

PEEL: Police effectiveness 2015 (Vulnerability)

An inspection of Greater Manchester Police



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Contents

Vulnerability in numbers	3
Introduction	5
How effective is the force at protecting from harm those who are vulnerable, and supporting victims?.....	7
Summary	7
How well does the force identify those who are vulnerable and assess their level of risk and need?.....	9
How well does the force initially respond to vulnerable victims?.....	12
How well does the force investigate offences involving vulnerable victims and work with partners to keep victims safe?	14
How well does the force respond to and safeguard specific vulnerable groups (missing and absent & victims of domestic abuse), and how well prepared is it to tackle child sexual exploitation?	16
Summary of findings	21

Vulnerability in numbers



Calls for assistance

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

Greater Manchester Police England and Wales

339

350

Domestic abuse calls for assistance per 1,000 population 12 months to 31 March 2015

Greater Manchester Police England and Wales

24.5

15.8



Crime

Crimes recorded per 1,000 population 12 months to 31 March 2015

Greater Manchester Police England and Wales

73.3

61.6

Change in recorded crimes (excluding fraud) 12 months to 31 March 2015 against 12 months to 31 March 2014

Greater Manchester Police England and Wales

10.2%

+2.2%

Percentage of total crimes recorded (excluding fraud) as having a vulnerable victim 12 months to 31 March 2015

Greater Manchester Police England and Wales

9.5%

10.7%

Percentage of total crimes recorded as domestic abuse 12 months to 31 March 2015

Greater Manchester Police England and Wales

9.8%

10.0%

Change in domestic abuse recorded crime 12 months to 31 March 2015 against 12 months to 31 March 2014

Greater Manchester Police England and Wales

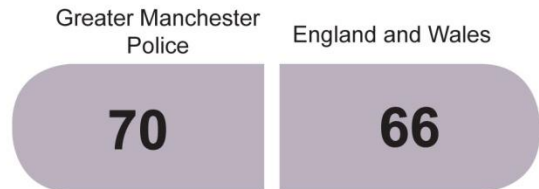
32.9%

+20.8%



Domestic abuse arrest rate

Number of domestic abuse arrests per 100 domestic abuse crimes recorded 12 months to 31 March 2015



Charge rate

Charge rate as a percentage of all crimes recorded (excluding fraud) 12 months to 31 March 2015



Domestic abuse charge rate as a percentage of all domestic abuse crimes recorded 12 months to 31 March 2015



Victim satisfaction rate

Victim satisfaction rate 12 months to 31 March 2015



Data: for full details on the data used in this graphic see annex A in the vulnerability national report.

Introduction

The public expects their local police force to support victims of crime by responding to calls for help, putting in place the right support and keeping them informed. It is particularly important that vulnerable people, whether or not they have been a victim of crime, are identified early and receive the support they need.

As part of its annual inspections into police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy (PEEL), HMIC's effectiveness programme assessed how well forces keep people safe and reduce crime. Within this programme, HMIC's vulnerability inspection examined the overall question, 'How effective are forces at protecting from harm those who are vulnerable, and supporting victims?' We have considered in depth how forces respond to and support missing and absent children and victims of domestic abuse, and assessed how well prepared forces are to respond to and safeguard children at risk of sexual exploitation.

We have looked at four areas:

- How well does the force identify those who are vulnerable and assess their level of risk and need?
- How well does the force respond to vulnerable victims?
- How well does the subsequent police action and work with partners keep victims safe?
- How well does the force respond to and safeguard specific vulnerable groups (missing and absent children & victims of domestic abuse); and how well prepared is it to tackle child sexual exploitation?

At the heart of this inspection is the protection of people who are vulnerable. A force may therefore be judged as requiring improvement by HMIC where it exhibits shortcomings in one of these areas, even if its performance in other areas is strong, and even if there are many elements of its service that HMIC considers to be good.

This inspection follows up our 2014 domestic abuse inspection and reviews forces' progress on implementation of their action plans following that inspection. A national domestic abuse report summarising the findings across 43 forces is being published at the same time as this report.

During our inspection we collected data and plans from forces, conducted a review of case files and observed multi-agency meetings. We heard from victims of domestic abuse through a number of focus groups across England and Wales and conducted an online survey with practitioners, including Independent Domestic Violence Advocates, outreach and refuge workers, to gauge views on what has changed since the 2014 inspection and inform local practitioner focus groups.

During the in-force inspection, we interviewed chief officers in each force and held focus groups with officers, staff and partners, and made unannounced visits to police stations, force control rooms and specialist teams.

We also worked with the force missing person coordinator (or equivalent) to review cases of missing and absent children, including children considered to be 'repeat absent' and 'repeat missing' and children shown to be at risk of child sexual exploitation.

