



ORIGINATOR: CHIEF CONSTABLE

PAPER NO: AP21/05

SUBMITTED TO: ACCOUNTABILITY AND PERFORMANCE PANEL –  
15 JANUARY 2021

SUBJECT: VICTIM SATISFACTION AND CONFIDENCE

**SUMMARY:**

1. This report illustrates Constabulary activity and performance in respect of public confidence in policing and the satisfaction of victims.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

1. The Accountability and Performance Panel is asked to note the contents of this report.

## DETAIL OF THE SUBMISSION

### 1. KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

- 1.1. Public Confidence in policing and the satisfaction of victims of crime in relation to the service they receive from police is of huge importance.
- 1.2. Measures of public confidence and victim satisfaction are prominent within most police force performance frameworks and indeed both are prioritised within the Suffolk Police and Crime Plan 2017-2020. While the two are often discussed together it is important to emphasise the distinction between confidence and satisfaction.
- 1.3. Public confidence relates to measurements taken from the general public regardless of whether they have had contact with the police. Like most forces, Suffolk Constabulary uses the Office of National Statistics Crime Survey of England and Wales (CSEW) to track the confidence of the Suffolk public. The CSEW is a national survey which provides results from a statistically reliable sample<sup>1</sup> and a consistent method of asking questions ordinarily from face to face interviews. Following restrictions imposed due to COVID-19 the CSEW surveys have been conducted by telephone since 21/05/2020, and due reduced operating periods this has produced a slightly lower sample size than would ordinarily be the case. It is not only used to track confidence within the county, but to compare to other police Constabulary areas. Measurements are published every quarter and since 2012 each measure refers to results from at least 600 interviews taken from the county within the last 12 months. Not all of those sampled will necessarily have had contact with Suffolk Constabulary.
- 1.4. Victim satisfaction relates to measurements taken from victims of certain types of reported crime. Until March 2017, the Home Office required each police Constabulary to submit statutory returns on satisfaction in relation to burglary dwelling, violent crime (excluding domestic violence), vehicle crime and hate crime. This requirement was discontinued in April 2017 and replaced with a new requirement relating only to domestic abuse although the Home Office set out clear non-prescriptive expectations that each Constabulary would continue to seek feedback from victims of other forms of crime. In Suffolk, a third-party research company is used to conduct telephone interviews (in line with the Police and Crime Plan (PC&P) priorities) with victims of:
  - Hate Crime
  - Rural Crime
  - Online Crime
  - Business Crime
- 1.5. In terms of user satisfaction, it is made clear to all participants that the survey is in respect of recent service received from Suffolk Constabulary, which is repeated several times. Thereafter, Suffolk Constabulary is referred to as 'the police' for simplicity.
- 1.6. Measurements have been available each month, and usually refer to satisfaction rates over the prior 12 months to ensure sufficiently small margins of error.

---

<sup>1</sup> The sample is representative of the general population of the county and we can have strong confidence the results are accurate within a small margin of error.

- 1.7. Surveys are also undertaken with victims of Domestic Abuse (as part of the Home Office Mandated ADR 444 – mentioned in 1.3). These telephone surveys are undertaken by the in-house Domestic Abuse Victim Satisfaction Survey Co-ordinator.
- 1.8. Within the Police and Crime Plan 2017-2020, the Police and Crime Commissioner has prioritised the measurement of the following areas:

**Confidence Measures:**

- % of respondents who agree police are doing a good job
- % of respondents who agree police deal with community priorities
- % of respondents who agree police would treat them fairly
- % of respondents who have confidence in the police overall

**Satisfaction Measures:**

(Domestic Abuse, Hate Crime, Online Crime, Rural Crime and Business Crime)<sup>2</sup>

- % of victims satisfied with overall service
- % of victims satisfied with accessibility
- % of victims satisfied with actions taken
- % of victims satisfied with treatment
- % of victims satisfied with how well they were kept informed

- 1.9. This paper outlines the current position in respect of each of these indicators, as well as detailing several of the key programmes of activity the Constabulary is operating to sustain and improve performance in these areas.

**Public Confidence**

- 1.10. The ONS typically publishes CSEW confidence data three months in arrears. The most recent data was published in July 2020 and covers the period up to March 2020. Levels of confidence are displayed in Table 1 below:

**Table 1: Suffolk Constabulary Confidence Data March 2017 to March 2020**

| Measure   | Last 12 months | 3-year average | Difference | National Average (Last 12 months) | National Ranking: as at Mar 2020 (/42) |
|---|----------------|----------------|------------|-----------------------------------|--|
| % of public who agree police are doing a good job           | 50.5%          | 56.4%          | -5.9 p.p.  | 56.7%                             | 29                                     |
| % of public who agree police deal with community priorities | 48.5%          | 53.4%          | -4.9 p.p.  | 53.9%                             | 32                                     |
| % of public who agree police would treat them fairly        | 67.3%          | 67.6%          | -0.3 p.p.  | 67.5%                             | 14                                     |
| % of public who have confidence in the police overall       | 70.4%          | 74.3%          | -3.9 p.p.  | 74.5%                             | 25                                     |

