

PEEL: Police effectiveness 2015

An inspection of Hertfordshire Constabulary



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

Overall judgment¹



Good

HMIC judges Hertfordshire Constabulary to be good overall in the way it keeps people safe and reduces crime. The constabulary works very well to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour and protects most victims well, but improvement is needed in the way vulnerable people² are protected from harm. The constabulary's approach to investigating crime and managing offenders is also good. The constabulary works well to tackle serious and organised crime. This is the first year HMIC has graded forces on their overall effectiveness so comparison of their year-on-year effectiveness is not possible.

Summary

HMIC judges that overall Hertfordshire Constabulary is good in the way that it keeps people safe and reduces crime.

It is good at preventing crime and anti-social behaviour. The constabulary is strongly committed to crime prevention, supporting victims, partnership working and keeping communities safe. Officers and staff work well with other organisations to solve problems in neighbourhoods, including intervening early to stop them from escalating.

While we found a few areas for improvement, including better use of out-of-court disposals the police can use to deal with anti-social behaviour and low-level crime, known as community resolutions, and how the force evaluates 'what works', the public can feel confident that the constabulary works well to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour, and keep people safe. Hertfordshire has seen a slightly bigger reduction in police recorded crime over recent years than the average for England and Wales.

Hertfordshire Constabulary's investigation of crime and the way in which it deals with offenders is generally good, although there are some inconsistencies in the quality and supervision of the constabulary's initial crime investigations, which means that it may miss opportunities to gather the best evidence to bring offenders to justice at this important first stage. However, we did find that after the initial response, the

¹ Outstanding, Good, Requires improvement or Inadequate – see Annex A for definitions.

² A vulnerable person is someone who is in need of special care, support, or protection because of age, disability, or risk of abuse or neglect.

quality of subsequent investigations is good because investigative staff are generally appropriately skilled and trained.

Hertfordshire Constabulary is generally good at identifying vulnerable people and often responds well initially to meet the needs of victims who are vulnerable. However, there are important areas where improvement is needed to ensure the service is consistent and that vulnerable people, particularly missing children, are kept safe.

The constabulary has a good understanding of the threat posed by serious and organised crime, and is good at disrupting the activity of organised crime groups operating in its area. Investigators of serious and organised crime are highly skilled and experienced, and the constabulary also benefits from additional specialist capacity provided through the Eastern Region Special Operations Unit (ERSOU) which is a unit made up of specialist officers from all five forces in the region.

The leadership has strong oversight of the force's ability to respond to national threats, such as terrorism, serious cyber-crime incidents and child sexual abuse. Its own arrangements for ensuring it can meet its national obligations in this regard (such as planning, testing and exercising) are good.

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



Good

Hertfordshire Constabulary is good at preventing crime and anti-social behaviour, and keeping people safe. This is consistent with HMIC's 2014 crime inspection when the constabulary was also judged as good at reducing crime and preventing offending.

Crime prevention, supporting victims, partnership working and keeping people safe are all clearly important areas to the constabulary. Resources continue to be targeted at these areas and the constabulary's commitment is well

How effective is the force at investigating crime and managing offenders?



Good

Hertfordshire Constabulary's approach to investigating crime and managing offenders is generally good. In HMIC's 2014 crime inspection the constabulary was also judged as good in this area.

There are some inconsistencies in the quality and supervision of the constabulary's initial investigations, which mean that it risks missing opportunities to gather the best evidence to bring offenders to justice. This was also an HMIC recommendation in 2014.

Although we found weaknesses in the

understood throughout the workforce.

HMIC found that, although Hertfordshire has increased the number of neighbourhood officers, however, neighbourhood officers continue to be regularly taken away from their neighbourhood duties to support the police response to calls and incidents.

In some areas we found that the capacity of local safer neighbourhood teams does not always reflect the increase in local demand and may undermine the constabulary's focus on prevention. The constabulary is aware of this and is reviewing local policing in response to the changes in demand and the need to achieve future savings; changes to resourcing are planned for the end of 2015.

Hertfordshire Constabulary recognises the added benefit from working together with local and regional partner organisations to provide a better service to the public by sharing information and joining-up the response, making best use of resources. Hertfordshire has the right systems and processes in place at constabulary-wide and neighbourhood levels, alongside a range of powers and tactics, to work with partner organisations to tackle anti-social behaviour and keep people safe. There is still some room for improvement in the way the constabulary systematically evaluates and uses evidence of what works to ensure it learns from best practice.

standard of some initial investigations, the quality of subsequent investigations is good as investigative staff are well trained and generally properly qualified. Investigation plans are generally thorough and well documented and we saw evidence of effective support and review by experienced supervisors.

The constabulary keeps victims well informed as its investigations progress and has effective systems in place to ensure that victims are kept updated at key stages throughout the investigation, such as when an offender has been arrested or bailed and when a court date has been set. Victim satisfaction rates in Hertfordshire remain consistently above the England and Wales average.

The constabulary identifies vulnerable offenders and makes efforts to divert them from further offending. While we found a few areas for improvement, the force's processes for working with partner organisations to identify, monitor and work with repeat and dangerous offenders to stop them re-offending generally work well.

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



Requires improvement

Hertfordshire Constabulary generally provides a good service in identifying vulnerable people, and responds well to them. It has made good progress since last year, improving its approach to domestic abuse and setting up a county-wide multi-agency safeguarding hub to provide more effective joined-up services with partner organisations to safeguard children better.

We found that Hertfordshire Constabulary, at all levels, is strongly committed to improving its services to protect vulnerable people. The constabulary has invested extra resource into its specialist services that support those who are vulnerable and keep them safe. We found a strong focus on ensuring that vulnerable victims are identified early enough to ensure that the police response is appropriate.

However, the constabulary needs to improve its response to missing and absent children. We found good work from the small specialist team, but there is a lack of clarity over responsibilities for missing children among the majority of frontline staff. This poses a risk that the constabulary may not be managing effectively its investigations into missing children and work to understand and

How effective is the force at tackling serious and organised crime, including its arrangements for fulfilling its national policing responsibilities?



Good

Hertfordshire Constabulary is good at identifying and tackling serious and organised crime, including its arrangements for ensuring that it can fulfil its national policing responsibilities. This is the first year HMIC has graded forces on their effectiveness in these areas, so no year-on-year comparison is possible.

The constabulary works well with local and national partner organisations and other forces in the region to prevent serious and organised crime. It has a well-developed understanding of the threat posed by serious and organised crime groups across Hertfordshire, through comprehensive analysis of serious and organised crime at district level. The constabulary is part of an effective multi-agency response to these types of crime, including work to prevent people from becoming involved in it. Hertfordshire Constabulary has access to an extensive range of specialist capabilities provided by the Eastern Region Special Operations Unit, to help the constabulary tackle serious and organised crime.

The constabulary has a well co-ordinated and effective method for tackling organised crime groups, with good

prevent vulnerable children from repeatedly going missing.

The constabulary has made a good start in ensuring that it is well-prepared to tackle child sexual exploitation and must now build on this initial approach with its partners.

processes to identify and disrupt the activities of these criminal groups. We saw some good early work with schools and universities to identify vulnerable young people who may be at risk of being drawn into serious and organised crime.

Force in numbers



Calls for assistance

Calls for assistance per 1,000 population 12 months to 31 March 2015



Crime

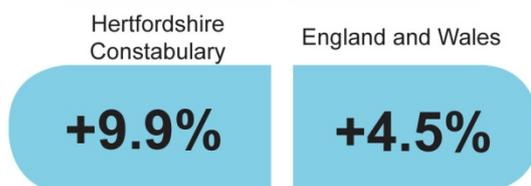
Crimes recorded (excluding fraud) per 1,000 population 12 months to 30 June 2015



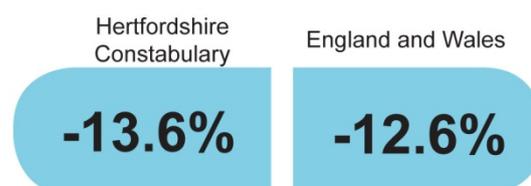
Crimes recorded (excluding fraud) per 1,000 population 12 months to 30 June 2014



Changes in recorded crime (excluding fraud) 12 months to 30 June 2014 against 12 months to 30 June 2015

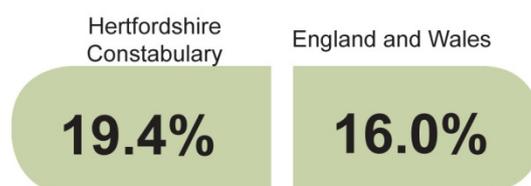


Changes in recorded crime (excluding fraud) 12 months to 30 June 2010 against 12 months to 30 June 2015



Charge rate

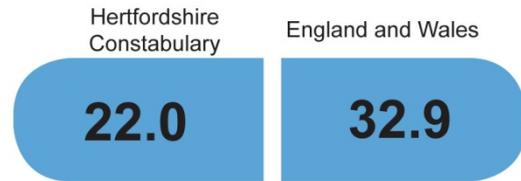
Charge rate as a percentage of all crimes recorded (excluding fraud) 12 months to 30 June 2015