All forces are subject to significant cost reductions and these issues have been reflected in our efficiency reports published in October 2015. The judgments we are making in this vulnerability report are made understanding the financial challenges forces are facing.

This report sets out the findings from this wide-ranging inspection of Greater Manchester Police.

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

Summary



Good

Protecting vulnerable people and putting victims at the centre are priorities for Greater Manchester Police (GMP). The force has invested considerable effort and re-directed resources to this area since HMIC's domestic abuse inspection in 2014. HMIC now judges the force as good at protecting from harm those who are vulnerable and supporting victims.

HMIC's domestic abuse inspection report in 2014 was critical about the force's approach to tackling domestic abuse. In November 2014 HMIC re-visited GMP, and found that it had made significant improvements. In the current inspection, we found good evidence that these improvements are now firmly in place and well-understood across the force.

In our report of November 2014, we also commented that the force should improve the quality of service it provides to victims. Police officers and staff now routinely identify those who are vulnerable at an early stage and tailor their response accordingly. While computer systems are limited in their ability to identify repeat victims, officers and staff are well-practiced in finding this out by asking victims directly.

The force investigates well the crime committed against the most vulnerable victims, with generally the right level of expertise involved in the right complexity of investigation. We found that the investigations by specialist officers into the most serious offences (such as rape and wounding) were of a particularly good standard, with clear evidence of victim-centred investigations.

GMP has a clear, structured and well-supervised process for responding to reports of children who are missing or absent. The force works well with local authorities and partners to keep these children safe.

The force has learnt lessons from high-profile cases of child sexual exploitation in Rochdale and other areas of the country. It has commissioned work to revise and update the problem profile¹ for child sexual exploitation, based on both police and

¹ A problem profile is intended to provide the force greater understanding of established and emerging crime or incident series, priority locations or other identified high-risk issues. It should be based on the research and analysis of a wide range of information sources, including information from partner organisations. It should contain recommendations for making decisions and options for action.

partner information. All public sector partners across Greater Manchester have signed up to Project Phoenix, a shared approach to tackling child sexual exploitation. This is supported by an informative website and an extensive training and awareness-raising package. This inspection only considered how well prepared the force is tackle child sexual exploitation. The force was also subject to a re-inspection in respect of its child protection services. The more detailed findings from that re-inspection published in December 2015 should be read in conjunction with this inspection report.

Officers attending domestic abuse incidents have a good knowledge of how to assess risk. Officers consistently apply the RARA model (remove the risk; avoid the risk; reduce the risk; accept the risk), and look for evidence of the so called toxic trio (mental health issues, drug use, alcohol abuse) which can be indicators of increased risk. We found far greater clarity around responsibilities for safeguarding than in previous inspections. HMIC was pleased to see that progress, identified during the re-visit of the force's approach to tackling domestic abuse, is solidly in place across the force. This is a good example of the progress the force has made since its last domestic abuse inspection.

How well does the force identify those who are vulnerable and assess their level of risk and need?

GMP is good at identifying those who are vulnerable and assessing the risks that they face and what is needed to keep them safe. Police officers and staff routinely identify those who are vulnerable at an early stage and tailor their response accordingly. The force has invested considerable time and resource in providing training on the identification and treatment of vulnerability.

The police and crime plan for Greater Manchester identifies six key priorities, which include protecting vulnerable people, putting victims at the centre, and building and strengthening partnerships. This inspection found that police officers and staff have a clear understanding of these priorities and are working hard to put them in to practice on a day to day basis.

Identifying those who are vulnerable

GMP is good at identifying those victims who are vulnerable when they first make contact with the police.

Forces define vulnerability in different ways. The majority of forces use either the definition from the government's Code of Practice for Victims of Crime,² or that referred to in ACPO guidance.³

Nine forces use their own definition or a combination of these definitions.

Greater Manchester uses its own force definition and defines vulnerability as:

"A person may be vulnerable by reason of age and or their circumstances. Or, who suffers from mental or physical disabilities, illness, or other such special feature, which renders them either permanently or temporarily unable to care or protect themselves against harm or exploitation."

