT). Although this is a recent innovation which has not yet been evaluated, it has been designed to help the force and other public services to exchange information and to recognise when children have had adverse experiences which merit long-term joint interventions.

Neighbourhood officers and PCSOs routinely dedicate time to preventative work with a range of other public services. For instance a PCSO talks to elderly members of the community, and attends market days to give crime prevention advice. We also heard examples of 'designing out crime' such as improved landscaping to reduce the fear of crime in Bilston, Wolverhampton.

West Midlands Police used anti-social behaviour powers 188 times per one million population in the 12 months to 30 June 2016. This is lower than many other forces in England and Wales. However, we found neighbourhood officers successfully using a wide range of other powers to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour by using methods such as public space protection orders, gang injunctions and closure orders. The force is also one of the highest users of civil injunctions. The force is exploiting the full range of civil orders and this is contributing to a decrease in anti-social behaviour. The force has a low rate of recorded anti-social behaviour incidents (20.6 per 1,000 population) compared to the England and Wales rate of 31.0 per 1,000 population. The rate decreased by 11 percent in the 12 months to 31 March 2016 compared to the same period in 2015.

Does the force use evidence of best practice and its own learning to improve the service to the public?

Although the force's evaluation of individual local problem-solving activities requires improvement; the force does evaluate its broader force-wide tactics and interventions. It uses a wide range of evidence sources to assess its performance. The force's ability to improve services would be enhanced if it had an easily accessible central repository of local effective practice for its neighbourhood teams.

When HMIC inspected the force in 2015, we found that it understood the benefits of an evidence-based approach and the dissemination of good practice. However we advised that the ability of the force to provide an outstanding service would be enhanced if learning was disseminated throughout the force more effectively. We advised the force that it should use evidence of 'what works' drawn from other forces, academics and other public services, in order continually to improve its methods of preventing crime and anti-social behaviour. There needs to be routine evaluation of tactics and dissemination of effective practice.

The force has responded positively and has made improvements, but still has more work to do. The force is committed to an evidence-based policing ethos and in order to exploit the latest available evidence it now has 120 projects under way or under consideration. This approach enables it to trial, evaluate and then adopt new ways of working. Examples include Operation Savvy (an operation to carry out highly visible patrolling for 15-minute periods in set locations) and Operation Swordfish (an operation where PCSOs visit people whose neighbours have been burgled, in order to reassure them.

We found examples of effective practice being disseminated throughout the force in a more structured way. Good practice is routinely being shared at the force leadership conference and local policing leaders' forum. The force recently held a neighbourhood policing conference to disseminate best practice for officers including the use of anti-social behaviour legislation, use of acceptable behaviour contracts and early help pathways. The force also conducts internal audits and thematic reviews to evaluate its performance in responding to domestic abuse, sexual offences and reports of missing persons.

The force has introduced 'mi-patch', which is a framework of performance measures to help with assessing the success of its early interventions. Neighbourhood officers are being trained in the use of evidence-based policing to support their everyday role. The force is working with Loughborough University to evaluate the implementation of its early intervention and prevention methods.

However, the force has not brought its good practice together in one central repository. The force intranet does contain information arising from the force's research projects but we found that neighbourhood teams are not accessing this consistently in order to support their preventative work. When considered alongside the lack of structured problem-solving referred to earlier, this means that at a tactical level, officers are not effectively and continually learning from their experience in order to improve services to the public. The force has plans to introduce a dedicated 'sharepoint / knowledge hub' on its intranet in 2016. This will give neighbourhood teams access to local effective practices which will support the force in its work to improve its service to the public.

Summary of findings

Good

West Midlands Police is effective at preventing crime, tackling anti-social behaviour and keeping people safe. This is consistent with last year's findings.

The force has a good understanding of the communities it serves. The force's strategic assessment describes the threats faced by the public and concentrates on the demand associated with people who are vulnerable, and who have complex needs. The force produces local profiles to help its neighbourhood teams to understand the make-up of the community. However in some parts of the force these profiles are not used to their full extent.

The force uses a broad range of tailored methods of communicating with the public in order to understand and prioritise what matters most to the public. Many of these activities are conducted with other public services to help the force to reach groups who would not routinely talk directly to the police.

Area for improvement

- The force should adopt a structured and consistent problem-solving process to enable it to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour more effectively. This activity should be evaluated regularly, and effective practice should be disseminated throughout the force.

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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 offenders being prosecuted; 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/khat[5] 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 partners 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 crime types such as sexual offences, the delay between a crime being recorded and

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[5] 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.

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 West Midlands Police, in 12 months to 30 June 2016, by outcome type[6,7]

Outcome number	Outcome type / group	West Midlands Police	England and Wales
1	**Charged/Summonsed**	**14.2**	**12.1**
4	**Taken into consideration**	**0.1**	**0.2**
	Out-of-court (formal)	**2.7**	**3.2**
2	Caution - youths	0.4	0.4
3	Caution - adults	1.9	2.3
6	Penalty Notices for Disorder	0.4	0.6
	Out-of-court (informal)	**3.8**	**3.6**
7	Cannabis/Khat warning	0.4	0.9
8	Community Resolution	3.5	2.8
*	**Prosecution prevented or not in the public interest**	**0.4**	**1.8**
	Evidential difficulties (victim supports police action)		
15	Suspect identified	7.8	8.3
	Evidential difficulties (victim does not support police action)	**9.1**	**13.8**
16	Suspect identified	8.0	10.6
14	Suspect not identified	1.1	3.2
18	**Investigation complete – no suspect identified**	**56.1**	**47.4**
20	**Action undertaken by another body / agency**	**0.8**	**0.6**
21	**Further investigation to support formal action not in the public interest**	**0.1**	**0.1**
	Total offences assigned an outcome	**95.0**	**91.3**
	Not yet assigned an outcome	**5.0**	**8.7**
	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

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[6] 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.

[7] '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.

In the 12 months to 30 June 2016, West Midlands Police's use of 'investigation complete – no suspect identified' was among the highest in England and Wales. Its use of 'prosecution prevented or not in the public interest' was among the lowest in 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 it deals with offenders for different crimes.

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

West Midlands Police assesses incidents and calls from members of the public using a structured process. This ensures that an appropriate response is provided in the majority of cases.

The force uses THRIVE(+), a variation of the THRIVE[8] risk assessment model, to assess in a structured manner all calls that are received from the public. The additional (+) element encourages the force control room and primary responders to consider any opportunities for early intervention and crime prevention. However the force acknowledges that THRIVE(+) is relatively new and HMIC found that it is not yet accepted and understood by everyone.

The force's OASIS command and control system provides readily accessible call data history quickly to identify previous incidents at the same location, or previous calls from the same telephone number. Officers and staff within the force control room have access to force intelligence systems to help them to assess calls from the public. They are supported by a 24/7 real time intelligence centre (RTIC) which conducts additional research for incidents to help the control room staff make a thorough assessment.

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[8] 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.

Although the force has clear processes for allocating resources to an incident we found that this is sometimes compromised by the levels of demand. This leads at times to incorrect decisions about the grading of a call. As a result the force does not respond to some calls from the public as quickly as it should. The force itself acknowledges this and is about to introduce a new grading policy alongside its new response policing model. The new policy will operate alongside THRIVE(+) and introduces nine different grades of incident with appropriate associated responses. The new model will have a 'mission control centre', which will enable a greater concentration on improved co-ordination of resources and deployment. The force plans to introduce the new model in two stages, and the first stage began in November 2016.

How well do response officers investigate?

In many cases the force's initial investigations are being conducted thoroughly, leading to good end results. The force is more successful at taking offenders to court than many other forces in England and Wales, and gathers the evidence to support cases more successfully than other forces. However there is still room for improvement as officers and staff sometimes miss opportunities to gather evidence from crime scenes at the earliest opportunity.

Following our 2015 inspection of the effectiveness of West Midlands Police, HMIC identified that the force needed to take steps to ensure that all available evidence was recorded at crime scenes. In 2016, although the force is taking steps to improve initial investigation this remains an area for improvement.

The force conducted 'health check' reviews in each of its local policing units and concluded that poor initial scene management was not due to a lack of understanding or knowledge amongst its response teams. The force identified that the problem stemmed from the force's response to increased demand, and that officers were occasionally being prematurely deployed to other incidents. The force assess that more proactive supervision is required to manage this more effectively within the control room.

HMIC found that officers who are the first to attend scenes of crimes, usually response officers, demonstrate a good understanding of the need to conduct prompt initial investigation in the 'golden hour', the critical early stage of an enquiry. Evidence which is gathered in the hour immediately after a crime has been committed is often very important to an investigation. If there is any delay, it is possible that this evidence might no longer be available. We found that in many cases crime scenes are being prioritised and appropriate forensic strategies are used to obtain available evidence. Response officers are equipped with body-worn video cameras, and these cameras help them to retrieve evidence at crime scenes. However, we found that officers are being redeployed from incidents at times when demand outstrips resources. This is consistent with the force's own findings and sometimes results in missed opportunities for early evidence-gathering. Scene

management has been incorporated into supervisor training days and the force conducts dip-sampling of initial investigations, and informs officers and their superiors of the results of the dip-sampling.

The force allocates crimes for further investigation through its CRIMES/Docutrak systems. The allocation policy takes into account threat, harm, risk and the vulnerability of the victim. In deciding on the most appropriate resource the force also considers the seriousness of the crime and the likely requirement for a complex investigation. The most serious and complex types of crime, and crimes which involve vulnerable people, are allocated to appropriately skilled specialist investigators. This is a well-understood policy which is consistently applied by the force's crime service team. Local and force daily management meetings provide an additional opportunity to ensure that crimes are allocated correctly, and that teams have sufficient resources to manage the demand.

We found primary investigators are documenting their handovers to specialists using the CRIMES/Docutrak system. The quality of handover is variable, particularly in relation to the failure to complete all primary investigative actions. The role of supervisors to intervene when this occurs is vital but supervisors are not intervening often enough.

The new response model which is being introduced is designed to help the force to manage demand more effectively. The force is considering the introduction of direct despatch of specialist investigation officers in appropriate cases. It is also planning to increase the number of investigations which can be done over the telephone in cases where this is appropriate, instead of sending officers to the crime scene.

HMIC will be monitoring closely how the force's new operating model, its revised grading policy and the use of THRIVE(+) are combined in order to improve the force's initial investigative response to incidents.

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

In 2015 we found that the force was good at investigating crime and that officers were consistently using investigation plans to set out their lines of enquiry. In 2016 we found that these investigation standards have been maintained. The force is continuing to conduct secondary investigations to a high standard and is securing satisfactory end results for victims.

We found that the vast majority of investigations were being conducted by both specialist and non-specialist investigators, who were thorough, and who made good use of investigation plans to structure their investigative work. We also found that in most cases, managers provided good supervision and investigative support

The force is planning to bring local investigation teams together as one force resource, and is piloting this approach in Birmingham. This will give an opportunity to ensure that consistent force-wide practices continue.