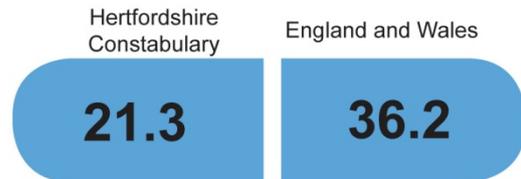


Anti-social behaviour

Anti-social behaviour incidents per 1,000 population 12 months to 30 June 2015



Anti-social behaviour incidents per 1,000 population 12 months to 30 June 2014



Domestic abuse

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



Domestic abuse as a percentage of all recorded crime (excluding fraud) 12 months to 31 March 2014



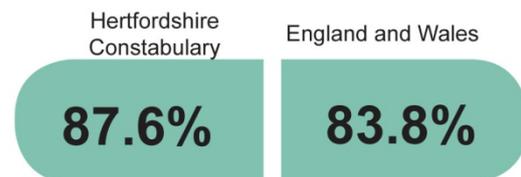
Organised crime groups

Organised crime groups per million population as at 30 June 2015



Victim satisfaction rate

Victim satisfaction rate 12 months to 31 March 2015



Introduction

The public expects their local police force to:

- Prevent crime and anti-social behaviour and, when crime occurs, to investigate it properly and provide support to victims.
- Use appropriately trained officers and staff and approved practice when investigating crime, gathering evidence and building cases to ensure offenders are brought to justice.
- Support victims of crime by responding to calls for service, identifying and putting in place the right help at the first point of contact, keeping them informed and consulting them about the possible outcomes of their case.
- Ensure that vulnerable people who might not have been a victim of crime are identified and given appropriate support, for example, people at risk of domestic abuse, children at risk of sexual exploitation and missing or absent children.
- Understand and be prepared to respond to threats beyond their own force boundaries, including national threats such as terrorism, serious and organised crime and cyber-crime.
- Work effectively with local partner organisations and other bodies to prevent all types of crime and re-offending and to protect the public.

HMIC's annual inspections into police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy (PEEL) consider whether forces keep people safe and reduce crime (how effective a force is), whether these activities are being carried out at the most appropriate cost (how efficient a force is), and how forces are ensuring they have the confidence of their communities (the public legitimacy of a force).

All forces are subject to significant cost reductions; this is reflected in our efficiency reports published in October 2015. The judgments we are making in this effectiveness report are made understanding the financial challenges forces are facing. Reports on the efficiency and legitimacy of Hertfordshire Constabulary are available from the HMIC website (www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/).

HMIC's effectiveness inspections make an assessment of how well forces are preventing and investigating crime and anti-social behaviour; tackling serious and organised crime; and protecting victims and those who are vulnerable. These are the most important responsibilities for a police force, and are the principal measures by which the public will judge the performance of their force and policing as a whole.

Our effectiveness inspection focused on the overall question: "How effective is the force at keeping people safe and reducing crime?"

To answer this question we looked at four in-depth questions, three of which are discussed in more detail within this report:³

1. How effective is the force at preventing crime and anti-social behaviour, and keeping people safe?
2. How effective is the force at investigating crime and managing offenders?
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, including its arrangements for fulfilling its national policing responsibilities?

During our inspection, we collected data from forces, reviewed case files and surveyed the public to seek their views on the effectiveness of the force. We also surveyed and interviewed representatives from partner organisations to gather evidence about the effectiveness of their working relationships with the force. We interviewed chief constables and chief officers and held focus groups of officers and staff at all grades and ranks. We also made numerous unannounced visits to police stations to talk to frontline officers and staff about their work. This report sets out the findings from this wide-ranging inspection of Hertfordshire Constabulary.

³ HMIC inspected forces on questions 1, 2 and 4 between September and November 2015. Question 3 was inspected between June and August 2015, and a separate report was published in December 2015 (available from: www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/publications/police-effectiveness-vulnerability-2015-hertfordshire/). In 2014, in preparation for the PEEL programme, forces were inspected to assess how effective they are at cutting crime (available from: www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/publications/crime-inspection-force-reports/).

How effective is the force at preventing crime and 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 can be cheaper and more effective than investigating crime, and it makes society a safer place. The police cannot prevent crime on their own; other statutory and non-statutory bodies have a vital role to play. Police effectiveness in this matter is therefore dependent on their ability to work closely with other partner organisations to understand local problems and have access to a wide range of evidence-based interventions to resolve them.

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

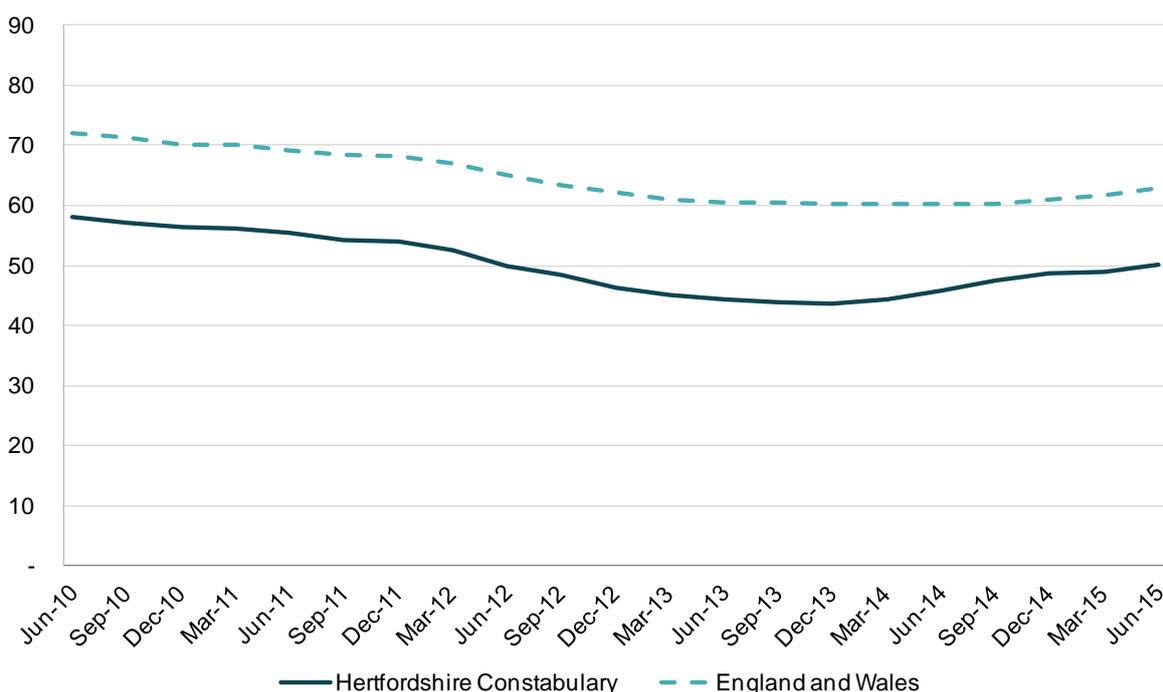
Although police recorded crime is by no means a complete measure of the totality of demand for calls on its service that a force faces, it does provide a comparable indication of performance across all forces. Crime rates are reported as a number of crimes per 1,000 population in each force area to enable comparison between areas. Total recorded crime is made up of victim-based crime (e.g. theft) and non victim-based crime (e.g. possession of drugs). More than two-thirds of forces showed an annual increase in total police recorded crime (excluding fraud) in the 12 months to 30 June 2015. 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 national inspection of crime data in 2014.

In 2010 the Home Secretary set a clear priority for the police service to cut crime. When compared with the 12 months to 30 June 2010, police recorded crime (excluding fraud) for the 12 months to 30 June 2015 fell by 14 percent in Hertfordshire compared with a reduction of 13 percent across all forces in England and Wales.

Over this same period, victim-based crime (i.e. crimes where there is a direct victim such as an individual, a group, or an organisation) decreased by 12 percent in Hertfordshire, compared with a reduction of 12 percent across England and Wales.

When compared with the previous year, police recorded crime (excluding fraud) in Hertfordshire increased by 10 percent for the 12 months to 30 June 2015. This is compared with an increase of 4 percent across England and Wales over the same period.

Figure 1: Police recorded crime rates (per 1,000 population) for the five year period to 30 June 2015



Source: Home Office data

The volume 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. Figure 2 shows crime and anti-social behaviour rates in Hertfordshire (per 1,000 population) compared with England and Wales.