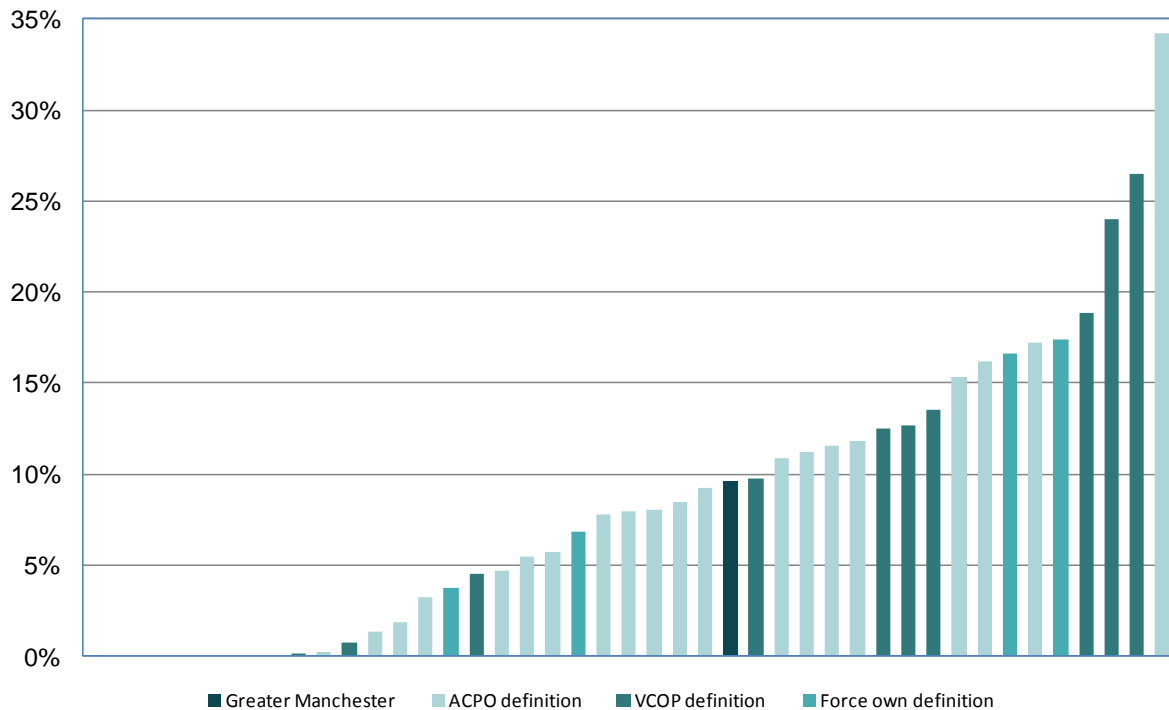
The proportion of crime recorded which involves a vulnerable victim varies considerably between forces, from 0.03 percent to 34.3 percent. For the 12 months to 31 March 2015, 9.5 percent of all recorded crimes in Greater Manchester Police were identified as involving a vulnerable victim. Eight forces were unable to provide this data at the time of data collection.

² *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-practice-victims-of-crime.pdf

³ 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/

There is no standard way in which forces are required to record whether a victim is vulnerable on crime recording systems and forces do this differently.

Figure 1: The proportion of police recorded crime with a vulnerable victim identified, by force, for the 12 months to 31 March 2015.



Source: HMIC data return

Following the publication of HMIC’s report on GMP’s approach to tackling domestic abuse, in March 2014, the force invested significant time and resource in training all its frontline staff in the identification and treatment of vulnerable persons. At the time of this inspection, GMP has provided the training to:

- all call-handlers and switchboard operators who answer emergency and non-emergency calls from the public;
- all staff who work on the public enquiry counters at police stations; and
- more than 3,500 constables and sergeants who work in neighbourhood and response teams.

In September 2014, the force introduced a mandatory training course on safeguarding⁴ vulnerable people for all frontline supervisors.

⁴ The term safeguarding means providing protection and support to ensure the safety of the vulnerable person and prevent further harm.

The technology currently available to call-handlers and control room staff automatically identifies locations where calls for assistance have previously been made; however it does not identify individuals who are repeat callers or victims. The force is aware of this and has embarked on a £30m transformation programme to replace this technology. In the interim, all call handling staff have been trained in the questioning of callers to identify vulnerability. This is supported by prompt lists and question sets available on the communications system information database. Additionally the force has introduced a risk support team in the control rooms. This team does specific, fast time research of intelligence and other databases to inform officers who are deployed to deal with vulnerable people. This research includes details of any previous incidents and information or intelligence in respect of relevant threat, harm or risk.

Assessing levels of risk and need

The force's call handling policy makes it clear that the over-arching priority is to provide a service based on the needs of the caller. This is informed by the HOT principles of identifying and assessing harm, opportunity and threat. Our inspection found good evidence that this was understood and consistently applied by call handlers and those responsible for deploying resources to incidents. Staff we spoke to commented on a change in culture, away from a concentration on serious acquisitive crime⁵ to a focus on vulnerability and the identification of risk. During the inspection, we found that vulnerability and risk were routinely identified at the time of the original call. We also found that this assessment was used to inform the selection of the most appropriate resource to deploy (i.e. officers from response, neighbourhood or specialist units). Once assigned by the operator, only a supervisor can downgrade the level of risk which means that the call may not necessitate an immediate response. The oversight from the supervisor provides assurance that incidents are correctly assigned and monitored.