We found that the opportunity for continuous professional development (CPD) for investigators in West Midlands Police is limited. The force itself acknowledges that it would benefit from a more formalised approach. The force is about to launch a 'detective academy' to provide initial training for detectives with a view to deploying investigators in a variety of roles to maximise their exposure to different types of investigation. The force should consider how this academy can provide CPD for its current investigators in order to improve overall investigative quality.

Support to investigations

West Midlands Police has a broad range of effective intelligence and forensic capabilities which provide good support to investigations. The force has a clear and consistently applied attendance policy for forensic scene investigators (FSI). FSIs are available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, with a response that is based on the type of crime. For some types of crime FSIs will respond or attend on every occasion – primarily for major crimes. For other crimes attendance is considered on an evidence-led basis. In these cases, the investigator and the Forensic Investigation, Resource and Submissions Team (FIRST) consult to determine whether FSI attendance is required, based on forensic opportunity. Forensic examination of material recovered from crime scenes also takes into account the nature of the crime and the likelihood of success in securing forensic evidence to support the investigation. Progress of forensic examinations is recorded via the CRIMES portal investigation log.

The force has a number of intelligence systems which support investigators. Officers use the CORVUS data system to input intelligence, to brief themselves, and to search across force systems. The force has a number of staff who have been trained to search publicly available social media, and other information on the internet in order to look for evidence. There are sufficient numbers of sexual offence trained

officers (STO) to provide 24/7 support. Analytical support and covert human intelligence sources are also available to support the force's investigations.

The force encourages officers to consider the recovery of digital evidence as part of investigative strategies. During our 2015 child protection re-inspection of West Midlands Police, HMIC recommended that the force takes steps to eradicate the backlog which was present at that time in the high-tech crime unit (HTCU).

This recommendation is being progressed by the head of forensics and is governed through the force's vulnerability improvement board. To help with effective management of demand, the force grades and prioritises HTCU submissions using a threat, harm and risk matrix. This prioritisation procedure is supported by early discussions with investigating officers, and in some cases, e-forensic officers accompany investigation teams to crime scenes and on the execution of warrants. This enables an early triage process to take place, and e-forensic officers can give advice about appropriate seizures and examinations of digital equipment.

Priority cases, such as those where live abuse of adults or children is suspected are immediately escalated and allocated to an officer to be examined on that day. The force is working hard to manage the increasing demand for examination of computers and has eradicated the backlog we found in 2015. At the time of our inspection, we found that the force had only 47 computers awaiting examination. Although the force aims for a maximum turnaround time of 150 days to produce evidential reports in these cases, it is consistently achieving a much faster turnaround than this. Most computers are being examined within 65 days. To improve further its management of this caseload, the force has temporarily outsourced some cases at a cost of £44k and is trying to fill several vacancies which exist in the HTCU. Turnaround times of 35 days for examination of mobile phones have been achieved through recent temporary outsourcing, costing £14k. In less complex cases, investigators can request simple downloads from devices such as mobile phones by completing a simple submission document. The force has 30 trained digital media examiners and turnaround time for these less complex examinations is within four weeks.

The force acknowledges that it does not currently have sufficient cyber-investigation capacity. As well as seeking to fill immediate vacancies, the force is planning for increases as part of its 2020 change programme. However the force is working effectively to manage the increased demand for HTCU examinations and it is giving effective and timely support to investigations.

Supporting victims

The new outcomes framework introduced in 2014 includes some outcomes where there were evidential difficulties,[9] 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.

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[9] 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 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[10,11]
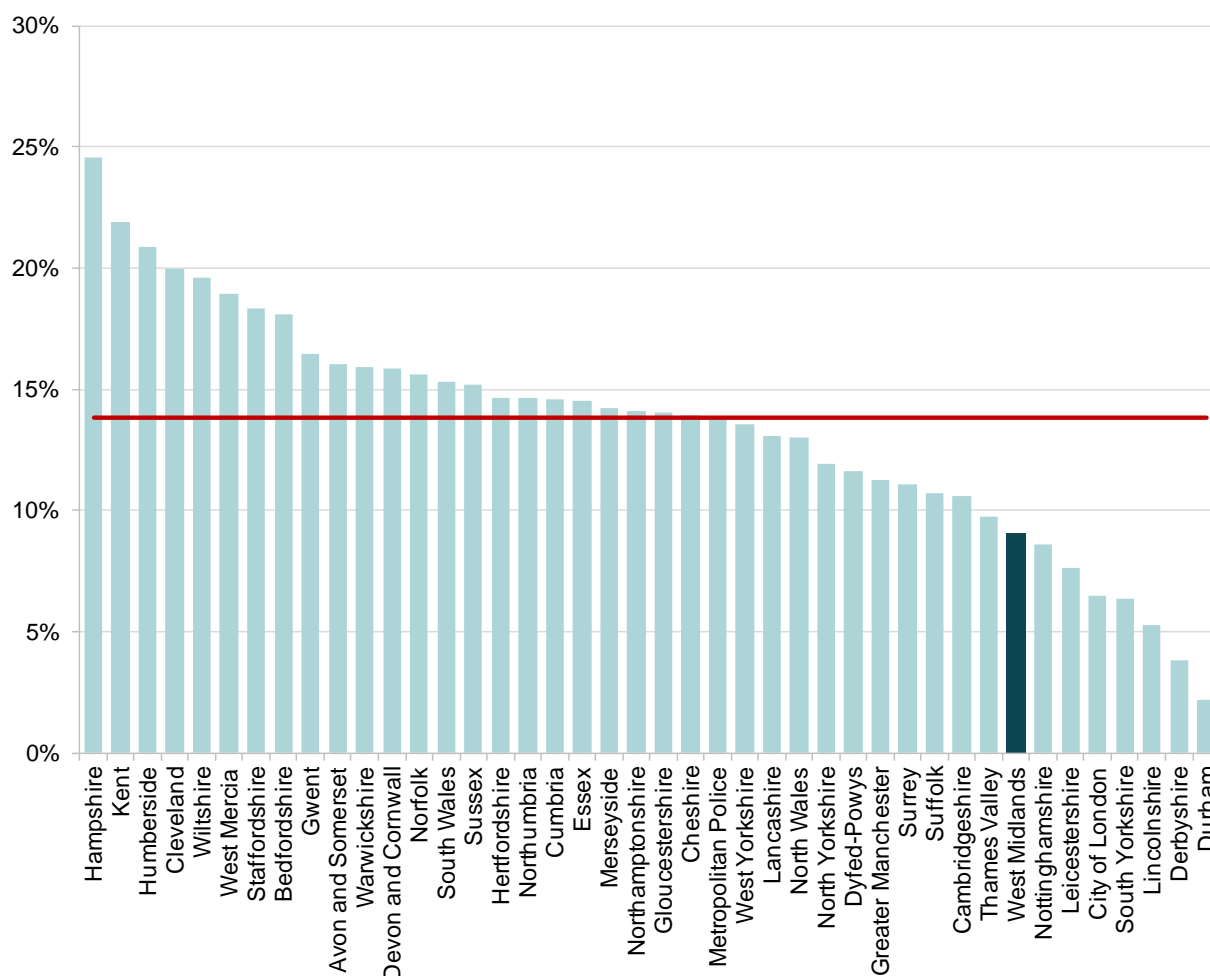
Source: Home Office crime outcomes data
For further information about these data, please see annex A

For all offences recorded in the 12 months to 30 June 2016, West Midlands Police recorded 9.1 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 gives a good service to the majority of victims, and works hard to place victims at the centre of policing activities. The force conducts several different types of victim survey and conducts its own audits and dip samples to quality-assure victim support. The office of the police and crime commissioner has formed a victims'

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

[11] 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.

commission with the force and other local organisations to ensure a consultative approach to the provision of victim support.

The force has a well-established victim code steering group, which is made up of victim code representatives from each LPU and department. This group meets every six weeks and carries out regular dip sampling audits to assess compliance with the *Code of Practice for Victims of Crime*. The group feeds back the results to the force, and draws attention to any areas for improvement

The force's dip sampling identified that victim contact plans or contracts were not being recorded consistently. This is consistent with HMIC's file review earlier in 2016 when we found very few cases which included victim contact plans. However, surveys which the force had conducted with the relevant victims confirmed that such plans had in fact been agreed and were being adhered to in most cases. The force has introduced changes to the crime recording process in the form of mandatory victim contact plans for completion by the crime service team. Following these changes, HMIC found during our inspection that crimes now consistently have a victim contact plan recorded which sets out the frequency and method for updating victims.

HMIC found that in most cases officers have regular contact with victims, and give them updates on the progress of an investigation. These updates are recorded. However the contacts are not always recorded correctly within the victim contact section of the crime report. This makes it difficult for colleagues and supervisors to audit the contact logs. The force's dip sample audits also identified this inconsistency, and the force is planning changes to the CRIMES portal early in 2017 to make victim contact information more accessible.

Of those who have been the victim of a crime in West Midlands in the 12 months to 30 June 2016, 82.2 percent were satisfied with their whole experience with the police. This is in line with the England and Wales victim satisfaction rate of 83.3 percent over the same time period.

The force tries to pursue prosecution even in cases where the victim's support is not available. As can be seen below, West Midlands Police is one of the better-performing forces for cases where there were evidential difficulties and where the victim does not support police action. The force assigns this outcome to only 9.1 percent of cases compared to the England and Wales proportion of 13.8 percent.

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?

West Midlands Police is effective at actively managing offenders who pose a risk to the public.

The force acts to track and arrest people who are wanted by the police, and outstanding suspects. This ensures that although there is a high volume, because new offenders are constantly being identified, the numbers are stable. Local policing teams receive regular briefings about people in their areas who are wanted by the police, and arrest enquiries are allocated for action at the local DMM. This is done every day, particularly for newly identified domestic abuse offenders, and violent offenders. In the first 72 hours after suspects are identified, cases are handed over from one shift to another to ensure that suspects are arrested as soon as possible.

The overall number of people who are wanted by the police is closely monitored at the force tactical TCG meeting. If the number is judged to be high in any of the LPUs, the force activates 'trigger plans' to use force resources such as firearms teams and traffic officers to ensure that offenders in that local area are pursued with additional vigour. Officers in West Midlands make appropriate use of the ACRO criminal records office (ACRO) to check offenders who are foreign nationals against the international criminal conviction exchange.

In addition to a good local focus on offenders, the force makes effective use of the PNC It is in line with the England and Wales figure for the number of persons wanted and circulated on PNC per 1,000 population (1.4 compared with 1.3), with the majority of those being for non bail related offences (2,693 out of 4,025).

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

The force makes extensive and innovative use of integrated offender management (IOM) co-operating with a broad range of other public services. This is helping the force to achieve impressive and consistent reductions in re-offending among serial offenders. Integrated offender management is overseen by the 'West Midlands reducing reoffending steering group' with senior representation from the force and a range of other public service organisations.