- 1.11. The CSEW surveys are usually undertaken face to face by a researcher in the home of the participant but due to COVID restrictions have been undertaken by telephone. The surveys

<sup>2</sup> Plans to conduct similar surveys for victims of Serious Sexual Offences have been paused whilst the Constabulary considers the processes and output of the Domestic Abuse surveys.

ask a large number of questions of participants covering a range of police and crime issues, including confidence in policing. As stated above it should be borne in mind that members of the public participating in the survey may never have been a victim of or reported a crime to police, or have had any other experience of police. Therefore, responses in relation to confidence in police should be considered as a measure of perceptions of police, rather than exclusively based on experience.

- 1.12. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, face to face surveys by a researcher in the home of the participant have not taken place since March 2020 and there was a period of more than eight weeks before surveys resumed by telephone. The data set for the first quarter of 2020/2021 is therefore incomplete and has not been made available for analysis.
- 1.13. The research is carried out by a third-party research company on behalf of the Office for National Statistics (ONS). When questions are asked in the CSEW, they are asked in the context of 'the police in your area', rather than Suffolk Constabulary specifically.
- 1.14. As at March 2020, confidence in Suffolk Police sits below the three-year average and national average in all four measures.
- 1.15. Confidence levels had been in decline since early 2016. There is no definitive trigger or reason for this decline although the decline can be mapped against changes to operating models and reductions in officer and staff numbers as a result of cuts to police funding. Since the third quarter of 2019 there has been an increase in confidence across most measures including overall confidence in police.
- 1.16. Confidence levels are 8<sup>th</sup> in the MSG across three of the prioritised CSEW confidence measures. Recent analysis indicates that satisfaction levels across these measures have been increasing since the quarter ending September 2019. The gap between Suffolk and the MSG has been closing over time. For the quarter ending March 2020 Suffolk is 0.9 percentage points below the nearest force in the MSG for 'Police in this area are doing a good/excellent job'. For the same measure, Suffolk was 5.9 percentage points below the nearest force in the MSG for the quarter ending June 2019. Table 2 (below) compares Suffolk to the MSG average and the nearest force in the MSG across all three measures.

**Table 2: Suffolk Constabulary Confidence Data comparison to the MSG**

| Measure  | Difference from the MSG Average |        | Difference from nearest force in MSG |        |
|--|---------------------------------|--------|--------------------------------------|--------|
|  | Sep-20                          | Mar-20 | Sep-20                               | Mar-20 |
| Police are dealing with things that matter to people in this community | -7.7pp                          | -4.8pp | -3.5pp                               | -1.3pp |
| Taking everything into account I have confidence in police             | -7.8pp                          | -3.2pp | -4.4pp                               | -1.6pp |
| Taking everything into account police are doing a good/excellent job   | -9.5pp                          | -5.8pp | -2.4pp                               | -0.9pp |

### **Victim Satisfaction**

- 1.17. In April 2017, the Home Office requirements for Victim Satisfaction surveys changed. All forces were given the opportunity to survey whichever victim groups they felt most appropriate, with the stipulation that all forces would survey victims of Domestic Abuse. Suffolk Constabulary decided that the groups of victims to be surveyed going forward would be:
  - Hate Crime
  - Rural Crime
  - Online Crime

- Business Crime
- Domestic Abuse (HO Mandated)

1.18. Of the victim satisfaction measures specified in the police and crime plan, the Constabulary only had arrangements previously in place for Hate Crime. This therefore required new survey and sampling designs which have now been in place since June 2017. For domestic abuse victim surveying this requires additional levels of scrutiny and safeguarding considerations prior to surveys being conducted and, to this end, the Constabulary has adopted a different approach for this element.

#### **Domestic Abuse Surveys (ADR 444) and Sexual Offences**

1.19. Suffolk Constabulary has a requirement to comply with ADR444 (Service Improvement Survey – Domestic Abuse). This is a mandatory collection requirement and was introduced in 2015/16 to meet recommendation 4 from the 2014 report by HMICFRS entitled 'Everyone's Business: Improving the police response to domestic abuse'.

1.20. The Home Office worked with forces and third sector organisations to develop a survey tool and methodology and to identify learning around how to collect victims' views effectively. A survey tool, guidance, principles and FAQs for this collection were sent to forces in June 2016 and remain unchanged.

1.21. Locally, we reviewed multiple options for undertaking the survey, with a core strategy that we must put the victim's safety as the priority, not speed of delivery. Options including outsourcing to the private sector, to other forces or to undertake the work in-house. Due to the risks involved and the criticality of the information used prior to a call being the most up to date possible, it was decided to deliver the service in-house.

#### **Current Position**

1.22. A Victim Satisfaction Survey (VSS) Co-ordinator delivers Home Office mandated requirement to carry out satisfaction surveys with victims of Domestic Abuse (ADR444).