Figure 2: Police recorded crime rates (per 1,000 population) for the 12 months to 30 June 2015

Rates per 1,000 population	Hertfordshire Constabulary	England and Wales
Recorded crime (excluding fraud)	50.2	63.0
Victim-based crime	43.7	56.0
Sexual offences	1.1	1.6
Assault with injury	5.0	6.3
Burglary in a dwelling*	6.7	8.4
Anti-social behaviour incidents*	22.0	32.9

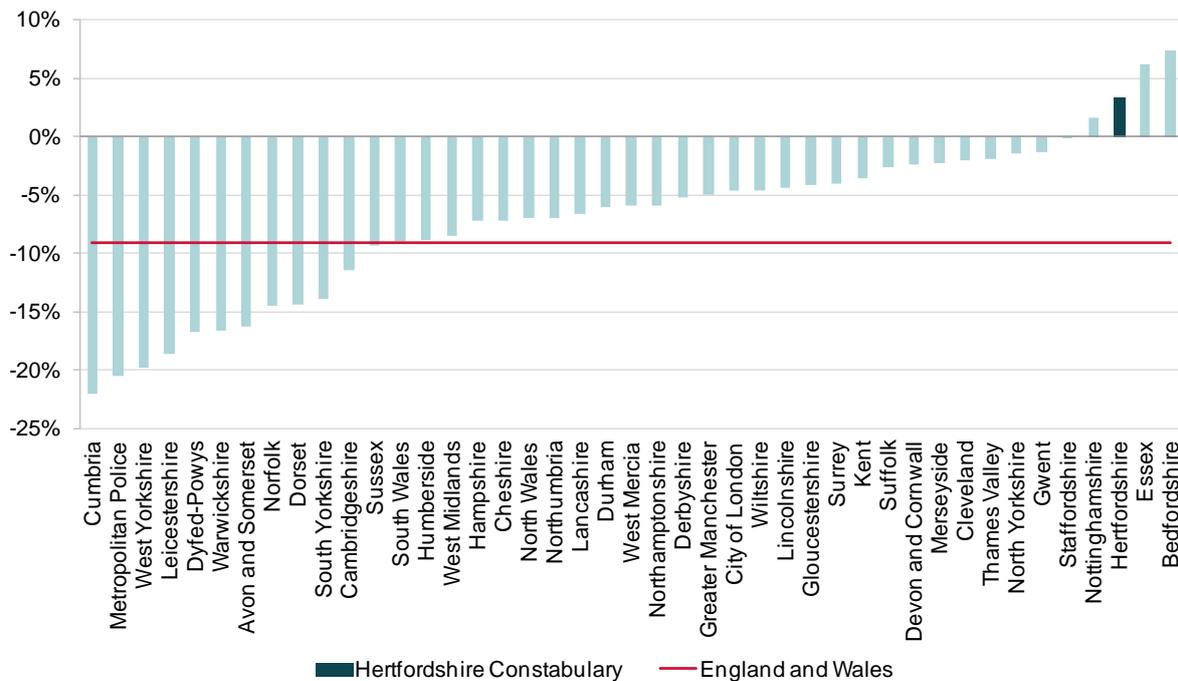
Source: Home Office data, HMIC data return

***Anti-social behaviour data is from the constabulary's data return and the rate for burglary in a dwelling is the rate per 1,000 households, not population.**

HMIC has chosen these types of crime to indicate offending levels in the constabulary area. We are not judging the effectiveness of the constabulary on police recorded crime rates only.

In the 12 months to 30 June 2015, Hertfordshire Constabulary recorded 25,422 incidents of anti-social behaviour. This is 3 percent more incidents than the constabulary recorded during the previous 12 months. When considering all forces across England and Wales, there were 9 percent fewer incidents in the 12 months to 30 June 2015, than recorded during the previous 12 months.

Figure 3: Percentage change in the volume of anti-social behaviour incidents, by force, comparing the 12 months to 30 June 2015 with the 12 months to 30 June 2014



Source: HMIC data collection

How well does the force work to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour, and keep people safe?

How well is the force prioritising the prevention of crime and anti-social behaviour?

Hertfordshire Constabulary’s overall plan for reducing crime demonstrates a strong commitment to crime and anti-social behaviour prevention and keeping people safe. The constabulary collects and analyses a broad range of information (including data from local authorities, private and voluntary sector organisations, together with public consultation results) to identify the most important threats and risks facing Hertfordshire communities as part of the constabulary’s annual assessment process. This work informs the chief constable’s annual operational plan for the constabulary, which reflects the priorities set out in the police and crime commissioner’s police and crime plan. The priorities demonstrate a clear commitment to supporting victims, working with partners, keeping people safe from crime and anti-social behaviour and maintaining neighbourhood policing by allocating resources to local preventative activity.

The importance of preventing crime and anti-social behaviour and keeping people safe is generally well understood throughout the whole constabulary. This includes early intervention to stop the escalation of anti-social behaviour. The way the police work in local neighbourhoods reflects both constabulary-level and local prevention priorities. Local neighbourhood teams are the main focus for this work, although the integrated Local Policing Command (LPC) in Hertfordshire supports a more cohesive, 'one team' approach. This is particularly apparent where the response, neighbourhoods, criminal investigation department and proactive units (Scorpion) are located in close proximity, together with community safety partnerships.

How well are resources allocated to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour?

The constabulary effectively allocates officers and staff to neighbourhoods to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour and keep people safe, by ensuring that every local area has a visible and accessible safer neighbourhood team.

The constabulary has developed individual prevention and enforcement plans to protect repeat and vulnerable victims. Safer neighbourhood teams, particularly police community support officers (PCSOs), understand their local communities including the identity of their vulnerable and repeat victims. They make contact with vulnerable people in their area to provide reassurance and keep them safe. A good example is Operation Manhunt, where PCSOs visit elderly people in areas where distraction burglaries have taken place.⁴ Together with local partners, they put appropriate safeguarding measures in place including the use of cameras to provide reassurance and help secure evidence. Plans are reviewed by officers and partner organisations in local neighbourhoods to ensure that joint resources are being allocated to prevent escalation.

HMIC found that local officers and staff are carrying increasing workloads and continue to be regularly taken away from their neighbourhood duties to support reactive duties. While Hertfordshire has increased its neighbourhood officers, in some areas we found that capacity of local safer neighbourhood teams does not always reflect the increase in local demand and may undermine the constabulary's focus on prevention; the constabulary is aware of this. The constabulary is reviewing local policing in response to the changes in demand and the need to achieve future savings. This work is progressing and changes to resourcing are planned for the end of 2015.

How well is the force using a broad range of effective tactics to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour?

Safer neighbourhood teams use a broad range of tactics to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour and keep people safe. These include: anti-social behaviour powers,

⁴ A distraction burglary is where the offender tricks or dupes the occupant or distracts them, allowing the other person they are working with to gain access to the property and commit burglary. The elderly are particularly vulnerable to distraction burglary.

disruptive tactics, advice and equipment (CCTV, crime prevention officers, 'neighbourhood alert'), and campaigns to tackle offending behaviour and reduce opportunities for crime.

In one area, police and partner organisations visit homes together giving specific crime prevention advice such as 'immobilise' (a scheme which guards against mobile phone theft) and burglary and personal safety advice. In two years over 9,600 houses were visited, resulting in almost 2,000 requests from residents to sign-up for neighbourhood text messaging and over 800 requests for fire prevention visits. The visits also identified 246 vulnerable people who received support from the police as a result of these visits. A recent summer holiday crime prevention initiative increased police patrols and engagement with young people to prevent anti-social behaviour.

In HMIC's 2014 crime inspection, we recommended that the constabulary took steps to ensure that it had methods in place to review and evaluate the benefits of current and new tactics and initiatives, and capture and share learning and good practice.

We found that the constabulary is making progress in this area. For example, it has shared with partners an effective IT system to record anti-social behaviour problem-solving plans and actions, and which is accessible to the police and a range of partner organisations. This can be searched by officers and staff to look for good approaches that have worked in the past and can be re-used to tackle similar community problems, although some staff did tell us that information could be lost over a period of years.

HMIC saw good examples of innovative initiatives such as the integrated offender management project known as 'C2', which is an offender location-monitoring project to assist in the constabulary's assessment of the risk an offender may pose. We also saw evidence of early constabulary plans to create an innovation hub where good ideas will be recorded to share with officers and partners. However, local prevention activity would still benefit from a more consistent and sophisticated problem-solving process, including use of predictive policing techniques, and evidence of innovations and 'what works' from other forces, academics and partners. Hertfordshire Constabulary needs to routinely evaluate, share and refine its effective practice.

How well does the force work with partners to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour, and keep people safe?

How committed is the force to working with partner organisations?

The constabulary works well in partnership activities and has a strong focus on prevention and local problem-solving through the community safety partnership structures. HMIC found good examples of positive joint initiatives, such as the pilot

scheme working with adults with chaotic lives and complex needs, the thriving families project and impressive long-term reductions in anti-social behaviour.⁵

Hertfordshire Constabulary differentiates between anti-social behaviour that is personal⁶ and that which is environmental.⁷ In the 12 months to 30 June 2015 the constabulary recorded a reduction in personal anti-social behaviour of 1 percent (120 fewer incidents) and an increase in environmental anti-social behaviour of 46 percent (273 more incidents), compared to the 12 months to 30 June 2014. The constabulary tackles environmental anti-social behaviour through local joint police and environmental officer patrols, which are viewed positively by local communities.