The IOM scheme manages 2,889 offenders and operates in each of the ten LPUs. There are several public services who share buildings with the force across the force area, including probation, community rehabilitation company (CRC), drug workers and mental health professionals. A monthly multi-agency meeting in each LPU called 'one day - one conversation' enables sharing of information among the various partner organisations and supports effective joint working.

The force and the other public services that it works with are using a broad range of interventions, and many of these are innovative. 'New chance' is a scheme which gives mentoring support to female offenders in Birmingham, and the force works with a similar group called 'Kairos' in Coventry. 'Transition to Adulthood' is a pilot scheme

with magistrates' courts in Coventry which seeks to provide bespoke court services for offenders who are under 24 years old.

The force regularly briefs frontline officers and PCSOs about the IOM group of offenders, and also about other potentially dangerous offenders who live in or visit their local policing areas. The IOM team uses local neighbourhood officers to 'adopt an offender' in their area, and they agree additional interventions as part of the overall case management plan. This is promising practice which gives additional management of offenders and improves service to the public. The IOM data on CORVUS are available for operational officers and staff via their mobile digital devices, which enables them to contribute effectively to intelligence gathering and crime prevention.

The force and its IOM partners have together achieved a commendably low re-offending rate among the IOM groups (17 percent), which is much lower than the England and Wales rate of 57 percent. IOM is being increasingly applied to additional types of crime. This includes domestic abuse offenders, gang members, and foreign national offenders. However, comparative force-wide performance management data relative to each group are not readily available.

The force is about to create local offender management units (LOMU) under a centralised co-ordinator. This is designed to encourage a more consistent approach and to develop the application of IOM methods to groups such as violent offenders, female offenders and homeless offenders. The force recognises the need for more sophisticated data to enable it to evaluate success with these different types of offender. It is considering a development to its IT systems to help it achieve this as part of the WMP 2020 change programme.

Measures to reduce domestic abuse re-offending are being piloted with a group of fifty domestic abuse offenders in Coventry and Sandwell. The force could do more to intervene actively with serial domestic abuse offenders. In addition to its plans for LOMUs, the force should seek to use this domestic abuse pilot to develop its IOM approach further.

The force has a sexual offender management unit (SOM) based in three locations. The unit is responsible for managing sex offenders, violent offenders and other potentially dangerous people. SOM officers and staff are well trained to manage these offenders and comprehensive risk management plans are in place. However, a lack of capacity within SOM is resulting in delays in routine visits to sexual offenders, which is an important part of their overall management. Some of the processes relating to updating risk-assessments following these visits are also falling behind. In particular supervisors do not have sufficient capacity to quality-assure risk-assessments in a timely fashion.

SOM officers and staff seek to mitigate this risk by prioritising visits where intelligence shows that there is an increased risk, or any safeguarding concerns.

However the backlog of routine visits and risk-assessment for registered sex offenders is an area for improvement for the force.

The force is aware of these problems and is acting to improve resilience. The LOMUs which the force is creating, as outlined earlier, will incorporate both IOM and SOM functions. The force has training arrangements in place for October and November 2016 to train 30 of its integrated offender management team in sex offender management. Once they have been trained, the intention is to involve them in the management of registered sex offenders. The force intends to monitor closely how this new approach affects both the management regime for sexual offenders and its integrated offender management.

West Midlands Police works effectively with other public service organisations to manage the risk posed by dangerous offenders by using the MAPPA[12] process. Officers and staff within the SOM and IOM manage MAPPA offenders and the process is co-ordinated effectively by a dedicated MAPPA support team based at Aston in Birmingham.

Summary of findings

Good

Although we found some areas where the force can improve, West Midlands Police is good at investigating crime and reducing re-offending. This is consistent with our assessment in 2015 when we also judged the force as good at investigating crime and reducing re-offending.

The force assesses calls from members of the public using a structured process, which ensures that an appropriate response is provided in the majority of cases. In many cases initial investigations are thorough but this is not entirely consistent. Officers are redeployed from incidents on occasions when demand outstrips resources, which results in missed opportunities for the early gathering of evidence. The force's revised grading policy and new response policing model are designed to help it to manage demand more effectively.

The force's investigations make good use of investigation plans to structure investigations. Managers provide good supervision and investigative support. West Midlands Police has a broad range of effective intelligence and forensic capabilities which give good support to investigations. The force is working effectively to manage

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[12] MAPPAs (multi-agency public protection arrangements) are in place to ensure the successful management of violent and successful offenders. Agencies involved include the police, probation trusts and the prison service. Other agencies may become involved, for example the Youth Justice Board will be responsible for the care of young offenders.

the increased demand for examinations of computers and it is giving effective and timely support to investigations.

The force gives the majority of victims a good service and achieves good results. Changes to the crime recording process in the form of mandatory victim contact plans ensure that officers give victims regular updates on the progress of investigations.

The force takes effective action to track and arrest outstanding suspects and the overall number of people who are wanted by the police is closely monitored.

Extensive and innovative use of integrated offender management (IOM) results in consistent reductions in re-offending by serial offenders. IOM methods are being increasingly applied to additional types of criminals such as domestic abuse offenders and gang members.

A lack of capacity has led to delays in routine visits to sexual offenders. Supervisors do not have sufficient capacity to quality-assure sexual offender risk assessments in a timely fashion.

Areas for improvement

- The force should improve its approach to reducing the risk posed by dangerous and sexual offenders by ensuring that:

    - it improves how it manages the caseload of sex offender managers so that routine visits and risk assessments are conducted in a timely manner; and

    - sexual offender management unit supervisors have sufficient capacity to quality-assure all risk assessments in a timely manner.

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?

In 2015, HMIC inspected how well forces keep people safe and reduce crime. West Midlands Police was graded as requiring improvement at protecting people who are vulnerable from harm, and supporting victims. Two causes of concern were identified. One cause of concern related to the force's response to domestic abuse and the other to its response to missing and absent children.

Two aspects of the force's response to domestic abuse were a cause of concern in 2015 – inappropriate assessment of risk and lack of effective management of outstanding suspects. The force has made a number of changes to its policies and procedures since our 2015 inspection. These changes have alleviated successfully that part of the domestic abuse cause of concern which relates to tracking and arresting suspects. However the cause of concern relating to domestic abuse risk assessment-remains. Some victims of domestic abuse, who might be at risk of harm, are not being appropriately risk-assessed. The force cannot be confident that all vulnerable domestic abuse victims receive a multi agency response which has been tailored to their individual needs. The force still has an inconsistent approach to the risk-assessment and management of missing persons cases. The cause of concern relating to its response to missing and absent children has not been alleviated.

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*,[13] others use the definition referred to in ACPO guidance[14] and the remainder use their own definition.

West Midlands 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"

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, 29.9 percent of all recorded crime in West Midlands was identified as having a vulnerable victim, which is above the England and Wales figure of 14.3 percent.

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[13] *Code of Practice for Victims of Crime*, Ministry of Justice, 2013. Available from www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/254459/code-of-practicevictims-of-crime.pdf

[14] The Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) is now the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC). ACPO Guidance on Safeguarding and Investigating the Abuse of Vulnerable Adults, NPIA, 2012. Available from: www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/major-investigation-and-public-protection/vulnerable-adults/

Figure 6: Percentage of police-recorded crime with a vulnerable victim identified, by force, for the 12 months to 30 June 2016[15]
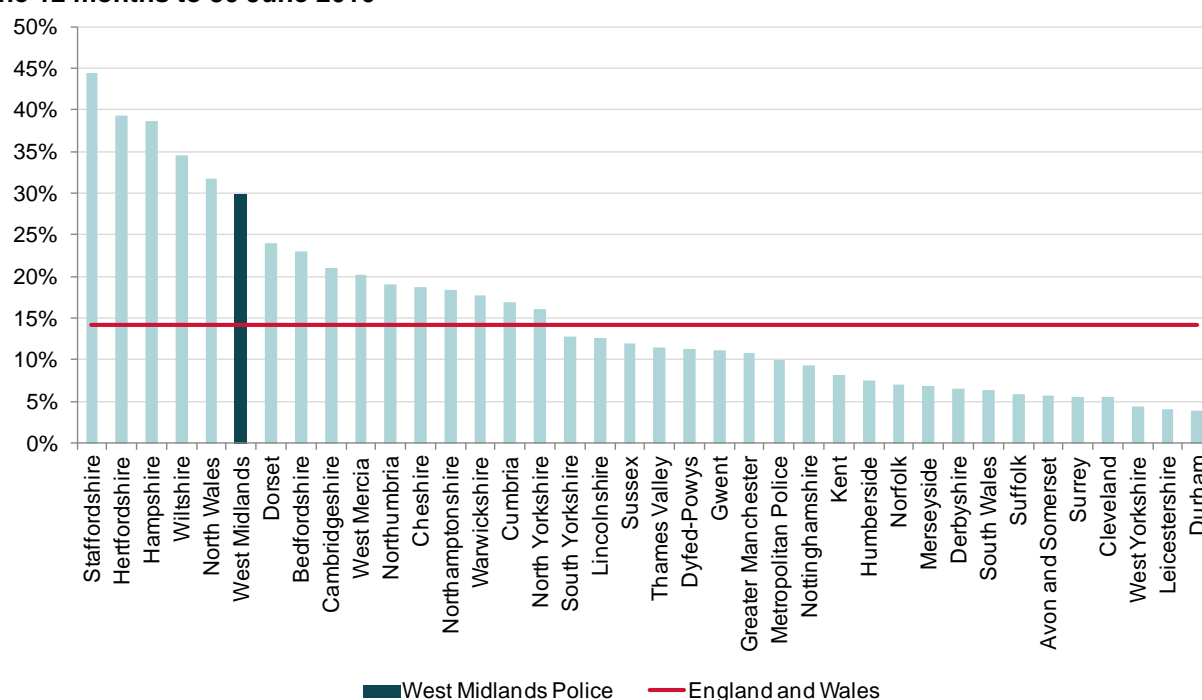
Source: HMIC data return, Home Office data
For further information about these data, please see annex A

West Midlands Police has an adequate understanding of the nature and scale of vulnerability developed in conjunction with other public service organisations. This would be enhanced by more up-to-date force-wide analysis of domestic abuse and modern-day slavery and by expanding its use of the MORILE process.

A main part of the force's ambition for the next two years is to protect vulnerable people from abuse. Improvements to the force's approach to vulnerability are overseen at chief officer level through a vulnerability improvement board and plan. This is supported by working groups, and the officers in charge of vulnerability are driving improvements at an operational level across the force.

The force has completed force-wide problem profiles for child sexual exploitation (CSE), so-called honour-based violence, female genital mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage. This gives the force a good understanding of these threats. In Birmingham, these force-wide profiles are supplemented by local analysis of these risks among specific communities. The force's understanding of the threat posed by domestic abuse is enhanced through joint research projects with Birmingham University. However we found its force-wide domestic abuse profile is out of date and the force is in the process of consulting with other public services to produce an updated version. The MORILE process helps the force to understand some of the threats and

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[15] 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.

risks which the public is facing. However this is currently limited and could be expanded to develop the force's understanding of vulnerability in all its forms.