We found good evidence that vulnerability is an integral part of the agenda at the divisional pacesetter morning management meetings, at which information and intelligence on high-risk people missing from home and domestic abuse incidents are discussed. Divisions can request additional specialist resources and support through the force-level pacesetter meeting (for example, to locate and arrest domestic abuse perpetrators or to search for high-risk missing people).

⁵ Serious acquisitive crime is defined as domestic burglary, car crime (theft of and from a vehicle), and robbery.

Understanding the risk to victims and ensuring they are protected and supported

After a force has identified that a victim is vulnerable, it must then provide services that best meet his or her needs. HMIC found that GMP is doing a lot of work to understand the requirements of vulnerable groups.

The force has a much greater understanding of the vulnerability of victims of domestic abuse than it did in 2013. It continues to work to ensure that the most appropriate services are then provided.

The force has a good understanding of and responds well to the needs of missing and absent children. Effective systems and processes are in place for both the force alone and in partnership with others to ensure that the best service is provided.

The force has made a good start in terms of being prepared to tackle child sexual exploitation. It works in partnership and uses analytical expertise to build a better picture of this complex area of vulnerability, to understand the risks and provide the right service.

The force has also invested more resource in the parts of its organisation which works to keep vulnerable people safe. This includes:

- extensive training in the identification and treatment of vulnerability;
- £30m investment in technology; and
- specialist support teams (such as the risk support team in the control room, whose role is to research all police IT systems for previous reporting history).

How well does the force initially respond to vulnerable victims?⁶

GMP responds well to vulnerable victims. The force has made identifying and supporting vulnerable people its priority and this was clearly understood by everyone we spoke to. We found good evidence that, since HMIC revisited the force in November 2014 to assess its progress in response to HMIC's domestic abuse inspection in 2014, there was far greater clarity and a shared understanding of individual roles and responsibilities for safeguarding vulnerable people. We were pleased to see that the positive progress on the identification and treatment of vulnerability appears to have been sustained.

⁶ The question within the PEEL inspection methodology asks "How well does the force respond to vulnerable victims?" HMIC has amended the heading in this report to make it clear to the reader that this section focuses on the initial police response to vulnerable victims, rather than the overall police response to vulnerable victims.

All police officers and staff we spoke to confirmed the shift in emphasis, from a culture based on acquisitive crime targets, to one underpinned by the identification and management of vulnerability, where staff are encouraged and empowered to respond in a manner that prioritises the victim's needs.

Response officers

HMIC found that frontline police officers and staff who regularly respond to and deal with vulnerable people were knowledgeable and empathetic. They had a good understanding of the other agencies and services that were available to provide support to vulnerable victims. This had been reinforced through training on risk assessment, which included the generic minimum standards required and the specific services available in each division and local authority area.

We found that officers attending domestic abuse incidents were completing the domestic abuse, stalking, harassment and honour-based violence (DASH)⁷ risk assessment. We also found that responding officers demonstrate that they routinely apply the RARA approach to risk management (remove the risk; avoid the risk; reduce the risk; accept the risk), look for signs of the so-called toxic trio (mental health, drug use, alcohol abuse) and take steps to identify children who may be affected by or at risk from domestic abuse.

Frontline staff were aware of the immediate options available to them to protect victims. These include installation of panic alarms, allocation of mobile telephones, target-hardening of victim's homes and the facility to relocate vulnerable victims immediately. They also know where to go for specialist advice in relation to other types of incidents, such as where they suspect child sexual exploitation, female genital mutilation and so-called honour based violence.

Supervision of the response to vulnerable victims

HMIC assesses that GMP's approach to supervision of the response to vulnerable victims is good. The force's domestic abuse policy was amended as a result of HMIC's domestic abuse inspection report of March 2014. Supervisors are required to play an active role in checking and approving the risk assessment process. Sergeants are encouraged to attend domestic abuse incidents while the responding officer is present. If this is not possible, they must make contact with the attending officer and satisfy themselves that they have exhausted all available investigative opportunities, conducted a full risk assessment, and have considered and implemented appropriate immediate safeguarding measures.

⁷ Most forces use the domestic abuse, stalking, harassment and honour-based violence risk identification, assessment and management model (DASH): www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/major-investigation-and-public-protection/domestic-abuse/risk-and-vulnerability/#approaches-to-risk-assessment

Before the incident log can be closed by the control room, the sergeant must also confirm that any criminal offences have been recorded in accordance with the national crime recording standards.⁸

How well does the force investigate offences involving vulnerable victims and work with partners to keep victims safe?⁹

The force routinely identifies vulnerability at an early stage and we found good evidence of partnership referral to support those with particular needs.

Investigation of crimes involving vulnerable people

HMIC reviewed 60 crime investigation files,¹⁰ of which 19 were identified as involving a vulnerable person. In 18 of these cases vulnerability had been identified at an early stage, and in 17 vulnerability had been well-managed. We found good evidence from the sample that the right staff with the right skills had quickly been allocated to these cases. The resulting investigations were of a high standard and were clearly focused on the needs of the victim.