Feedback from partner organisations who work with the police, such as local councils, reflects strong professional relationships between themselves and local police teams, and a commitment to resolving community issues together.

Hertfordshire Constabulary continues to invest time and resources in working with partner organisations and understands the value of shared skills, knowledge and powers to keep people safe and solve problems quickly.

How well does the force share and use information with partners to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour?

Hertfordshire Constabulary has invested in the co-location of multi-agency partnership groups in each community safety partnership area to consider their joint response to crime and anti-social behaviour. This includes a monthly police and partnership 'responsible authority group' (RAG) in each area, which the local chief inspector chairs.

This approach enables the effective sharing of information, supported by the constabulary's online case management system (safety net) that is regularly accessed, updated and used to progress joint actions and initiatives. Partners spoke positively to HMIC about the use of safety net and see the value in this method of information sharing. The increased co-location of police and partners is also improving joint work and better sharing of information. The constabulary has information-sharing agreements in place with principal partner organisations and it has developed joint analysis of demand with community safety partners resulting in one partnership report to inform how police and partners should allocate resources according to local threat, harm and risk.

⁵ The thriving families project brings together a wide range of partners to share information and identify support and diversionary opportunities to families. This can include housing provision, drugs and alcohol diversionary schemes, and training, employment and educational health support.

⁶ Personal anti-social behaviour is perceived to be targeted at an individual or group rather than the community at large.

⁷ Environmental anti-social behaviour is not aimed at an individual or group but targets the wider environment, e.g. public spaces/buildings.

How well is the force working with partner organisations to keep people safe and tackle anti-social behaviour in local neighbourhoods?

Hertfordshire Constabulary works well with partner organisations. HMIC saw good examples of effective joint problem-solving to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour and keep people safe. For example, there is close working with local authority environmental health services as part of a 'safer streets' initiative to address local concerns about anti-social behaviour. Similarly, crime prevention design advisers (police staff) provide guidance to house builders to ensure that houses being built conform to a 'secure by design' specification.

The constabulary uses a range of tactics to address problems of crime and disorder, including the appropriate use of violent offender orders, banning orders, and anti-social behaviour injunctions. There is close working with licensing authorities to make public areas safer, for example, in the installation of additional closed-circuit television cameras. This is part of the night-time economy initiatives to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour.

In addition to preventative work, the constabulary also works well with partner organisations to promote resolutions that protect communities and victims, once crime and anti-social behaviour has occurred. Neighbourhood officers are aware of the option to refer offenders who have committed low-level crime and anti-social behaviour to diversionary schemes and education.

Hertfordshire Constabulary has made limited use of community resolutions. The constabulary is introducing its community remedy and we found officers' knowledge of this was varied. Although it is now making progress, more work is needed in this area.⁸ A community resolution is an alternative to formal criminal prosecution and enables victims to have quick resolutions and closure to their crime; offenders will receive speedy justice. It can only be used for certain offences, such as low-level public order, criminal damage, theft, and minor assaults.

Summary of findings



Good

Hertfordshire Constabulary is good at preventing crime and anti-social behaviour, and keeping people safe. This is consistent with HMIC's 2014 crime inspection when

⁸ The community remedy was introduced by the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014. It is designed to give victims of crime a say in how offenders are dealt with out-of-court for certain types of low-level crime and anti-social behaviour. It is a list of actions – or remedies – which have been agreed by the police and crime commissioner and the chief constable. Both the victim and the offender need to agree about the remedy to be used. Its use will also be dependent on the offender admitting their guilt, and it can also be used in conjunction with a more formal out-of-court disposal, such as a conditional caution.

the constabulary was also judged as good at reducing crime and preventing offending.

Crime prevention, supporting victims, partnership working and keeping people safe are all clearly important areas to the constabulary. Resources continue to be targeted at these areas and the constabulary's commitment is well understood throughout the workforce.

HMIC found that, although Hertfordshire has increased the number of neighbourhood officers, however, neighbourhood officers continue to be regularly taken away from their neighbourhood duties to support the police response to calls and incidents. In some areas we found that the capacity of local safer neighbourhood teams does not always reflect the increase in local demand and may undermine the constabulary's focus on prevention. The constabulary is aware of this and is reviewing local policing in response to the changes in demand and the need to achieve future savings; changes to resourcing are planned for the end of 2015.

Hertfordshire Constabulary recognises the added benefit from working together with local and regional partner organisations to provide a better service to the public by sharing information and joining-up the response, making best use of resources. Hertfordshire has the right systems and processes in place at constabulary-wide and neighbourhood levels, alongside a range of powers and tactics, to work with partner organisations to tackle anti-social behaviour and keep people safe. There is still some room for improvement in the way the constabulary systematically evaluates and uses evidence of what works to ensure it learns from best practice.

Areas for improvement

- The force should use evidence of 'what works' drawn from other forces, academics and partners to continually improve its approach to the prevention of crime and anti-social behaviour. There should be routine evaluation of tactics and sharing of effective practice.

How effective is the force at investigating crime and managing offenders?

When a crime occurs, the public must have confidence that the police will investigate it effectively, take their concerns as victims seriously, 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. The risk posed by those who are identified as being the most prolific or dangerous offenders must also be properly managed (in partnership with other organisations), to minimise the chances of continued harm to individuals and communities.

HMIC referred to national standards and best practice in examining how well the force allocates and investigates both complex and non-complex (e.g. burglary, robbery and assault) crime, including the full range of ways police officers and staff can gather evidence to support investigations (these include the more traditional forensics, such as taking fingerprints, as well as digital sweeps to find evidence of online abuse, for instance).

We also looked at how well the force works with partners to identify vulnerable offenders and prevent them from re-offending, and how well it identifies and manages repeat, and dangerous and sexual offenders.

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 'sanction detections', the new outcomes framework gives a fuller picture of the work the police do to investigate and resolve crime. The new broader framework (now containing twenty 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.

Given the work involved in amending police force crime-recording systems to accommodate fully the new outcomes framework, two forces have not yet been able to provide a full year of data for all new outcomes types. Hertfordshire Constabulary, however, has been providing the Home Office with full data since July 2014. The complete range of new outcome types will be used in future HMIC inspections, once all forces have provided a full year of data. Figure 4 shows only those outcome types for which full data is available for all forces in England and Wales.

Figure 4: Outcomes recorded in the 12 months to 30 June 2015 for all police recorded crime (excluding fraud)^{9 10 11}

Outcome type/group	Hertfordshire Constabulary Number of outcomes	Rate	England and Wales Number of outcomes	Rate
Charged/Summoned	11,260	19.4	577,678	16.0
Taken into consideration	589	1.0	21,318	0.6
Out-of-court (formal)	4,425	7.6	165,384	4.6
Caution - youths	283	0.5	19,703	0.5
Caution - adults	2,970	5.1	115,000	3.2
Penalty Notices for Disorder	1,172	2.0	30,681	0.8
Out-of-court (informal)	1,925	3.3	159,915	4.4
Cannabis/Khat warning	1,181	2.0	41,964	1.2
Community resolution	744	1.3	117,951	3.3

Source: Home Office crime outcomes data

Outcomes are likely to differ from force to force for a number of reasons. Certain offences are more likely to be concluded without offenders being prosecuted, typically including types of crime such as cannabis misuse. If this type of crime is particularly prevalent in a force then it is likely that the level of 'cannabis/khat¹² warning' outcomes would be greater.

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.

⁹ Rate based on number of outcomes recorded in 12 months to 30 June 2015 divided by number of offences recorded in 12 months to 30 June 2015.

¹⁰ For a full commentary and explanation of outcome types please see *Crime Outcomes in England and Wales 2014/15*, Home Office, London, July 2015. Available from: www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/445753/hosb0115.pdf

¹¹ Community resolutions are an out-of-court disposal the police can use to deal with anti-social behaviour and low-level crime. 'Taken into consideration' is when an offender admits the commission of other offences in the course of sentencing proceedings and requests those other offences to be taken into consideration.

¹² 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.

Hertfordshire Constabulary has one of the highest rates for both ‘penalty notices for disorder’ and ‘cannabis/khat warnings’, of all forces in England and Wales. Hertfordshire Constabulary also has one of the lowest ‘community resolution’ rates, of all forces in England and Wales.

How well does the force investigate crime and keep victims safe and informed?

How well does the force initially investigate and allocate cases?

It is important that when the police are called to an incident they respond in a timely manner, with officers or staff who are trained and competent to keep people safe, and who can take steps to apprehend offenders and investigate the circumstances if a crime has occurred. An effective initial response by the police increases the likelihood of a successful outcome for both the victim and the criminal justice system. Subsequent investigation by detectives and other specialist police staff also needs to be well managed and resourced.