Through its Operation Sentinel campaigns the force works well with many other public service organisations to raise awareness within the force, with other public services, and with the community about hidden crimes,. For example, in the 'Salon Saviours', initiative, detectives work with staff at Wolverhampton's Haven refuge to train beauticians, hairdressers and nail technicians about the signs of abuse, and about the support networks which are available. This initiative is about to be introduced throughout the West Midlands.

The force is working with the Victims' Commissioner to assess the extent of modern-day slavery, and is involved in a twelve month pilot with Public Health England to increase the force's understanding of so-called honour-based violence and FGM. These initiatives help the force and the other public services that it works with to understand the full extent of these threats, and to assess the need for multi-agency support.

The force regularly evaluates its capacity and capability to respond to the threats which it has identified. This is supported by a comprehensive performance framework, which provides a detailed understanding of how well the force is responding. The force completes self-assessments including case file audits, and it develops plans to ensure that it concentrates on its objective of protecting vulnerable people.

The force defines a person as vulnerable if, as a result of situation or circumstances, he or she is unable to care for him or herself, or protect him or herself, or others, from harm or exploitation. We found that officers have a clear understanding of the force's approach to vulnerability. However officers do not always apply this understanding consistently in order to identify and protect vulnerable people.

West Midlands Police identifies vulnerable and repeat victims inconsistently at the first point of contact. Calls from the public are received in the force control room either via the 999 emergency system or the general 101 system. Calls are logged on the force's OASIS command and control system. This provides readily accessible call data history which enables call handlers to identify quickly previous incidents which have occurred at the same location, or where previous calls have been made from the same telephone number. The force flags locations on OASIS to draw attention to vulnerabilities such as domestic abuse, mental health and CSE risks. Officers and staff in the force control room have access to force intelligence systems to help them to assess calls from the public. They are supported by a 24/7 real-time intelligence centre (RTIC) which conducts additional research for incidents to help with a thorough assessment.

As mentioned earlier in this report, the force uses THRIVE(+), a variation of the THRIVE[16] risk-assessment model, to assess in a structured manner all calls which are received from the public. This model, when it is used effectively alongside the control room processes and OASIS flags, helps control room staff to concentrate on vulnerability. Supervisors assure the quality of the call handlers' work by conducting dip samples of calls. They identify whether the nature of vulnerability of the caller was assessed correctly and whether the call was dealt with appropriately. However the force acknowledges that THRIVE(+) is relatively new. Training in the use of THRIVE(+) is still being provided and we found that some staff and supervisors do not yet have a full understanding of the model's application.

HMIC found examples where the THRIVE(+) model and the control room processes referred to above do not appear to be helping staff to make an accurate assessment of vulnerability and risk at the initial point of contact. This incorrect assessment of risk is, in some cases, influencing the quality and timeliness of the force's response. We found examples, including cases of repeat victims, where this is resulting in delays in the force acting promptly.

The force takes an inconsistent approach to the assessment and management of risk for missing and absent children. This is an enduring cause of concern which HMIC identified during our 2015 Vulnerability Inspection of the force.

In 2015, HMIC found that the assessment of risk for children who go missing from home was incorrect in some cases. We found some instances where children were classed as 'absent' when they should have been recorded as 'missing', and risk levels for missing children were sometimes incorrectly assessed at a lower grade. We also found incidents where the risk had not been identified, even where good information was available on the police database. In some cases there was information to indicate that children were at risk of sexual exploitation, but this did not influence the assigned risk and categorisation. Children were incorrectly graded at a lower level and could have been exposed to an increased risk of harm.

To address this cause of concern HMIC recommended the force should immediately review its approach to reports of missing children and take steps to ensure that:

- frontline staff understand and appropriately use the missing and absent categories;

- frontline staff have the necessary knowledge to identify risk factors associated with child sexual exploitation and how to respond to such cases; and

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[16] 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 puts the needs of the victim at the centre of that decision.

- supervisors provide the correct oversight of missing person enquiries and direct appropriate and timely investigative and safeguarding action.

The force has responded positively to this recommendation. However, changes introduced by the force to try to solve this problem have not yet taken full effect.

The force's response to this HMIC recommendation is overseen by a force vulnerability improvement board, which meets bi-monthly and is led by an assistant chief constable. In July 2015 the force introduced a revised policy for managing cases of absent and missing persons. The policy places greater emphasis on gathering information at the initial point of contact. The policy requires that children with CSE risks are to be treated as missing rather than absent. This means that measures to find and safeguard the missing child should then be conducted in a timelier manner. In addition the force consulted control room staff and amended the process for initial assessment to improve investigative focus.

The vulnerability board commissions regular audits to monitor compliance with the policy and earlier in 2016 it conducted a force-wide review. The review concluded that although the changes introduced had brought about some improvement, the force was still not consistently accurately assessing risks for missing persons. The force identified that officers were still regularly using the absent category in cases with CSE risks, which was not allowed under the force's policy.

Following its own review, the force moved quickly to address the continuing cause of concern. It consulted externally with other public services and internally with duty inspectors to find out if there were any barriers to effective decision-making. It also started a pilot scheme in Coventry where absent cases are being recorded on the same IT system (COMPACT) as missing person cases.

The force also decided to transfer responsibility to the control room for the initial assessment of risk in missing and absent cases. The control room's decision is then reviewed and ratified by the duty inspector. This is designed to improve management of risk at the initial point of contact and speed up the force's response. A missing person operations group has recently been formed to drive improvements at a tactical level and this is led by the force missing persons lead at chief inspector level. The force is continuing with its audits and gives feedback to LPU command teams. Recent data produced by the force indicates that decision making in general may be improving, with an increased proportion of cases being recorded as missing, rather than absent.

However, HMIC found that inconsistencies remain. During our inspection HMIC found a small number of missing person incidents where vulnerabilities such as mental health and children with CSE risks had not been identified accurately. Information which can help in more accurate assessment is readily available on the police database in these cases. Some duty inspectors still appear to be overlooking relevant information and are not taking all the circumstances into account. This can

result in cases being incorrectly graded at a lower level and not being handled with the right level of urgency. Such inaccurate assessment and management of risk, creates the potential for vulnerable missing persons to be exposed to potential harm unnecessarily.

The force is now running a pilot scheme in Birmingham involving a dedicated 'LOCATE' team. This team, consisting of six sergeants and 29 constables deals with investigations of all missing persons, but not absent cases, and operates only in the Birmingham area. The force uses the information gathered at the first point of contact, together with a broader review of intelligence, previous COMPACT logs and trigger plans (where applicable) to help in the correct identification of risk. Early assessment of this method indicates that it is effective in achieving reductions in the overall time that people are missing. The force is considering whether this scheme should be expanded to cover other parts of the West Midlands but the pilot has not yet been fully evaluated.

Although the force is clearly determined to improve its response to missing persons, especially vulnerable children, the cause of concern identified in 2015 has not been alleviated. The force must continue with its efforts if it is to bring about lasting improvement.

In most cases, West Midlands Police is effective at recognising vulnerability associated with mental health. Mental health street triage vehicles staffed with police officers, ambulance staff and mental health nurses provide a 24/7 response. The street triage is providing an improved service to vulnerable people in the community, ensuring that they receive the most appropriate treatment and care quickly. The force also has qualified mental health specialists working in all of its custody areas, providing a service from 8am-10pm. They make initial assessments on people who are in custody, ensuring appropriate safeguarding as well as signposting to other public services where this is appropriate. Regular mental health awareness training is provided force-wide. Control room staff and initial police recruits are given specific training which is relevant to their jobs. On a rolling programme mental health professionals attend briefings across the force, and 3500 have receiving an input to date. The OASIS command and control system has mental health flags to help officers and staff to identify previous incidents which were related to mental health. In the 12 months to 30 June 2016, 2.3 percent of incidents within the force area were flagged to identify mental health. This is in line with the 2.4 percent rate for England and Wales as a whole.

The force is maintaining a strong focus on improving its response to incidents involving vulnerable people. As can be seen from the graph below, West Midlands Police has one of the highest percentage of crimes which have been flagged to identify vulnerable victims in England and Wales. However, the force cannot allocate resources to risk properly if it does not fully understand the nature and scale of the problem it faces. Some of the working practices that HMIC discovered provide

evidence that the force can only have limited confidence that any analysis is based on a true picture of risk.

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 West Midlands increased by 13 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 West Midlands, 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 forms 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 West Midlands Police, for every 100 domestic abuse related offences recorded in the 12 months to 30 June 2016, there were 52 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[17]
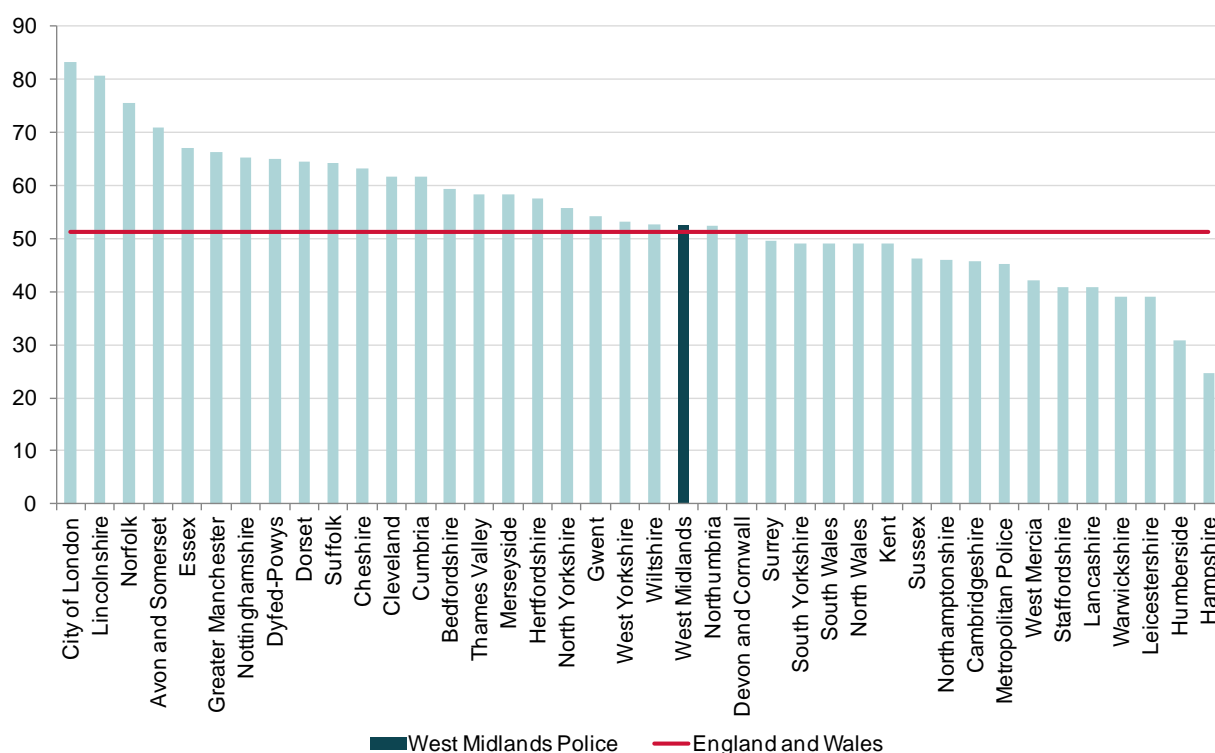
Source: HMIC data return, Home Office data
For further information about these data, please see annex A

West Midlands Police addresses vulnerability inconsistently at initial response. In particular the force is not completing domestic abuse, stalking and harassment (DASH)[18] risk assessments in all appropriate cases.