Compliance with the code of practice for victims of crime

All police forces have a statutory duty to comply with the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime, which sets out the service victims of crime can expect from all parts of the criminal justice system. The code states that all victims of crime should be able to make a personal statement,¹¹ which they can use to explain how the crime has affected them.

We found that victim personal statements were recorded, particularly in the more serious cases involving sexual offences or personal injury.

⁸ National crime recording standards ensure that crimes are recorded consistently and accurately.

⁹ The question within the PEEL inspection methodology asks “How well does the subsequent police action and work with partners keep people safe?” HMIC has amended the heading in this report to make it clear to the reader that this section focuses on the investigation of offences involving vulnerable victims, rather than the police’s initial response to vulnerable victims.

¹⁰ HMIC reviewed a sample of rape, burglary, offences of serious violence and actual bodily harm cases. In most forces the review consisted of 10 cases from each crime category, but in some larger forces the sample was increased to 15. The file review was designed to provide a broad overview of the identification of vulnerability and the effectiveness of the investigation.

¹¹ The victim personal statement (VPS) gives victims an opportunity to describe the wider effects of the crime upon them, express their concerns and indicate whether or not they require any support. Provisions relating to the making of a VPS and its use in criminal proceedings are included in the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime (Victims’ Code), which was published on 29 October 2013 and came into force on 10 December 2013.

Victims should also be kept updated about the progress of their case and we found that this process is well managed by sergeants, with regular updates recorded on the crime recording system.

Working with partners

GMP works with a variety of partners across ten local authority areas. The force is committed to the concept of public sector reform. This reform is trying to improve outcomes for local people by improving the sharing of information and breaking down barriers between public sector organisations including local authorities, health, the police and other emergency services.

Greater Manchester is at the forefront of the Government's devolution agenda. The police and crime commissioner for Greater Manchester was elected by the ten local authority leaders to act as interim mayor until full public mayoral elections in 2017. The interim mayor is responsible for co-ordinating public services across Greater Manchester. Many of the partners that we spoke to described GMP as the driving force behind partnership activity.

Public sector reform will enable a more timely and efficient response to vulnerable people. All agencies concerned will be working towards a single goal of keeping people safe and improving the quality of life for local people.

GMP adopts a flexible and responsive approach to working with the ten local authorities and other partners across Greater Manchester, reflecting the different issues which affect such varied locations. We found a strong ethos of multi-agency working and co-location of resources, although there is no single model across the force area. While the lack of a consistent approach is not an automatic barrier to success, it can be confusing to those working across the whole of Greater Manchester; and opportunities for organisational learning, sharing good practice and the development of consistent levels of service delivery may be missed.

A useful model for the force might be the approach taken to raise awareness of and tackle child sexual exploitation developed through Project Phoenix. This is establishing the governance arrangements and setting agreed minimum service standards across Greater Manchester. Project Phoenix's template might be a way to take stock of such change activity and improve the force's overall efficiency and effectiveness.

GMP holds multi-agency risk assessment conferences (MARACs)¹² with professionals from other bodies in order to safeguard those considered to be at the highest risk of harm. As part of the inspection, HMIC observed two different

¹² MARACs (multi-agency risk assessment conferences) – local meetings where information about high-risk domestic abuse victims (those at risk of murder or serious harm) is shared between local agencies.

MARACs. We found good attendance and participation by those present with clear evidence that the conferences were effectively safeguarding victims and children through information sharing and joint action planning.

How well does the force respond to and safeguard specific vulnerable groups (missing and absent & victims of domestic abuse), and how well prepared is it to tackle child sexual exploitation?

The first three questions have explained how the force identifies those that are vulnerable, the response that is provided to them and what action the force takes to investigate crimes and to work with partners to keep them safe. This question looks specifically at how the force deals with three specific areas of vulnerability: domestic abuse, missing and absent children and its preparedness to deal with child sexual exploitation.

Missing and absent children

The force responds well to missing and absent¹³ children. We found that force processes were clear, structured and well-supervised, with good evidence that effective risk assessment is carried out at the point of reporting.

The force has a single policy on missing and absent children. The policy makes it clear that children under the age of 13 and those at risk of exploitation cannot be regarded as absent and must be recorded as missing. Individual trigger plans have been created for those children who go missing most frequently who are at most risk of child sexual exploitation. These plans include important information and the immediate actions to be taken when the person is reported missing. We found good evidence that staff in the control room were aware of these trigger plans and used them routinely to direct initial enquires; however, knowledge and use of these trigger plans among frontline staff was less consistent. GMP may wish to consider how it can increase the awareness and implementation of these plans.