The constabulary has a good process for initial investigation and subsequent allocation of reported crimes for further investigation. A detective sergeant reviews daily all reported crime and the allocation policy is clearly understood and adhered to by staff. HMIC found that the policy is flexible in cases where the detective sergeant’s assessment is that the investigation should be conducted by officers with specific expertise.

However, we did find the quality and supervision of initial investigations is inconsistent. The constabulary has an eight-point plan, which is intended as a generic guide for all investigations to ensure staff take a systematic approach to dealing properly with the following principal elements: suspect, forensics, CCTV, house-to-house, witnesses, generic evidence, witness statements and confirmation the incident has a crime number.

However, in practice officers use this inconsistently and do not tailor it to individual crime types. We were disappointed to find that the guide for officers and staff setting out the minimum standards expected from an investigation is not used by operational staff. Our testing found inexperienced staff in supervisory positions without the skills or expertise to effectively oversee initial investigations, which is resulting in poorer quality initial investigation packages being handed over to specialist teams.

HMIC’s crime inspection in 2014 recommended that the constabulary developed and implemented an action plan to improve the quality of its investigations to ensure that:

- investigating officers and police staff are aware of the standard required, especially in relation to investigation plans, and have the professional skills and expertise to fulfil their duties;
- supervisors know what is expected of them in driving up standards; and
- there is appropriate monitoring and oversight of investigative quality.

The constabulary has not yet completed its action plan, but is aware that it still has more work to do to improve the quality and consistency of initial investigations.

We did find that the constabulary regularly updates victims on the progress of its investigation. We also saw clear evidence that the constabulary understands the importance of ensuring this is completed across Hertfordshire with systems in place to automatically remind officers and staff.

How well does the force investigate different types of crime?

Once allocated, the constabulary undertakes effective investigations into volume crimes (the most frequent and less complex types of crime like burglary, robbery and assault). Crimes assessed as lower risk, for example, criminal damage, shop theft, possession of drugs or some domestic abuse cases, are investigated by a 'custody investigation team' (CIT). The CIT works well, and develops officers across the constabulary to increase their experience in preparing case files, working with the case-file build unit and the Crown Prosecution Service. Investigative staff are appropriately trained or working towards accredited status from the College of Policing. However, increasingly heavy workloads are putting the team under pressure from the implementation of transforming summary justice programme and the resultant increase of demand for file information within tight timescales.¹³

While the quality of prosecution files has improved and there are more successful outcomes at court, it does mean that some offenders are on bail for longer and on occasions the constabulary is re-bailing offenders because the investigator has not completed the outstanding enquiries. There is a risk that this may affect the victim as the length of the investigation prolongs the wait for justice. To address this issue, the constabulary has recently made it a requirement that to bail a suspect for up to 28 days, the investigating officer must get approval from a custody sergeant; for a period up to 56 days, approval from an inspector; and over 56 days, approval from a chief inspector. The constabulary is also exploring options to allocate extra resources to the new safeguarding command so that it can take on the investigation of lower-risk domestic abuse cases that are currently being dealt with by the CIT, thereby reducing workloads within the CIT.

The constabulary works collaboratively through its alliance with Bedfordshire Police and Cambridgeshire Constabulary, to provide crime scene investigators (CSIs). We found a common approach for attendance, although CSIs can apply their discretion when considering whether or not to attend a crime scene. We also saw effective, appropriate and consistent use of forensic specialists to support investigations, and CSIs consider the full range of forensic opportunities. Officers and staff told us that they have an excellent working relationship with CSIs.

¹³ The criminal justice system is working towards reducing delays in the magistrates' courts, holding fewer hearings per case and increasing the number of trials that go ahead the first time that they are listed. This programme is called transforming summary justice.

As part of this inspection HMIC reviewed a sample of investigation files. We found investigation plans were documented on fewer than half of the crimes we examined with the more serious crimes generally demonstrating effective plans. All crimes reviewed with the exception of one were judged to be effective, good quality investigations.

For more complex crimes, such as child abuse or serious sexual offences, the constabulary generally allocates cases to specialist units staffed by officers who have the specialist skills and training required to conduct complex investigations. The cases we reviewed showed consistent use of specialist officers with appropriate skills and training to conduct complex investigations, and obvious and consistent use of these specialist officers and departments to properly support the investigation. Many serious cases we reviewed had a clear investigation plan, and we also saw evidence of supervisory involvement in decision-making with regard to more serious cases.

HMIC found that PCSOs are investigating some crimes when they do not have training to do so. This may affect the quality of the investigation, and mean that the constabulary is not providing victims with the service that they need. We found that these crimes mainly consisted of theft from motor vehicles, criminal damage, burglary (house-to-house enquiries and collection of CCTV) and shoplifting (collection of CCTV). This will also limit PCSOs' capacity to conduct preventative activities.

We found a clear demarcation of regional and constabulary responsibilities in relation to serious and complex crime investigation. All serious crimes such as murder or kidnap are investigated by the Major Crime Unit (MCU) shared by Bedfordshire Police, Cambridgeshire Constabulary and Hertfordshire Constabulary, while specialist teams within the constabulary investigate serious sexual offences, high-risk cases of domestic abuse and other complex crimes. The Eastern Region Special Operations Unit is a regional unit comprising officers across the region, which provides additional support for serious and organised crime. This is an effective division of responsibility, ensuring that appropriately trained officers undertake the most complex investigations.

It is important all police forces learn lessons from what works, as well as when things go wrong. The regional head of serious and organised crime ensures that a single point of contact conveys the results of domestic homicide reviews, serious case reviews and vulnerable adult reviews to the force. After significant events the constabulary conducts organisational learning reviews to identify any risks for the constabulary and implement changes early. The constabulary reviews homicide investigations every six months and holds seminars for senior managers to share the learning. The joint professional standards department (PSD) publishes learning regularly from cases across the three collaborating forces (Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire) and learning from HMIC inspections are

incorporated in individual action plans within professional development reviews of senior officers.

How well does the force gather digital evidence?

Increasingly, crime in England and Wales is committed online and through the use of digital devices such as tablets, computers or mobile phones. All forces have to retrieve data from these devices and examine them for evidence; staff, in what may be known as high tech crime units (HTCU), carry out these examinations.

Hertfordshire has a well-managed HTCU which has an effective prioritisation process for dealing with the most serious offences first. For high-risk cases involving vulnerable children and adults, the HTCU examines immediately vital evidence. The constabulary has improved its management of backlogs, increased the number of staff in the HTCU and identified processes that can be allocated to administration staff, allowing specialists to focus on more technical and advanced analysis.

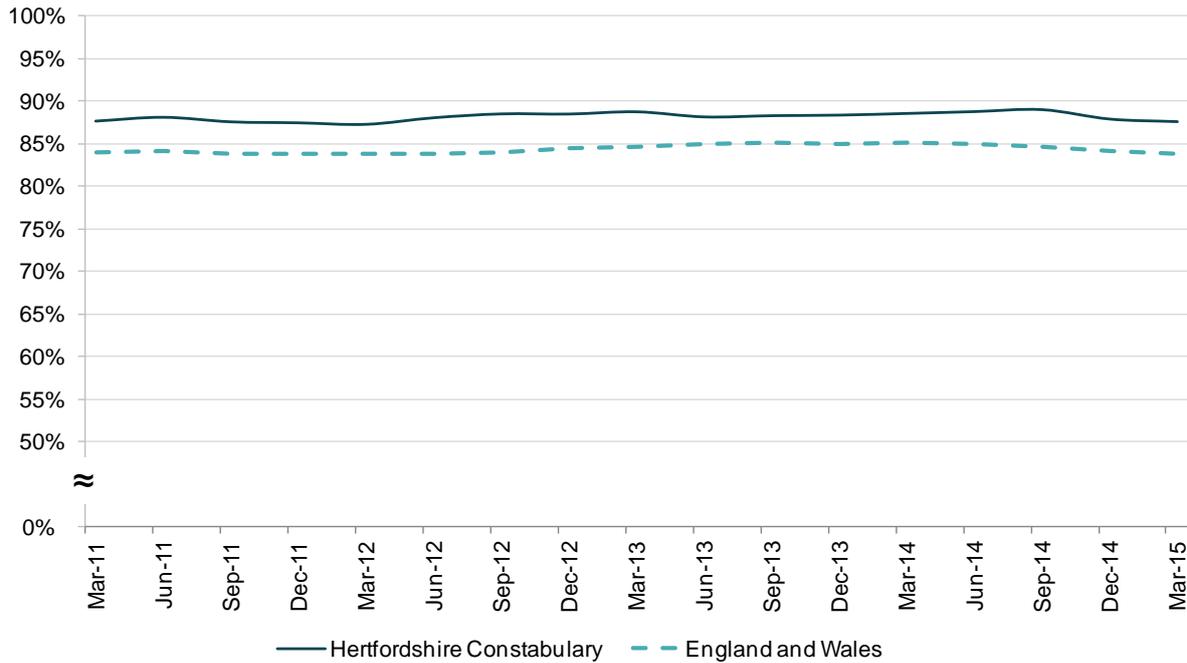
For lower-priority cases Hertfordshire has trained local staff to examine devices to retrieve intelligence and information without having to submit them to the HTCU. However, as technology continues to develop rapidly, local officers need to have their training and equipment updated to keep pace. We found examples where newer models of mobile phones and devices had to be submitted to the HTCU even in lower-risk cases because the equipment to download them and the trained staff were not available locally.