In 2015, when we inspected how effective the force was at protecting vulnerable people, the force's response to domestic abuse was a cause of concern. Force policy allowed officer discretion to complete a DASH risk-assessment for some crimes and incidents. This did not give confidence that risk had always been assessed appropriately. This related to one of the recommendations from HMIC's report on its domestic abuse inspection in 2014 that still needed to be implemented. In cases where a DASH risk-assessment was not completed officers should record their assessment on the crime management system. HMIC found inconsistency in the recording and a lack of effective supervision to ensure that this was taking place. There were examples of inappropriate downgrading of risk, even when the DASH assessment had been used.

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[17] 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.

[18] Most forces use DASH. For more information, see: www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/major-investigation-and-public-protection/domestic-abuse/risk-and-vulnerability/#approaches-to-risk-assessment

To address this cause of concern, HMIC recommended that the force should immediately take steps to ensure that there was effective supervision of the initial risk-assessment process, specifically on recording it on the crime management system.

In 2016, this policy still remains in place. However the force intends to adopt a revised, shortened version of the DASH risk-assessment as part of a College of Policing pilot scheme. The force intends to introduce this pilot early in 2017, initially in one part of Birmingham only. The pilot will involve mandatory completion of the new shorter DASH risk-assessment for every domestic abuse incident both crime and non-crime. There will then be a secondary review completed by a public protection specialist.

The force conducts its own audits to assess whether officers are conducting appropriate risk assessments. These audits indicate that officers are not consistently completing a DASH in circumstances where force policy requires that they should do so. This means that some victims of domestic abuse who may be at risk of harm are not being appropriately risk-assessed and are not being referred to other public service organisations. The force cannot be confident that all vulnerable domestic abuse victims receive a multi-agency response which is tailored to their individual needs.

Force policy requires that a sergeant attends all repeat incidents of domestic abuse. The force's audits indicate that this is not occurring sufficiently often. Even before the DASH pilot begins, and once it is in place, the force needs to maintain its concentration on effective supervision of the initial risk-assessment process.

Although the force has clear plans to improve its response to domestic abuse, the cause of concern identified in both 2014 and 2015 has not been alleviated. The force must address the cause of concern immediately and it cannot afford to wait for the College of Policing pilot to take effect. In particular the force must act urgently to ensure that supervisors take a more effective role in the initial response to vulnerable domestic abuse victims.

West Midlands Police officers sometimes fail to conduct the immediate necessary safeguarding actions at initial response. HMIC found many cases where attending officers and investigators are very focused on the victim's needs. They make referrals via MASH for victim and child safeguarding if necessary. In most cases this ensures that either the force or other public services take early and decisive action to ensure the safety of victims and children. Officers told us they were well supported by public protection officers within the force PPU who are readily available for specialist advice and guidance. However we also found some inconsistent practices, which means that the service to the public could be improved in some cases. When this occurs it is usually a result of the inconsistent risk-assessment practices of attending officers at the initial point of contact, as outlined earlier in this report.

Missing person reports are reviewed by a sergeant on response. Actions are identified to find and safeguard the missing person and are allocated to response officers to progress. In Birmingham these actions are completed by the dedicated 'LOCATE' team, whose shift patterns have been designed to increase resilience at the busiest times. Trigger plans are used effectively to identify priority actions for missing persons but in West Midlands, they are currently used exclusively for missing children with CSE risks. The force should consider expanding the use of trigger plans to improve its response for people who are repeatedly reported as missing, and who have other identified risks and vulnerabilities.

The force conducts dip samples of domestic abuse cases across all of its LPUs to determine if officers are taking appropriate safeguarding actions. In cases where an arrest is not made the decision is reviewed and in most cases the force believe the decision not to arrest was correct. West Midlands Police's domestic abuse arrest rate of 52.4 percent for the 12 months to 30 June 2016 is in line with the 51.4 percent arrest rate for England and Wales as a whole.

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).

Crimes committed against vulnerable victims in West Midlands are generally allocated to officers who have the specialist skills that are needed to conduct such investigations. Public protection units (PPUs) are located in each LPU. They are made up of teams of specialist officers dedicated to investigating domestic abuse, sexual offences, child protection, and safeguarding vulnerable adults. Many officers and staff within the PPU have received appropriate training, and the force has plans to train the rest of the officers and staff to develop these specialist skills. The domestic abuse teams include dedicated officers for investigation, safeguarding victims and offender management.

HMIC found that many investigations conducted by the different teams within the PPU are thorough and there is widespread use of investigation plans. However we found that this was not entirely consistent. For example, the standard of investigation in some domestic abuse cases was variable, with investigative actions sometimes

being overlooked. The force conducts regular reviews and audits of PPU investigation quality, and these audits are consistent with HMIC's findings. In addition the force has identified that timeliness of some domestic abuse investigations is a problem and there is also a lack of effective supervision.

Encouragingly, the force audits demonstrate that PPU officers are providing updates to victims in most cases. However, both the force's audits and HMIC's file review indicate that very few cases have victim contact plans recorded in the files. As mentioned earlier, changes to crime recording processes are now resulting in more consistent recording of victim contact plans.

The force has previously identified that demand in public protection is affecting resilience of officers within the PPU. The force previously significantly increased PPU resources but HMIC found that the resilience problems are continuing. Officers report that this is contributing to deteriorating timeliness of investigations and the capacity of supervisors to provide consistent support. The force recognises this enduring problem and recently conducted a seven week review of the PPU. . This review identified the need to increase PPU resources. This increase is being considered as part of the force's 2020 change programme and in the meantime the force has employed a number of police staff investigators on short term contracts.

The force is fully aware of the resilience problem within its PPU. Until it provides the additional staff that the recent review identified as being required, the force cannot be confident that it is ensuring the workload of its specialist investigators is manageable at all times. This is an area for improvement for the force.

In 2015, at the time of our vulnerability inspection, 750 named suspects for domestic abuse crimes had not been dealt with, and a further 650 suspects were still to be dealt with for other public protection type offences. Although the force had plans in place to address this, HMIC was concerned that a sustainable solution needed to be established to manage outstanding offenders and safeguard victims.

To address this cause of concern, HMIC recommended that the force take steps to ensure that a process was established to manage domestic abuse offenders who were still at large, so that action was taken to arrest them at the earliest opportunity. The force is responding positively to address this cause of concern and improvements are overseen by the force's vulnerability improvement board.

Local policing teams receive regular briefings about people who are wanted for domestic abuse offences in their area and arrest enquiries are allocated for action at the local DMM. During the initial 72 hours after domestic abuse suspects have been identified, cases are handed over from one shift to another to ensure that suspects are arrested as quickly as possible.

The overall numbers of suspects across the force who are wanted for domestic abuse offences is closely monitored via the force tactical TCG meeting. The force

identifies its 'Top 10' wanted each month and circulates details to front line officers. In cases where suspects remain outstanding after 30 days, Detective Inspectors from the domestic abuse teams review the case to quality-assure the investigation, including the work which is being done to bring about an arrest.

The force has provided data to HMIC which indicate that, despite a high volume of new offenders being identified each day, overall numbers are stable at about 600. If, at any point, numbers are judged to be high in any of the LPUs, the force activates 'trigger plans' to use force resources to ensure additional focus on outstanding offenders. Overall numbers have remained relatively stable for a sustained period. The force now has an improved concentration on outstanding domestic abuse offenders as part of its routine business. HMIC considers that the cause of concern we identified in our 2015 inspection has been alleviated.

In 2015 HMIC found a surprisingly low number of Domestic Violence Protection Orders (DVPOs) issued across the force area. We found this safeguarding option was not generally considered by attending officers, nor was it encouraged or considered in the domestic abuse team. In 2016, we heard from other public services that the force was still not consistently using Domestic Violence Protection Notices (DVPNs) and DVPOs in appropriate cases. The force has recognised this situation as requiring improvement. Following consultation with its domestic abuse independent advisory group and research with another large force, it has established a small dedicated team to concentrate specifically on the process. The force believes that this team will enable it to make greater use of DVPNs and DVPOs, and improve the service to vulnerable victims. However the team has only been established recently and it will take time for the force to achieve any sustained improvements.

West Midlands Police contributes effectively to multi-agency work with other public services to safeguard vulnerable victims. The force collaborates with other agencies in a number of areas in order to protect vulnerable people. In particular each of the seven local authority areas of the West Midlands now has a multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH), which brings together safeguarding professionals, including the police and social services. Partners in the MASH share safeguarding information and work together to improve safeguarding end results for children and people who are victims of domestic abuse. There is a multi-agency team within the Coventry MASH specifically to tackle child sexual exploitation from a multi-agency perspective. The team comprises social care, children and family workers, youth workers, health professionals and police specialists including the missing persons co-coordinator. The team have achieved some positive results and are being recognised with a force award.

All of the MASHs generally function well with no backlogs to deal with domestic abuse, risk-assessments and other referrals. However the number of MASHs in place across the West Midlands means there are a variety of different processes

operating. The force and other public services are in the process of 'mapping out' a clear and consistent MASH process for managing their joint working.

The force also takes an active role in ensuring a consistent approach to multi-agency risk assessment conferences across the seven local authority areas. A MARAC is a regular local multi-agency meeting to discuss how to help high-risk domestic abuse victims. The MARAC writes an action plan to set out the way that agencies will work together to improve the safety of victims and their families. Each West Midlands MARAC is chaired by a detective inspector. The force has an overall improvement plan for MARAC. In addition each area is working towards the areas for improvement recommended by Safelives. Workshop events to compare practices and promote consistency are being held with Safelives and the chairs and vice-chairs of all of the MARACs. The force is also working with the office of the Police and crime commissioner to ensure appropriate MARAC co-ordination and administration is in place across the whole of the West Midlands.

As well as seeking to improve more consistent current practices, the force is actively engaged with other public sector agencies, consultants and private sector companies planning for the complex and wide ranging joint working arrangements which will be required for the proposed West Midlands combined authority.