During the inspection, HMIC reviewed a number of missing from home investigations, including six cases where children identified as being at risk of sexual exploitation were reported missing. In each case the child was appropriately highlighted or flagged as at risk of sexual exploitation on the force computer systems. We found that the initial risk assessments had graded all as high-risk missing from home cases. Initial actions were appropriate and undertaken promptly; there was good evidence of supervisory management and oversight; and investigation strategies and actions were well recorded on the missing from home

¹³ A person is classified as absent if they are not where they are expected to be but they are not considered to be at risk. Whereas, if they classified as missing the police are obliged to take steps to locate them, as the level of perceived risk is higher.

log. Those that had not been located were discussed at the divisional and force level pacesetter meetings. This would generate a review of the investigation which would be completed by a senior investigating officer.

The Greater Manchester safeguarding partnership (which includes police, local authorities, children's services, voluntary sector) has developed a standard approach to dealing with missing and absent children when they are found. Under this agreement, police officers conduct an initial interview with missing children when they are located, to ensure that they are safe and well. Fuller return interviews are commissioned through the local safeguarding children board (LSCB)¹⁴ and are carried out by independent trained professionals from local authorities and other agencies, including charities such as Barnardo's.

However, many officers and staff that we spoke to suggested that feedback from these interviews is not always passed back to the police. The force may wish to remind partners and LSCBs of the requirements of the partnership agreement, to ensure relevant information and intelligence, which may help safeguard a child in the future, is made available to the force.

Preparedness to tackle child sexual exploitation

The force has made a good start in ensuring it is well prepared to tackle child sexual exploitation. This inspection has focused on actions and activities the force has taken to understand and identify the extent to which children are at risk of child sexual exploitation and the policies, practices and procedures it is putting in place to tackle this. It did not test the quality of how the force conducted these complex investigations with other agencies such as children's services as these issues are covered in HMIC's rolling programme of child protection inspections.

Together with the ten local authorities that make up Greater Manchester, the force is a member of the association of Greater Manchester authorities (AGMA). In May 2013 the AGMA partners agreed to implement an integrated model of working in relation to child sexual exploitation. Under this model, named Project Phoenix, all the main interested parties including local authorities, the police and the voluntary sector, work to a standard set of guidelines and operating procedures based on identified best practice nationally. The approach includes the deployment of specialist multi-agency child sexual exploitation teams. These teams are co-located and cover each of the ten local authority areas.

In 2013 the force prepared a problem profile to understand better the nature and extent of child sexual exploitation. This original profile was based on police data only. The force has now commissioned a series of local problem profiles, with an

¹⁴ Local safeguarding children boards have a statutory duty to co-ordinate how agencies work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children to ensure that safeguarding arrangements are effective.

overarching force-level profile based on all available police and partner information, which it expects to be complete before the end of 2015.

GMP has provided specific child sexual exploitation training to specialist officers and frontline staff, as well as to partners and other groups who can play a major role in keeping children safe. Events have been held with taxi drivers, schools, hotels, licensed trade, fast food outlets, shopping centres and local authority street cleaners. The force recognises that this is a continuing commitment in order to maintain a high profile and increase awareness. The force makes extensive use of social media including online blogs and twitter. Project Phoenix is supported by a website (www.itsnotokay.co.uk) which provides access to information, professional advice and resources for partners, parents and young people.

Domestic abuse

GMP's response to victims of domestic abuse has improved over the last 12 months and can now be considered to be good.

In the 12 months to 31 March 2015, recorded domestic abuse increased by 33 percent against the previous 12 months, and accounted for 10 percent of all police recorded crime. Across England and Wales during the same period there was a 21 percent increase, with domestic abuse accounting for 10 percent of all police recorded crime.

HMIC inspected GMP's approach to tackling domestic abuse in 2013. The resulting report (published in March 2014)¹⁵ raised significant concerns about the force's ability to deal consistently and appropriately with victims of domestic abuse and to reduce the risk of harm to them. The report made nine recommendations for improvement, and the force was one of four identified for re-inspection.

HMIC therefore returned to the force in November 2014. We found that the force had invested a considerable amount of time and had re-directed resource to improve its response to victims of domestic abuse, it had addressed eight of the nine recommendations, and was continuing to address the final recommendation.