Staff in the HTCU are proactive about accompanying investigators to assist with search warrants, and raising awareness of the specialist support they can provide across the constabulary. The constabulary acknowledges that it could do more to ensure that its officers attending crimes understand which devices to seize and which are least likely to contain evidence. Improved knowledge and understanding by frontline staff would reduce unnecessary demand and increase positive outcomes. This will become more important as future demand increases.

How satisfied are victims of crime with the service provided by the force?

Of those who have been the victim of a crime in Hertfordshire in the 12 months to 31 March 2015, 87.6 percent were satisfied with their whole experience with the police. This is higher than the national victim satisfaction rate of 83.8 percent over the same time period. The victim satisfaction rate in Hertfordshire for the 12 months to 31 March 2015 is broadly in line with both the previous year's rate and the rate for the 12 months to 31 March 2011.

Figure 5: Percentage of victims satisfied with the overall service provided by the police, for the four year period to 31 March 2015



Source: Home Office data provided by forces

How well does the force identify and manage offenders to prevent re-offending?

How well does the force divert offenders away from crime?

The constabulary works well to effectively identify and keep vulnerable offenders out of the criminal justice system, where appropriate, to prevent further offending. Activities to divert offenders away from crime are provided by partner organisations and include a wide range of advice and guidance, for example, bike restoration projects and a new drugs 'testing on arrest' pilot within a custody suite to prevent drug-dependent offenders re-offending. Integrated offender management (IOM) teams are co-located with the local authority's children and young persons unit, dealing with out-of-court disposals for 10-17 year-olds.^{14 15}

The governance arrangements for IOM are in a state of flux following the recent disbanding of the oversight board. The constabulary is reviewing its IOM programme to ensure that its objectives are clearly set out. However, we found uncertainty among staff about the future of the IOM programme. The constabulary leadership should provide clear and regular engagement with IOM practitioners to reassure them that they are contributing to constabulary priorities, and that the future of the IOM programme is secure.

¹⁴ Integrated Offender Management (IOM) brings a multi-agency response to the crime and reoffending threats faced by local communities. The most persistent and problematic offenders are identified and managed jointly by partner agencies working together.

¹⁵ Out-of-court disposals allow the police to deal quickly and proportionately with less serious, often first-time offending which could more appropriately be resolved without a prosecution at court.

There is more scope for the constabulary to deal with offenders using restorative justice, which brings together people harmed by crime or conflict with those responsible for the harm, to find a positive way forward.¹⁶

How well does the force deal with repeat offenders?

The constabulary has effective processes in place to identify repeat offenders and prevent them re-offending, but it can improve these processes. The IOM approach could be extended to include more types of repeat offenders. As of 1 July 2015, 126 offenders were being managed under the IOM approach. All of these offenders are perpetrators of serious acquisitive crime (theft, burglary and robbery).

The constabulary's focus on these crime types is limiting the benefits to be gained from an integrated approach to managing repeat offenders and is limiting its opportunities to keep communities safer. While the constabulary is considering extending the IOM remit to high-risk domestic abuse offenders, it has not yet done so. High-risk domestic abuse offenders are managed within the specialist domestic abuse unit, but the constabulary can improve and co-ordinate its activity to prevent their reoffending. It is not clear how the constabulary measures the success of the IOM programme for those offenders it manages.

Through the IOM programme, the constabulary is using innovative rehabilitation processes, working closely with the court services to target high impact offenders and reduce crime. The choice and consequences programme (C2) offers prolific burglars on remand the opportunity to be part of a rehabilitation scheme as an alternative to prison. Rigorous conditions are imposed which are designed to reduce the causes of reoffending. At the time of our inspection, around eight prolific burglars (10 percent of the total number of prolific burglars) had successfully completed the scheme.

Hertfordshire Constabulary uses technology to target prolific offenders, prevent re-offending, keep victims safe and reduce demand on its services. Project Torch is a voluntary GPS tagging system for acquisitive crime criminals. The constabulary intends to be the first in the country to expand this to include domestic abuse offenders, especially those involved in stalking and harassment.

How well does the force deal with sexual and other dangerous offenders?

The constabulary has effective processes for identifying and monitoring sexual offenders. Skilled and accredited staff use appropriate plans to reduce the risk from registered sex offenders, with clear supervision and governance arrangements. The constabulary has recognised the risk from a growing number of dangerous offenders who are suitable for multi-agency public protection arrangements (MAPPA). These

¹⁶ Restorative justice gives victims the chance to tell offenders the real impact of their crime, get answers to their questions and get an apology. Restorative justice holds offenders to account for what they have done. It helps them understand the real impact, take responsibility, and make amends.

arrangements are used by the constabulary to work jointly with partner organisations including prison and probation services to monitor those offenders assessed as presenting high risk to the public, and to stop them re-offending. Offenders assessed as presenting the highest level of risk require co-ordinated action with partner organisations to reduce these risks. For example, we saw covert resources being allocated to tackle a high-risk sex offender based on the impact that the offender could have on vulnerable victims. In the 12 months to 30 June 2015, Hertfordshire issued 73 sexual offence prevention orders (SOPOs) and has issued 21 sexual harm prevention orders (SHPOs)¹⁷ since 1 March 2015. The constabulary reported that one was breached.

As of 1 July 2015, Hertfordshire is dealing with 38 offenders in this way, within a clear framework. The detective inspector in the local policing command manages violent offenders, the public protection unit manages registered sex offenders and the public protection detective chief inspector manages high-risk offenders.

Summary of findings



Good

Hertfordshire Constabulary's approach to investigating crime and managing offenders is generally good. In HMIC's 2014 crime inspection the constabulary was also judged as good in this area. There are some inconsistencies in the quality and supervision of the constabulary's initial investigations, which mean that it risks missing opportunities to gather the best evidence to bring offenders to justice. This was also a HMIC recommendation in 2014.

Although we found weaknesses in the standard of some initial investigations, the quality of subsequent investigations is good as investigative staff are well trained and generally properly qualified. Investigation plans are generally thorough and well documented and we saw evidence of effective support and review by experienced supervisors.

The constabulary keeps victims well informed as its investigations progress and has effective systems in place to ensure that victims are kept updated at key stages throughout the investigation, such as when an offender has been arrested or bailed and when a court date has been set. Victim satisfaction rates in Hertfordshire remain consistently above the England and Wales average.

The constabulary identifies vulnerable offenders and makes efforts to divert them from further offending. While we found a few areas for improvement, the force's

¹⁷ On 1 March 2015, sexual offence prevention orders (SOPOs) were re-named sexual harm prevention orders (SHPOs).

processes for working with partner organisations to identify, monitor and work with repeat and dangerous offenders to stop them re-offending generally work well.

Areas for improvement

- The force should ensure that all investigations are completed to a consistently good standard, and in a timely manner.
- The force should ensure that all those carrying out investigations are provided with appropriate training and support.

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

This question was inspected between June and August 2015, and the full report was published in December 2015. The following is a summary of the findings.¹⁸

Summary of findings



Requires improvement

Hertfordshire Constabulary is generally good at identifying vulnerable people and often responds well initially to meet the needs of victims who are vulnerable. However, there are important areas where improvement is needed to ensure that the constabulary's service is consistent and that it keeps safe vulnerable people, particularly missing children. Given the scale of the challenge and the risk these weaknesses pose to some of the most vulnerable people, HMIC judges that overall the constabulary requires improvement.

HMIC acknowledges that the constabulary is committed strongly to improving the services to protect vulnerable people. Police officers and staff understand and share this commitment. The constabulary has committed significant effort and resource to improve services to the public.

The constabulary ensures that it identifies vulnerable victims early enough and this in turn helps ensure that the police response is appropriate. Hertfordshire records the highest proportion of crimes involving a vulnerable victim of all forces in England and Wales. It effectively identifies repeat and vulnerable victims and responds to them well. It also investigates crimes committed against the most vulnerable victims well. Generally, the constabulary allocates the right level of expertise to investigations based on the complexity of the case. However, HMIC found areas for improvement in the quality of investigations and the degree of supervision.

The constabulary has invested additional resources into the specialist services that support those who are vulnerable and keep them safe.

The constabulary's response to missing and absent children needs to improve. There is good work from the small specialist team, but there is a lack of clarity over roles and responsibilities between the majority of frontline staff, who help to deal with vulnerable children who are missing or absent, and the specialist units. As a result, there is a risk that Hertfordshire may not be managing effectively its investigations

¹⁸ *PEEL: Police effectiveness 2015 (Vulnerability) – Hertfordshire Constabulary*, HMIC, December 2015. Available from: www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/publications/police-effectiveness-vulnerability-2015-hertfordshire/.

into missing children or working as well as it should to understand and prevent vulnerable children from repeatedly going missing.