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.[19]

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).

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[19] 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.

Figure 8: Rate of outcomes recorded in 12 months to 30 June 2016 for domestic-related offences in West Midlands Police[20]

Outcome type / group	West Midlands Police	England and Wales
Charged / Summonsed	27.2	23.2
Caution – adults	4.1	5.6
Caution – youths	0.2	0.3
Community resolution	3.4	1.4
Evidential difficulties prevent further action; victim supports police action	23.3	24.1
Evidential difficulties prevent further action; victim does not support police action	37.5	35.4

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, West Midlands 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.

For those cases where officers successfully identify vulnerability and assess risks, the force responds well to victims of domestic abuse. As well as the enhanced service for high-risk victims provided through MARAC, this includes cases assessed as medium and standard risk

The force's allocation policy means that all domestic abuse cases, with the exception of homicides and serious sexual assaults, are dealt with by the domestic abuse teams. This means that, regardless of the level of risk which has been assessed, secondary investigation and safeguarding in these cases is carried out by officers who have had specialist training. This is a wider remit than in many other forces and is a clear effort to put the victim at the centre of the investigation. Despite the resilience issues within the PPU referred to earlier, the force is achieving outcomes for domestic abuse cases which are in line with England and Wales as a whole.

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[20] 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.

Summary of findings

Requires improvement

West Midlands Police requires improvement in investigating offences involving vulnerable victims and working with other public service organisations to keep people safe. This is consistent with 2015 when we also judged the force as requiring improvement.

The force uses Operation Sentinel campaigns to raise awareness of crimes against vulnerable people. Its understanding of the nature and scale of vulnerability would be enhanced by more up to date force-wide analysis of domestic abuse and modern-day slavery, and by expanding its use of the MORILE risk management process.

The force uses THRIVE(+), a variation of the THRIVE risk-assessment model, to assess in a structured manner all calls that are received from the public. Some staff and supervisors do not yet have a full understanding of the model's application, which sometimes results in a delayed response.

The force's revised policy for managing cases of absent and missing persons places greater emphasis on gathering information and assessing risk at the initial point of contact. However the force is not consistently accurately assessing risks for missing persons and in some cases duty inspectors overlook relevant information. This creates the potential for vulnerable missing persons to be unnecessarily exposed to potential harm.

The force is effective at recognising vulnerability associated with mental health. Street triage vehicles provide a 24/7 response and mental health professionals work in all of the force's custody areas. The force provides regular mental health training to front line officers and staff.

The force addresses vulnerability in domestic abuse cases inconsistently at initial response. Officers are not consistently completing a domestic abuse risk-assessment in appropriate circumstances. The force cannot be confident that all vulnerable victims receive a multi-agency response which has been tailored to their individual needs.

The force allocates crimes committed against vulnerable victims to officers who have specialist skills. However, we found that investigation quality is variable, that investigative actions are sometimes being overlooked, and in some cases there is a lack of effective supervision. Demand is affecting the resilience of public protection

officers and the force is considering increasing resources as part of its change programme.

The overall number of suspects across the force who are wanted for domestic abuse offences has remained relatively stable for a sustained period. The force has an improved focus on outstanding domestic abuse offenders as part of its routine business. The force collaborates effectively with other agencies in a number of areas to protect vulnerable people.

Cause of concern

The force's response to domestic abuse is a cause of concern to HMIC. The force policy which allows an officer discretion to complete a DASH risk assessment in some crimes and incidents does not provide confidence that risk is always assessed appropriately. This is an enduring cause of concern from HMIC's report on vulnerability in 2015 and is one of the recommendations from HMIC's report on its domestic abuse inspection in 2014 that still needs to be implemented. In cases where a DASH risk assessment is not completed the officer should record an assessment on the crime management system. HMIC found that officers are not consistently completing a DASH in circumstances where force policy requires that they should do so. This means that some victims of domestic abuse who may be at risk of harm are not being appropriately risk-assessed.

Recommendations

To address this cause of concern, HMIC recommends the force should immediately take steps to ensure that:

- there is effective supervision of the initial risk assessment process, specifically in relation to the completion of DASH risk assessment in appropriate cases.

Cause of concern

The force's response to missing and absent children is a cause of concern to HMIC. HMIC found that the assessment of risk for children who go missing from home was inappropriate in some cases. We found some instances where children were classed as 'absent' when they should have been recorded as 'missing', and risk levels for missing children were sometimes incorrectly assessed at a lower grade. We also found incidents where the risk had not been identified, even where good information was available on the police database. In some cases there was information to indicate that children were at risk of sexual exploitation, but this did not influence the assigned risk and categorisation. Children were incorrectly graded at a lower level and could have been exposed to an increased risk of harm. This is an enduring cause of concern from HMIC's report on vulnerability in 2015.

Recommendations

To address this cause of concern the force should immediately review its approach to reports of missing children and take steps to ensure that: .

- call takers understand and use the missing and absent category appropriately;

- call takers and frontline staff have the necessary knowledge to identify risk factors associated with child sexual exploitation and how to respond to such cases; and

- supervisors provide the correct oversight of missing person enquiries and direct appropriate and timely investigative and safeguarding action.

Areas for improvement

- The force should improve the quality of investigations involving vulnerable people, ensuring that the workloads of specialist investigators are manageable at all times and that such investigations are subject to regular and active supervision.

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.

West Midlands Police has a good understanding of the threat and risk posed by serious and organised crime (SOC) developed in conjunction with the West Midlands ROCU. However the force's overall understanding would be enhanced with more consistent use of the organised crime group mapping process.

The force does not conduct its own strategic assessment of SOC threats but has instead decided to use the regional assessment prepared by the ROCU. The force uses its force-wide SOC profile alongside the regional assessment to enhance its understanding. The West Midlands ROCU, which incorporates a regional confidential unit, uses the 'management of risk in law enforcement' (MORILE) process developed by the National Police Chiefs' Council and it shares the results with the force. This process takes into account the NCA strategic assessment, and identifies and assesses a range of emerging as well as established serious and organised crime threats in the West Midlands policing area. The force's proactive operations, including a range of prevention initiatives, are targeted against a wide range of complex threats including cyber crime, drug dealing, firearms, modern-day slavery and child sexual exploitation.

In 2015 HMIC assessed that West Midlands Police would benefit from a greater understanding of the threats and risks posed by serious and organised crime. Then, the force had completed a SOC local profile for the Birmingham East policing area

only. HMIC advised that completion of a force-wide local profile would enhance the force's understanding of the SOC threats posed to the public.

In 2016 we found that the force is making progress towards addressing this area for improvement. The force has now completed force-wide local SOC profiles, and is actively using these profiles to enhance its understanding of the threat. The profiles contain data from other public services to supplement police intelligence and there is analysis across the range of SOC threats including drugs, firearms, modern-day slavery and CSE. National guidance is that SOC local profiles should help the force and other public services to generate multi-agency action plans but not all of the force's profiles include recommendations for action. The force's SOC local profiles would be improved if they all had such recommendations.

As West Midlands Police is one of the largest forces in England and Wales, these local organised crime profiles, which cover the whole force area, support the force and help it to develop a sound understanding of the threat from serious and organised crime, and to provide better information for multi-agency intervention. West Midlands Police consistently uses a wide range of intelligence sources to aid its understanding of serious and organised crime. This includes intelligence from other public services and covert sources including the technical intelligence development unit, whose work has been recognised nationally as good practice. The force works closely with other forces and national agencies such as the prison service and the NCA in order to develop intelligence. We heard examples of this type of work leading to substantial cash seizures, large amounts of drugs, firearms and ammunition being recovered and online child sexual offences being detected. In response to the heightened threat from firearms in its area, the force makes good use of the national ballistic intelligence service (NABIS). In the 12 months to 30 June 2016, West Midlands referred 14.5 items to NABIS for every 100 ballistic items that were bought into police possession. This is well above the 5.6 rate for England and Wales as a whole. Intelligence from open source research and Crimestoppers also contribute to the force's understanding.

The force now makes greater use of neighbourhood teams to gather intelligence on organised criminals. The force provides SOC briefings via the Corvus briefing system and local officers demonstrate a good level of knowledge of organised crime groups in their areas. Neighbourhood officers demonstrate a good understanding of the signs to look for to help them to identify new organised crime groups as they emerge.

Until recently, the force's mapped OCGs were being re-scored every month regardless of their tier of criminality. The force recognises that this approach goes beyond the requirements set out in national guidance and has introduced changes to the process. Until these changes were introduced, responsibility for reviews and re-scoring rested with individual LROs who managed the process through local monthly LRO OCG meetings. However since October 2016 a dedicated analyst within the

force's intelligence unit is responsible for this. It is the force's intention to ensure that the analyst works closely with the West Midlands ROCU to ensure that the process of identifying, mapping and regular re-scoring of West Midlands OCGs is conducted in line with national guidance. HMIC will be monitoring the force's progress to ensure this occurs.

As at 1 July 2016, West Midlands Police was actively disrupting, investigating or monitoring 18 organised crime groups (OCGs) per one million of the population. This compares to 46 OCGs per one million of the population across England and Wales.

The force acknowledges that these low numbers reflect the fact that it is not currently making full use of the OCG mapping methodology, and is also maps some separate groups as one OCG when they are engaged in joint criminality. When a force identifies an OCG, it should go through a nationally standardised 'mapping' procedure to assess the organisation's criminal intent and capability. This procedure enables an accurate, detailed picture of serious and organised crime to be developed. West Midlands Police does not map all of its OCGs in accordance with national guidance and therefore is not comprehensively completing the national OCG tracker. The force does not use the national assessment tool consistently to map and score all identified OGCs appropriately

In addition to the improved use of intelligence sources and greater involvement of neighbourhood teams, the ability of the force to identify and then map organised crime groups might be enhanced once the local SOC profiles and relevant multi-agency action plans are finalised. However the force also acknowledges that some of its urban street gangs are sufficiently organised to fit the definition of an OCG. The force has compared practices with other large urban forces. The force now intends to apply the OCG mapping methodology more broadly, to incorporate more organised urban street gangs and other groups engaged in organised crime, which will allow it to target these groups with its SOC partners more effectively. It must also ensure that it proactively identifies and promptly maps organised crime groups to provide an accurate and comprehensive understanding of the threat they pose to communities. This will also allow it to make better informed decisions about which groups to prioritise for intervention.

The force supplies quarterly updates from its OCG mapping to the West Midlands regional organised crime unit (ROCU) and this is designed to inform the regional and national understanding of the threat from organised crime. A consequence of the force's approach to OCG mapping is that this information is not complete.