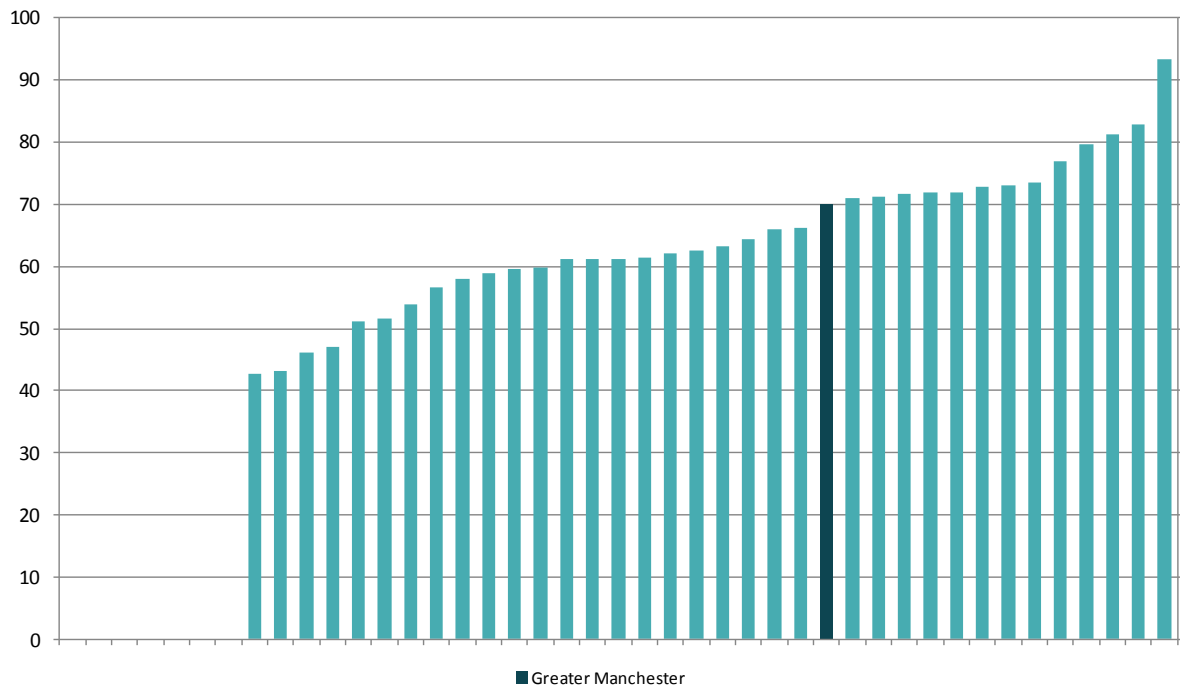
In this inspection HMIC was pleased to see that the positive progress identified in the re-visit report has been sustained and developed. We found that officers and staff now understand their responsibility for safeguarding domestic abuse victims, and that they routinely consider the impact of domestic abuse on children. The force has developed a problem profile to improve its knowledge and understanding of the issue, and has created a domestic abuse toolkit, which allows the monitoring and governance of domestic abuse processes. Partners working with domestic abuse

¹⁵ *Greater Manchester Police's approach to tackling domestic abuse*, HMIC, March 2014. Available from: www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmic/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/greater-manchester-approach-to-tackling-domestic-abuse.pdf

victims commented that the quality of risk assessment and the information they contain has improved markedly as a result of the vulnerability training provided to officers and staff.

As shown in figure 2, for every 100 domestic abuse crimes recorded Greater Manchester Police made 70 arrests.

Figure 2: The number of arrests per 100 domestic abuse crimes by force, for the 12 months to 31 March 2015