The constabulary has made a good start in ensuring that it is well prepared to tackle child sexual exploitation and should build on this approach to ensure consistent operational practice.

Staff are well trained in dealing with domestic abuse and the constabulary has made good progress since HMIC's domestic abuse inspection in 2014. The proposed police restructure aims to provide better services for victims of domestic abuse through joining up its safeguarding functions with the investigations.

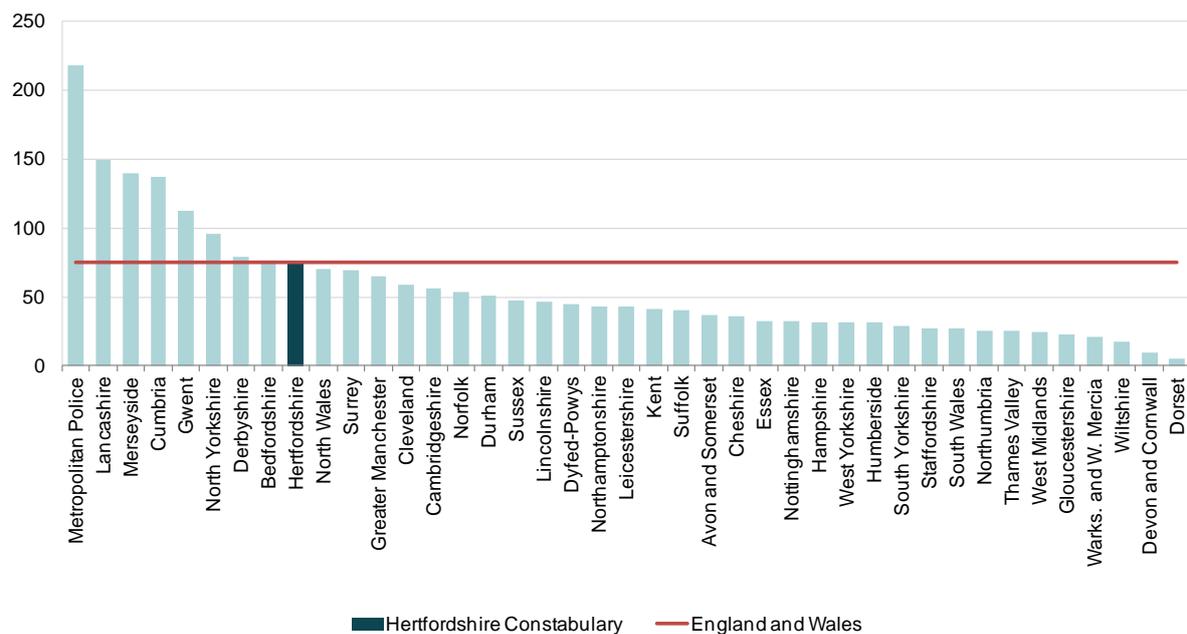
How effective is the force at tackling serious and organised crime, including its arrangements for fulfilling its national policing responsibilities?

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 play a critical role in tackling serious and organised crime alongside regional organised crime units (ROCU), the National Crime Agency (NCA) and other partner organisations.

Police forces that are effective tackle serious and organised crime not just by prosecuting offenders, but by disrupting and preventing organised criminality at a local level. They also use specialist capabilities (for example, surveillance and undercover policing) where appropriate in order to protect the public from highly sophisticated and rapidly changing organised criminal threats. A number of forces within a regional area often share specialist capabilities as this provides better value for money and is a more efficient way of working.

As at 30 June 2015, Hertfordshire Constabulary was actively disrupting, investigating or monitoring 86 organised crime groups (OCGs). This represents 74 OCGs per one million of the population, which is high compared with other forces in England and Wales.

Figure 6: Organised crime groups per one million population, by force, as at 30 June 2015^{19 20}



Source: HMIC data collection

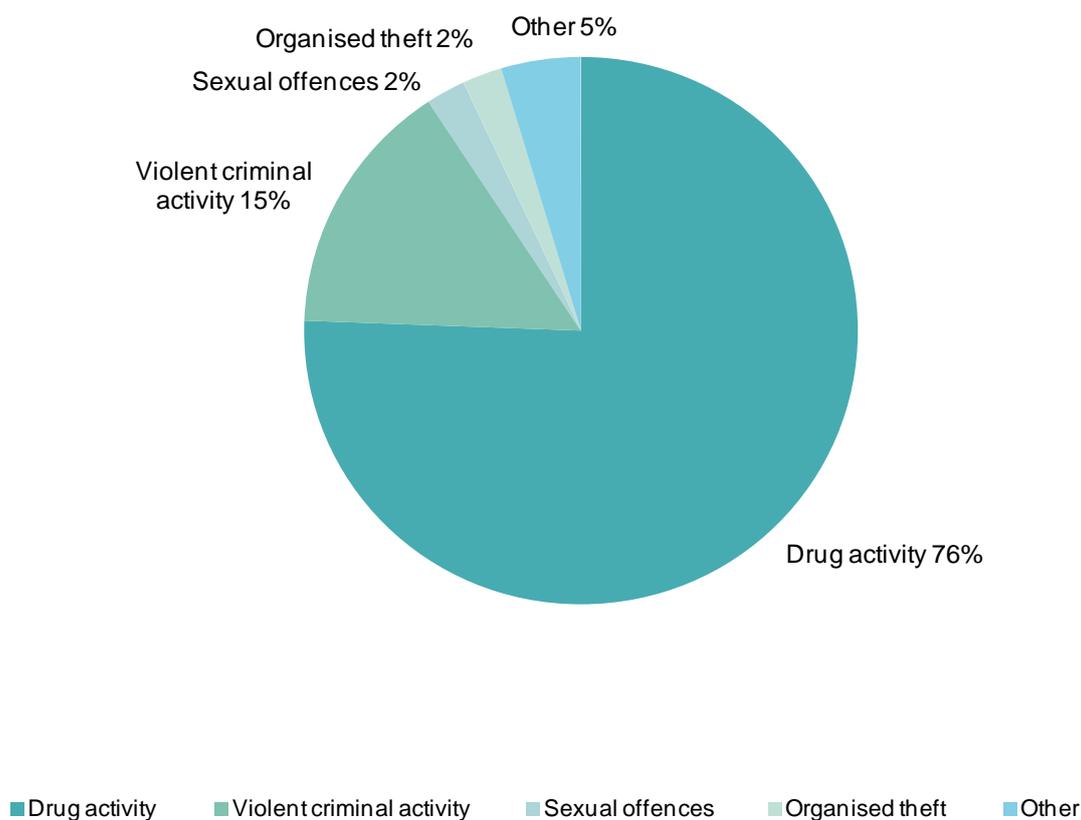
Forces categorise OCGs by the predominant form of criminal activity in which the group is involved. Although OCGs are likely to be involved in multiple forms of criminality, this indicates their most common characteristic. 'Drug activity' was the predominant crime type (76 percent) of the OCGs managed by Hertfordshire Constabulary as at 30 June 2015. 'Drug activity' was also the most common predominant crime type recorded by all forces in England and Wales,²¹ with 64 percent of all OCGs classified in this way.

¹⁹ City of London Police data has been removed from the chart as its OCG data is not comparable with other forces due to size and its wider national remit.

²⁰ 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.

²¹ The Metropolitan Police Service is not included in the England and Wales figure because it does not categorise in the same way as other forces; by the predominant form of criminal activity.

Figure 7: Force organised crime groups by the predominant crime type, as at 30 June 2015²²



Source: HMIC data collection

Serious and organised crime is one of six national threats specified within *The Strategic Policing Requirement*.²³ These include terrorism, serious cyber-crime incidents and child sexual abuse. These are complex threats which means that forces must work together to respond to them effectively. 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 the necessary arrangements in place to test their own preparedness for dealing with these threats, should they materialise.

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

The constabulary is good at assessing the threat posed by serious and organised crime to its communities. An effective threat assessment process is in place which

²² Figures may not sum to 100 percent, due to rounding.

²³ *The Strategic Policing Requirement*, Home Office, March 2015. Available from: www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/417116/The_Strategic_Policin_g_Requirement.pdf

draws on information from partner organisations.²⁴ The constabulary has created ten bespoke local profiles for serious and organised crime in line with national guidance, one for each local authority district in Hertfordshire. This provides the constabulary and its partners with a better understanding of serious and organised crime across the county. Constabulary analysts are now drawing links between serious and organised crime local profiles and other neighbourhood information such as thriving families' data.²⁵ This will help the constabulary to further improve its understanding of offending in local areas.

The constabulary uses intelligence from a range of sources to help it understand serious and organised crime. These include covert methods, and there are numerous examples of surveillance techniques being used to identify drug suppliers. The constabulary's intelligence function is complemented by a regional intelligence team which is part of the Eastern Region Special Operations Unit (ERSOU). This regional unit adds further intelligence to that held by the constabulary, including from other forces and partner organisations.