Figure 9: Organised crime groups per one million population, by force, as at 1 July 2016[21]
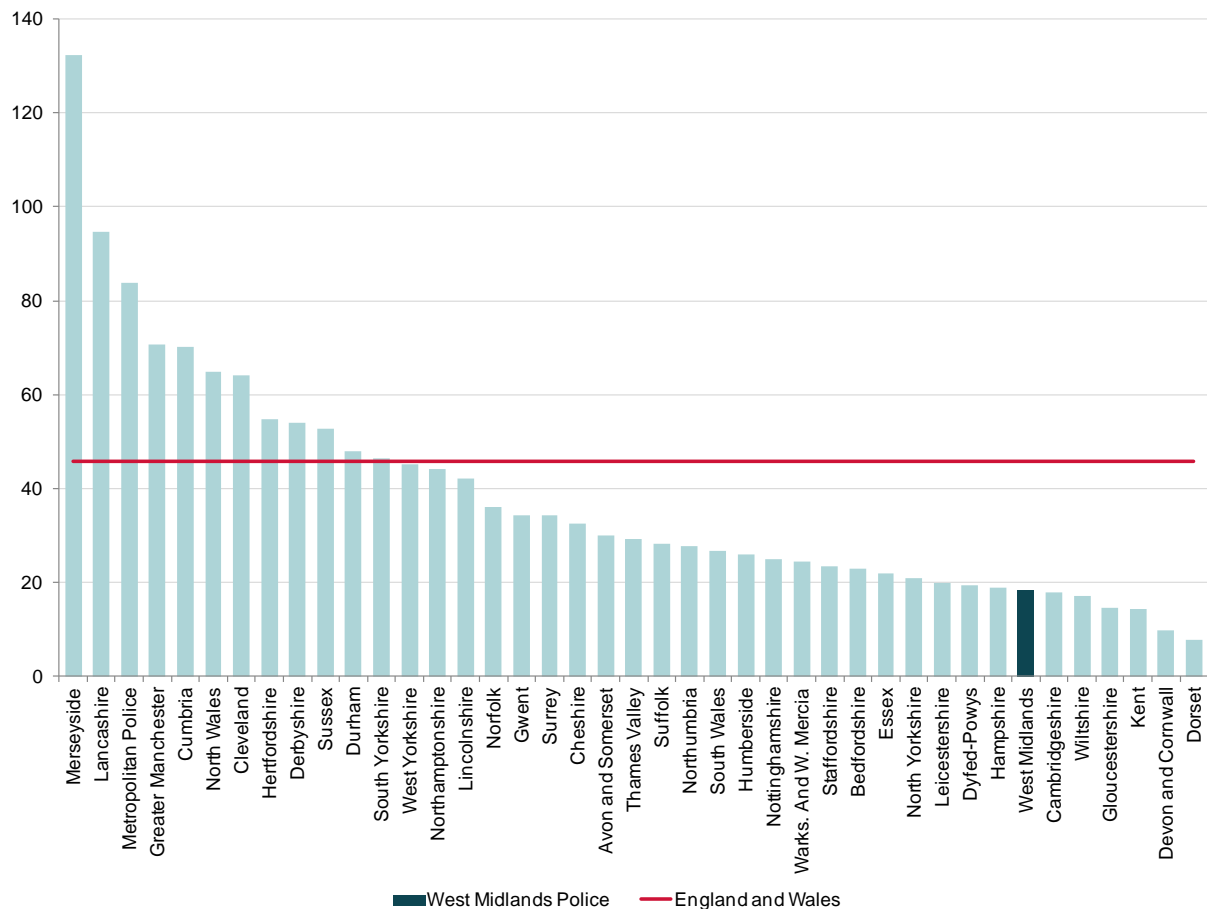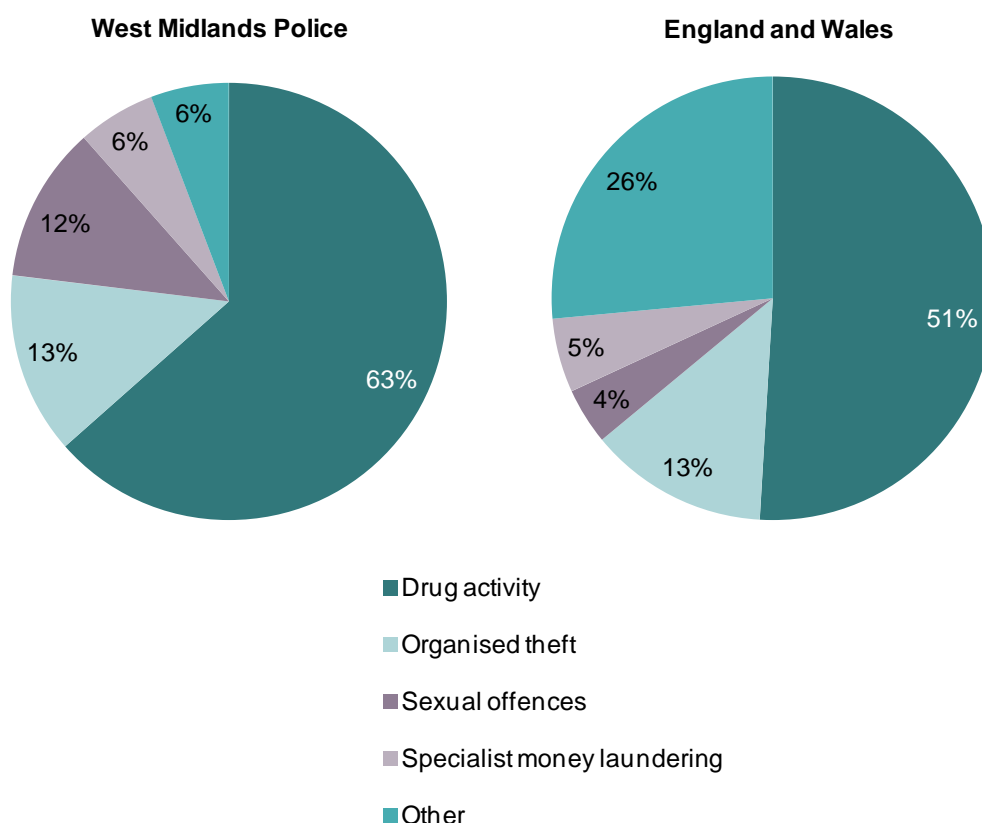

Source: HMIC data return
For further information about these data, please see annex A

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 West Midlands Police as at 1 July 2016. This was also the most common OCG crime type recorded by all forces in England and Wales.

The force already recognises the threat which is posed by urban street gangs, and in those parts of the force area where they are prevalent, such as Birmingham, Coventry and Wolverhampton, it has dedicated local teams to disrupt their activities. The force's plans to apply the OCG mapping process more broadly will enhance the force's ability to target these groups with its SOC partners.

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[21] 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.

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

West Midlands Police

63%
13%
12%
6%
6%

England and Wales

51%
26%
13%
5%
4%

- Drug activity
- Organised theft
- Sexual offences
- Specialist money laundering
- Other

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.

Although we did find some areas for improvement, West Midlands Police is good at managing its overall response to organised crime.

The force's response to organised crime is overseen by the force tactical tasking and co-ordinating meeting and force level OCG meetings chaired by the head of SOC. In these monthly meetings, the force prioritises work which is aimed at tackling a range of threats including SOC. The OCG mapping process assigns tiers of operational response, which helps with prioritisation decisions. HMIC found the force is also

effective at making rapid re-prioritisation decisions, particularly in response to new intelligence which raises the threat of risk or harm such as movements of firearms. However, more consistent use of OCG mapping processes would better inform and support the force's decisions on prioritisation.

The force appoints detective chief inspectors as lead responsible officers (LRO) for all of its OCGs, including both mapped and un-mapped OCGs. The Head of SOC conducts regular reviews of force activity to tackle organised crime and regularly brings the LROs together as a group to exchange ideas and tactics. Although the force's LROs apply some of the same methodology to manage both mapped and un-mapped OCGs, its inconsistent approach to OCG mapping means that for some groups the force's response is not as well structured as national guidance requires. In 2015 HMIC found that the national guidance to formulate disruption plans based on the 4P[22] approach was not being considered in all areas of the force. In 2016 we found an improved response, and the force is increasingly seeking to disrupt and dismantle OCGs using all four elements of the 4Ps approach. The force recognises the need to have a structured response to serious and organised crime which encompasses all elements of the 4Ps. However this is not yet entirely consistent practice and it remains an area for improvement for the force.

A force-wide SOC partnership board structure is in place in the West Midlands. Since March 2016 the force and the other public service organisations it works with have formed three multi-agency 'pursuit and prevent' panels, to oversee the strategic response to organised crime across all seven local authority areas.

The force regularly disrupts and investigates serious and organised crime in collaboration with a wide range of other public service organisations. This includes joint work to offer protection to victims and witnesses. We heard examples of good work undertaken to combat serious and organised crime with partners such as the UK Border Agency, Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency and trading standards. In cases involving vulnerability, the force shares safeguarding information with partners, for instance each LPU has a CSE Missing Operational Group, which is a multi-agency meeting to protect young people who are at risk of sexual exploitation.

Through the West Midlands ROCU the force has access to the Government Agency Intelligence Network (GAIN). This network facilitates the sharing of information between a number of law enforcement agencies. The force makes good use of GAIN

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[22] The 4P approach is outlined in the UK Government's Serious and Organised Crime Strategy. Pursue – prosecute and disrupt people engaged in serious and organised criminality, Prevent – prevent people from engaging in serious and organised crime. Protect – increase protection from serious and organised crime. Prepare – reduce the impact of this criminality where it takes place. Serious and Organised Crime Strategy, HM Government, October 2013, Cmnd 8715. Available at: www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/248645/Serious_and_Organised_Crime_Strategy.pdf

and made 125.0 GAIN referrals for every 100 OCGS in the 12 months to 30 June 2016. This is well above the rate of 26.4 for England and Wales as a whole.

The force is increasingly aware of the potential for modern-day slavery and In the 12 months to 30 June 2016 it referred 79 human trafficking cases to the NCA, which is one of the highest referral rates in England and Wales.

The force benefits from and contributes to arrangements with other forces in the region to share operational resources to tackle serious and organised crime. Because of the demographics, geographical location and main arterial routes of the force area, OCGs from the area cause harm to other force areas in the Midlands. These problems are addressed effectively through the established ROCU structures as well as direct communication with, and work with, other police forces.

We heard of several operations where the force has accessed specialist capabilities from the West Midlands ROCU and from the NCA. Senior leaders are conscious of the need to avoid duplication of specialist capabilities with the ROCU and the force has recently integrated all of its specialist SOC investigation capability to the ROCU. This includes its surveillance capabilities. The force acknowledges that these specialist resources will be tasked via regional tasking and co-ordinating processes. However the force is keen to retain some capacity to address local SOC problems which fall below the threshold for regional intervention. Each of its LPUs has a small force priorities team who are available to be tasked by the LROs.