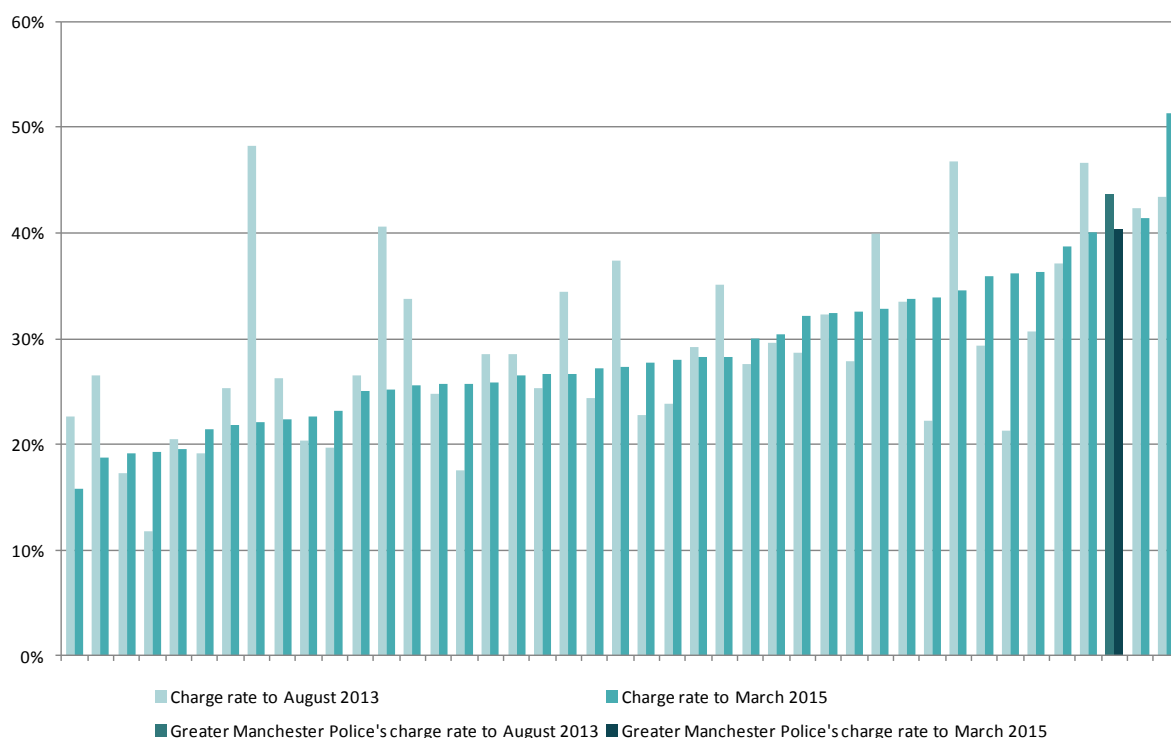


Source: HMIC data return

As part of the inspection, HMIC reviewed 18 crime files involving domestic abuse. We found a good standard of investigation centred on the victim and good evidence that investigating officers were looking to pursue prosecutions even where the victim was reluctant or refusing to co-operate.

The force's charge rate for domestic abuse recorded crimes for the 12 months to 31 March 2015 was 40 percent, compared with 27 percent for England and Wales. This is a decrease since the last HMIC domestic abuse inspection when the force rate was 44 percent for the 12 months to 31 August 2013, compared with 30 percent for England and Wales.

Figure 3: Domestic abuse charge rate for the 12 months to 31 March 2015 compared to the 12 months to 31 August 2013



Source: HMIC data return

HMIC found that frontline staff and supervisors are aware of the immediate options available to keep the victim safe and where to obtain specialist advice. Longer-term safeguarding issues and support to victims deemed at high risk are managed through the public protection unit (PPU), which has access to independent domestic violence advocates.

HMIC also examined the force’s use of new legal powers to protect victims. Domestic violence protection orders (DVPOs) were introduced in England and Wales in 2014 to prevent a suspected offender from returning to a victim’s home or contacting the victim. As one of the pilot forces for the use of DVPOs, Greater Manchester Police began using them in July 2011; between July 2011 and June 2015 it made 1,515 applications to magistrates’ courts for their use, of which 1,489 were granted. Two hundred and twenty nine DVPOs were breached.¹⁶ This represents a DVPO breach rate of 15 percent compared with the England and Wales rate of 17 percent.¹⁷

In the year to 31 March 2015, GMP officers completed 63,630 risk assessments resulting from domestic abuse incidents. Officers are required to complete DASH risk

¹⁶ Breaches occur when the offender fails to comply with the condition of the order and is taken back before the magistrates’ court.

¹⁷ The England and Wales figure is based on data provided by 35 forces.

assessment forms, including their assessment of risk to the victim as either standard, medium or high. Specialists in the PPU then review this assessment and initial safeguarding measures. The force is currently trying to streamline this process by allowing attending officers to finalise the response to victims assessed as standard-risk without referral to PPU. This is being implemented on a division by division basis, with officers receiving bespoke training on risk assessment and the specific support and referral services available in their locality. The force then monitors the quality of risk assessments and safeguarding measures, to ensure consistent levels of quality, before withdrawing the PPU review. The volume of risk assessments is such that there are currently backlogs in most divisions in the assessment by specialist staff. However, the force is aware of this and is taking action to remove these backlogs.

Summary of findings



Good

Greater Manchester Police is good at protecting from harm those who are vulnerable and supporting victims.

Following a critical report in 2014 by HMIC about the force's approach to tackling domestic abuse, Greater Manchester Police invested considerable effort and resources into ensuring that vulnerability is the priority for the force. In November 2014 HMIC re-visited the force and found significant improvements.

Police officers and staff now routinely identify those who are vulnerable at an early stage and tailor their response. While computer systems are limited in their ability to identify repeat victims, officers and staff are confident and skilled to ask victims directly.

The force investigates crime committed against the most vulnerable victims well. Investigations by specialist officers into the most serious offences, such as rape and wounding, are of a particularly good standard, with victim-centred investigations.

Greater Manchester Police has a clear, structured and well-supervised process for responding to reports of missing and absent children. The force works well with local authorities and partners to keep these children safe.

The force has learnt lessons from high profile cases of child sexual exploitation. All public sector partners across Greater Manchester have signed up to Project Phoenix, a shared approach to tackling child sexual exploitation.

Officers attending domestic abuse incidents have a good knowledge of how to assess risk and look for indicators of increased risk.