When a police force identifies a group of individuals whom it suspects may be involved in organised crime, it goes through a nationally standardised 'mapping' procedure. This involves entering details of the group's known and suspected activity, associates and capability into a computer system, which assigns a numerical score to each OCG. It also places each OCG into one of several 'bands' which reflect the range and severity of crime in which a group is involved as well as its level of capability and sophistication. Police forces, ROCUs, the National Crime Agency and a number of non-police organisations (such as Border Force) use OCG mapping.

Despite the use of standard software and methods, forces carry out OCG mapping inconsistently and there is significant variation in the number of mapped OCGs per head of population across England and Wales. This inconsistency is partly due to the unavoidably subjective nature of some aspects of the mapping procedure, which relies on human judgment as well as computer algorithms. Sometimes, groups exhibiting similar characteristics are scored in different ways, and forces do not always use the full range of information available to generate OCG scores, which can compromise their accuracy and usefulness. For these reasons, HMIC has recommended that ROCUs assume responsibility for OCG mapping on behalf of their constituent forces.²⁶

²⁴ Police forces work with a variety of partner organisations in order to tackle serious and organised crime, including HM Revenue and Customs, HM Prison Service, the Department for Work and Pensions and Immigration Enforcement.

²⁵ Thriving Families is the name used locally by Hertfordshire Constabulary that refers to the national 'Troubled Families' programme.

²⁶ *Regional Organised Crime Units: A Review of Capability and Effectiveness*, HMIC, December 2015. Available from: www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/wp-content/uploads/regional-organised-crime-units.pdf

The ERSOU understands regional threats well, and is rigorous and inclusive in its assessment of these by drawing on intelligence held by partner organisations, other forces and other regions. This helps ERSOU to produce a more accurate and detailed picture of serious and organised criminality in the Eastern region.

The constabulary can gather and corroborate information about OCGs operating in its area. Frontline officers can identify organised criminal activity and OCG members have recently been included in the constabulary briefing system to ensure that neighbourhood teams know who is operating in their area. Organised crime groups are generally identified quickly – we saw good awareness of serious and organised crime among some frontline staff, although this is not consistent across all teams

Organised crime groups are analysed and categorised appropriately, which helps the constabulary to decide when and how to intervene on an informed basis.

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

A well-established governance structure is in place for overseeing the constabulary's response to serious and organised crime, and the constabulary has a well co-ordinated and effective method for managing OCGs. It understands which of its OCGs are the most harmful and prioritises these for intervention, and we saw good alignment of activity with national and regional priorities. A high proportion of Hertfordshire's OCGs are drug-related and police operational activity is focused on these groups, although the constabulary has recognised that other organised criminality can be just as harmful. For example, it is making some efforts to identify and tackle organised groups who may be involved in child sexual exploitation.

Hertfordshire Constabulary can investigate organised crime groups, and – in partnership with ERSOU – has successfully dismantled criminal networks dealing Class A drugs in Hertfordshire, for example. Those responsible for investigating serious and organised crime are well trained, and consider routinely a range of tactics as part of their decision-making processes. The constabulary maintains its own specialist surveillance and investigative capabilities, but also draws on ERSOU support when necessary. The force ensures that the powers of some partner agencies are brought to bear against organised criminals, but could go further to widen and fully incorporate this joint approach.

At a local level, the constabulary does not use neighbourhood teams as much as it could do in the disruption of OCGs. The serious and organised crime local profiles for serious and organised crime are relatively new but partners are using the information to positive effect. For example, a known criminal involved in serious and organised crime was recently refused a tenancy as a result of information provided by the district local profile.

The constabulary has adopted the national model for measuring success by counting and grading OCG disruptions, although we found that it only analyses success in

more detail to a limited degree, so does not understand the impact of police activity in much greater depth.

How effectively is the force working with partners to prevent serious and organised crime?

Hertfordshire Constabulary is working well with local and national partner organisations and other forces in the region to prevent serious and organised crime. The constabulary has the capability to monitor the movement of convicted OCG members through the prison system. As soon as an individual is moved from one prison to another, the constabulary will issue a personalised letter outlining the constabulary's commitment to reducing serious organised crime, and offering them a way out of crime. The purpose is twofold: first, it provides the individual with an opportunity to turn his or her back on crime, and second, it makes clear to the prisoner that Hertfordshire Constabulary is monitoring their activity.

The constabulary has supported a number of joint partnership projects aimed at educating and raising awareness among those at risk of being drawn into serious and organised crime, for example, tackling knife crime in Stevenage. Other good examples include the constabulary's appointment of a dedicated 'Protect' officer to work with schools and universities to develop initiatives similar to 'Prevent',²⁷ encouraging teachers, professors and lecturers to notify the constabulary should they have concerns about students.

The constabulary makes good use of Serious Crime Prevention Orders (SCPOs)²⁸ to manage offenders and is rigorous in its approach to monitoring these. The National Crime Agency (NCA) and ERSOU are also increasing the use of SCPOs throughout the region, including in Hertfordshire, and the NCA is working alongside the regional unit to manage lifetime offenders.

The constabulary in general has a wide range of communication tools which it uses to advise the public about serious and organised crime. For example, the constabulary communications team is briefed promptly by the serious and organised crime team (SOC) about any new issue or emerging trend such as human trafficking or telephone fraud, so that they can quickly issue information to the public to alert them. In addition to this, SOC also worked with the communications teams to produce an information leaflet providing photographs of serious and organised crime offenders and their sentences.

²⁷ UK Government four-strand strategic approach to preventing terrorism, comprising Pursue, Prevent, Protect, and Prepare.

²⁸ SCPO is a court order that is used to protect the public by preventing, restricting or disrupting a person's involvement in serious crime. An SCPO can prevent involvement in serious crime by imposing various conditions on a person; for example, restricting who he or she can associate with, restricting his or her travel, or placing an obligation to report his or her financial affairs to the police.

How effective are the arrangements in place to ensure that the force can fulfil its national policing responsibilities?

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 the necessary arrangements in place to test their own preparedness for dealing with these threats, should they materialise.

We found clear governance arrangements in place to ensure that the constabulary can fulfil its national policing responsibilities. This includes a joint protective services²⁹ board for the collaborated forces which include Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire. Chief officers understand their duties under *The Strategic Policing Requirement* (SPR) and take responsibility for specific threats. The constabulary has carried out high-level assessments of the Hertfordshire dimension to the national threats specified within the SPR. The constabulary monitors progress in implementing previous HMIC recommendations in relation to the SPR, in collaboration with Bedfordshire Police, Cambridgeshire Constabulary and ERSOU. Hertfordshire has begun further work to improve the constabulary's resilience to a cyber attack.

HMIC also found that Hertfordshire Constabulary has good procedures in place to test its preparedness for responding to national threats specified within the SPR. The constabulary conducts exercises on a regular basis to satisfy itself that it is sufficiently well prepared to respond to national threats. In 2014 the constabulary was involved at strategic and operational levels in exercises involving statutory partners and voluntary organisations to test their collective preparedness to respond to a potential terrorist attack at a shopping centre, and a similar exercise simulating the response to a major train crash. In 2015 the constabulary and partners tested their collective response to an explosion and fire at a large sporting event, and a fire and hostage scenario at a psychiatric hospital. The exercises are comprehensively reviewed afterwards with all partners and organisations present to identify areas of learning.

Summary of findings



Hertfordshire Constabulary is good at identifying and tackling serious and organised crime, including its arrangements for ensuring that it can fulfil its national policing responsibilities. This is the first year HMIC has graded forces on their effectiveness in these areas, so no year-on-year comparison is possible.

²⁹ Joint protective services are the collaborated policing functions, which include handling serious and organised crime.

The constabulary works well with local and national partner organisations and other forces in the region to prevent serious and organised crime. It has a well-developed understanding of the threat posed by serious and organised crime groups across Hertfordshire, through comprehensive analysis of serious and organised crime at district level. The constabulary is part of an effective multi-agency response to these types of crime, including work to prevent people from becoming involved in it. Hertfordshire Constabulary has access to an extensive range of specialist capabilities provided by the Eastern Region Special Operations Unit, to help the constabulary tackle serious and organised crime.

The constabulary has a well co-ordinated and effective method for tackling organised crime groups, with good processes to identify and disrupt the activities of these criminal groups. We saw some good early work with schools and universities to identify vulnerable young people who may be at risk of being drawn into serious and organised crime.

Annex A – HMIC judgments

Our judgments

The categories are:

- outstanding;
- good;
- requires improvement; and
- inadequate.

Judgment is made against how effective the force is at keeping people safe and reducing crime; it is not an assessment of the overall effectiveness of policing. In applying the categories HMIC considers whether:

- the effectiveness the force is achieving is good, or exceeds this standard sufficiently to be judged as outstanding;
- the effectiveness of the force requires improvement, and/or there are some weaknesses; or
- the effectiveness of the force is inadequate because it is considerably lower than is expected.