In 2015 HMIC inspected all of the regional organised crime units. A recommendation arising from that inspection (Recommendation 3) was that by 30 June 2016, every police force in England and Wales should publish an action plan that sets out in detail what steps it will take to make maximum use of the ROCU capabilities, minimise duplication at force level, and ensure that the use of shared ROCU resources are prioritised between regional forces. This action plan should be developed in consultation with police and crime commissioners, ROCUs and the ROCU executive board, with regard to both local force priorities (in particular as specified in the relevant police and crime plan) and NCA priorities; and with regard to the other recommendations in the ROCU report.

The West Midlands ROCU has published one action plan for the region but this does not provide all of the recommended detail. In particular there is a lack of detail about how each force will maximise ROCU capabilities, minimise duplication and ensure regional prioritisation. There is also no reference to the individual force's local priorities, NCA priorities, or evidence of consultation with individual police and crime commissioners or the NCA executive board.

West Midlands Police should help to develop this action plan as soon as practicable to address all of the matters contained within the above recommendation.

Since we inspected the force in 2015 it has improved the way it uses its local policing teams to tackle organised crime. We found neighbourhood officers and PCSOs being used effectively in order to collect intelligence and disrupt criminal activity. They work well with other teams such as IOM and force priorities teams. We also heard of a good example of neighbourhood officers working with local rural businesses in support of a ROCU human trafficking investigation. The LROs appointed to manage the force's mapped OCGs are all LPU crime managers. This is supporting an improved all-force response and means neighbourhood policing leaders have a significant long-term role to tackle the SOC threat.

In 2015 HMIC found the force needed to develop a better understanding of the impact of its activity on serious and organised crime, to ensure that it learnt from experience and maximised its disruptive effect.

In 2016, we found the force can demonstrate very positive results to disrupt and dismantle numerous OCGs including those who use firearms to further their organised crime. At the time of our inspection we found that the force and its partners have very recently introduced three multi agency disruption panels covering the whole force area aimed at further improving how they objectively assess the impact of their joint activity on organised crime. However as a result of the force's approach to OCG mapping, the information available to these panels is not complete.

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.

West Midlands Police is effective at preventing serious and organised crime. The force's control strategy based on the case study of a violent young offender emphasises the need to find ways to work collaboratively to make interventions which prevent young people in particular from turning to crime. This preventative approach is evident in the force's response to serious and organised crime.

The force has a variety of effective, tailored projects in place across the force area to deter people from becoming involved in serious and organised crime. A recent knife campaign used the slogan "Either way he's not coming home" to show the consequences of carrying knives and to encourage parents to speak to their children about the dangers of carrying knives. The force works with other public services

such as the gang steering group in Wolverhampton and the multi-agency gang unit in Birmingham to run community projects which target gang culture.

The force and its partners recognise the potential to incorporate SOC problems into the Troubled Families [23] programme. In addition to known gang members, the force is increasingly targeting diversionary methods to deter people who are at risk of becoming involved in gang-related crime, such as younger siblings, whom the force refers to troubled families' 'early help' programmes. The force also talks to the parents of gang members who give feedback on how officers can improve the ways in which they try to deter young people from becoming involved in crime. The force produces SOC prevention messages targeting the girlfriends and partners of gang members involved in violence and gun crime.

The force has established a dedicated prevent and protect team based within force CID. Its purpose is to help the force's LROs by providing an operational focus on preventing vulnerable people from becoming involved in serious and organised crime. This team is now conducting a randomised trial with Cambridge University which seeks systematically to identify people who are at risk of being drawn into organised crime and to provide evidence which shows the diversionary treatments that work effectively with them. This trial and the overall effectiveness of the prevent and protect team have not yet been evaluated, but early successes have been achieved using civil orders to disrupt members of organised crime groups. The force makes effective use of ancillary orders such as serious crime prevention orders, and gang injunctions. The force has also secured slavery and trafficking risk orders to combat the threat from human trafficking.

The force tracks members of organised crime groups into, through and beyond the prison system as part of a 'lifetime' approach to offender management. The force works proactively with the prison service to maintain its focus on members of organised crime groups when they are imprisoned. We heard examples of this collaborative approach leading to SOC offenders being prosecuted for continuing their criminal activities while they were in prison.

The force communicates regularly with the public about serious and organised crime. As well as making effective use of traditional media such as newspapers to publicise arrests and successful results in court, the force also uses Twitter and Facebook. The force also distributes and displays leaflets in local communities with photographs of convicted SOC offenders and people who are the subjects of gang injunctions.

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[23] The Troubled Families programme is a Government scheme which aims to help troubled families turn their lives around. The programme aims to change the repeating generational patterns of poor parenting, abuse, violence, drug use, anti-social behaviour and crime in the most troubled families in the UK.

The force gives its communities and at-risk groups protective advice about different kinds of SOC, and we heard an example of an effective communication campaign aimed at elderly victims of organised courier fraud. Schools officers work with other public services to communicate directly with young people. This includes campaigns to raise awareness of the risks and consequences of becoming involved with gangs and youth violence.

The force website gives the public relevant information about organised crime such as modern-day slavery and human trafficking. The website also outlines the force's support for a regional campaign to raise awareness of child sexual exploitation called 'See me, hear me'.

The force's communication with the public raises awareness of the threat from organised crime groups and provides crime prevention advice. As well as deterring offenders, strong messages from the force give its communities reassurance about the force's response.

Summary of findings

● ● ● ○   **Good**

Although we found many effective practices, overall the force requires improvement at tackling serious and organised crime.

West Midlands Police has a good understanding of the threat and risk posed by serious and organised crime (SOC) developed in conjunction with the West Midlands Regional Organised Crime Units. The force is actively using force-wide local SOC profiles to enhance its understanding of the threat. However the force's overall understanding would be enhanced with more consistent use of the organised crime group mapping process.

However it now makes greater use of neighbourhood teams to gather intelligence and consistently uses a wide range of intelligence sources to develop its understanding. The force is effective at dynamically responding to changing threats such as firearms movements.

The force regularly disrupts and investigates serious and organised crime in collaboration with a wide range of other public service organisations. Use of all four elements of the 4Ps approach (pursue, prevent, protect, prepare) is increasing but is not yet entirely consistent practice. The force and its partners have now introduced multi-agency disruption panels to improve their assessment of the impact of activity on serious and organised crime.

The force has low numbers of OCGs per one million of population, particularly in comparison to other urban forces. The force intends to apply the OCG mapping

methodology more broadly to incorporate more organised urban street gangs and other groups engaged in organised crime, which will allow it to target these groups with its SOC partners more effectively.

The force has a variety of effective projects in place to deter people from becoming involved in serious and organised crime. It makes good use of ancillary orders such as serious crime prevention orders and gang injunctions. It tracks members of organised crime groups into, through and beyond the prison system as part of a 'lifetime' approach to offender management.

The force's communication with the public raises awareness of the threat from members of organised crime groups, provides crime prevention advice and deters offenders. Strong messages give local communities reassurance about the force's response to serious and organised crime.

Areas for improvement

- 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 its approach to the management of serious and organised crime by ensuring that work to disrupt the criminal activities of OCGs to reduce the threat and harm from serious and organised crime is structured effectively around all four elements of the 4P approach – pursue, prevent, protect and prepare.

- The force should continue to improve its understanding of the impact of its work on serious and organised crime across the four Ps, and ensure that it learns from experience to maximise the force's disruptive effect on this criminal activity.

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)[24] 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.

West Midlands Police has effective arrangements in place for ensuring that it can fulfil its national policing responsibilities. It has clear leadership arrangements in place with an identified lead nominated for each of the six national threats. The assistant chief constable (security) holds them all to account for the force's level of preparedness through a structure of meetings which are held every three months.

The force formally assesses all of the SPR threats every year. This includes its capacity and capability to respond at local, regional and national levels, and an assessment of how well it can work and collaborate across borders and with national partners. One of the objectives set out in the police and crime plan is that the force will continue to play its part in responding to local and national threats. The PCC regularly holds chief officers to account for the force's level of preparedness. As a result of this activity the force identifies cyber security as a growing area of concern. The force is considering an increase in its capacity to investigate and fight cyber crime and child sexual abuse as part of the WMP 2020 change programme.

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[24] 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:
www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/417116/The_Strategic_Policing_Requirement.pdf

The force has the necessary arrangements in place for testing its preparedness to respond to SPR threats. It undertakes regular large-scale exercises with national organisations, other emergency services and public services within the West Midlands local resilience forum. This ensures that it is ready to deal with major emergencies. For example the force has conducted joint exercises with other public services to test its response to severe weather civil contingencies and terrorist incidents in crowded places. The force is also able to test its preparedness to deal with some of the national threats when it undertakes real-life operations. These include policing English Defence League marches, responding to disorder such as the recent prison riots, or managing the response to cyber attacks on local business.

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.

West Midlands Police is well prepared to deal with an attack which requires an armed response. The force has thoroughly assessed the threat of such an attack. The force has clear and robust arrangements in place to review and where necessary increase its firearms capability.

The force completes an annual armed policing strategic threat and risk assessment (APSTRA) to assess the threat of an attack which requires an armed response. The force reviewed its APSTRA early in 2016, including an assessment of its readiness to respond to a Paris-style marauding terrorist firearms attack. The assessment is in line with national guidance and takes into account a wide range of intelligence sources including counter-terrorism and organised crime. The force is part of the national uplift programme and has provided detailed information on its plans for additional armed officer recruitment and training. The national uplift programme describes the force's progress as 'excellent'. The force has adjusted its armed response vehicle (ARV) shift pattern to ensure armed resources are deployed at appropriate times. The STRA also recognises the requirement to provide mutual aid to other forces in the event of a national emergency.

The force has conducted exercises with other public services to test its preparedness to respond jointly to incidents which require an armed response. As a result, police and other emergency services have revised their respective plans. Further joint exercises are being planned. HMIC found that officers in the control room have a sound understanding of relevant force procedures in the event of a marauding terrorist firearms attack.

Summary of findings

Ungraded

West Midlands Police has effective specialist capabilities. The force has the necessary arrangements in place to ensure it can fulfil its national policing responsibilities. There is clear leadership for overseeing its preparedness to respond to the national threats set out in the *Strategic Policing Requirement*. The force conducts a formal assessment of the threats every year. The force exercises regularly with partner organisations and other emergency services to test its preparedness.

The force is well prepared to respond to an attack which requires an armed response. The force has thoroughly reviewed its assessment of the threat from such an attack. In response it has immediately adjusted shift patterns to increase its 24/7 armed policing capacity. The force is part of the national uplift programme, and is making excellent progress in recruitment and training to increase its firearms capability.

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:

www.gov.uk/government/statistics/police-recorded-crime-open-data-tables

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.

- For a full commentary and explanation of outcome types please see Crime Outcomes in England and Wales: year ending March 2016, Home Office, July 2016. Available from:
  www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/539447/crime-outcomes-hosb0616.pdf

- 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

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 not included in the graph or in the calculation of the England and Wales proportion.

Numbers may not sum to 100 percent due to rounding.