1.23. The VSS Co-Ordinator (VSC) is trained, in terms of knowledge and understanding of domestic abuse and training on the required systems, to facilitate the pre-call safety checks and undertake the survey if deemed appropriate.

1.24. Data from the Domestic Abuse surveys is recorded and stored on an in-house database which allows analysts from the Strategic, Business and Operational Services (SBOS) department to access the results and review for a variety of purposes including to inform the Domestic Abuse delivery board.

1.25. The VSC role sits within the Crime, Safeguarding & Incident Management (CSIM) Directorate under the supervision of the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) Detective Inspector. The surveying process is owned and managed by CSIM, with support from SBOS in reporting on survey results.

1.26. Since a Suffolk VSS co-ordinator has been in post (November 2018):

- 609 victims were identified as suitable to call for survey purposes;
- Of those 609, 132 victims were successfully surveyed;
- For the 132 victims who were surveyed, 110 (83.3%) expressed satisfaction with the whole experience.

## Hate Crime, Online Crime, Rural Crime and Business Crime

1.27. For hate crime, online crime, rural crime and business crime the Constabulary awarded a contract to the research company SMSR in June 2017, which has recently been renewed for another operating term (at least two years) SMSR previously conducted victim satisfaction surveys for Suffolk over several years and began reporting findings for the new topics in August 2018. Data for the twelve-month rolling period to October 2020 is displayed in Table 2, below alongside comparable data for the previous year<sup>3</sup>

**Table 3: Suffolk Constabulary User Satisfaction October 2020**

| <b>Suffolk</b>        |                         | % satisfied                      |              |          |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------|----------|
|                       |                         | 12 months ending<br>Oct-20       | Oct-19       | Diff. PP |
| <b>Business Crime</b> | First contact           | <b>88.9%</b>                     | <b>79.4%</b> | 9.5%     |
|                       | Action taken            | <b>72.1%</b>                     | <b>61.4%</b> | 10.7%    |
|                       | Kept informed           | <b>72.1%</b>                     | <b>62.1%</b> | 10.0%    |
|                       | Treatment               | <b>92.8%</b>                     | <b>88.6%</b> | 4.2%     |
|                       | <b>Whole experience</b> | <b>78.4%</b>                     | <b>68.9%</b> | 9.4%     |
|                       |                         | <i>Number of<br/>respondents</i> | 111          | 132      |
| <b>Hate Crime</b>     | First contact           | <b>69.3%</b>                     | <b>71.4%</b> | -2.1%    |
|                       | Action taken            | <b>69.9%</b>                     | <b>58.0%</b> | 11.9%    |
|                       | Kept informed           | <b>70.7%</b>                     | <b>70.4%</b> | 0.4%     |
|                       | Treatment               | <b>87.0%</b>                     | <b>85.2%</b> | 1.8%     |
|                       | <b>Whole experience</b> | <b>72.4%</b>                     | <b>65.4%</b> | 6.9%     |
|                       |                         | <i>Number of<br/>respondents</i> | 123          | 81       |
| <b>Online Crime</b>   | First contact           | <b>70.9%</b>                     | <b>75.7%</b> | -4.8%    |
|                       | Action taken            | <b>76.3%</b>                     | <b>71.4%</b> | 4.9%     |
|                       | Kept informed           | <b>78.6%</b>                     | <b>75.3%</b> | 3.3%     |
|                       | Treatment               | <b>90.1%</b>                     | <b>87.0%</b> | 3.1%     |
|                       | <b>Whole experience</b> | <b>78.6%</b>                     | <b>76.6%</b> | 2.0%     |
|                       |                         | <i>Number of<br/>respondents</i> | 131          | 77       |
| <b>Rural Crime</b>    | First contact           | <b>71.0%</b>                     | <b>78.8%</b> | -7.8%    |
|                       | Action taken            | <b>68.8%</b>                     | <b>57.8%</b> | 10.9%    |
|                       | Kept informed           | <b>68.8%</b>                     | <b>62.5%</b> | 6.3%     |
|                       | Treatment               | <b>90.2%</b>                     | <b>90.6%</b> | -0.4%    |
|                       | <b>Whole experience</b> | <b>78.6%</b>                     | <b>73.4%</b> | 5.1%     |

<sup>3</sup> We are unable to report against long term trends until data is available for a minimum of a four-year period.

|       |                         | Number of respondents | 112          | 64    |  |
|-------|-------------------------|-----------------------|--------------|-------|--|
| Total | First contact           | 74.2%                 | 76.5%        | -2.3% |  |
|       | Action taken            | 71.9%                 | 62.1%        | 9.8%  |  |
|       | Kept informed           | 72.7%                 | 66.9%        | 5.8%  |  |
|       | Treatment               | 89.9%                 | 87.9%        | 2.1%  |  |
|       | <b>Whole experience</b> | <b>76.9%</b>          | <b>70.6%</b> | 6.3%  |  |
|       |                         | Number of respondents | 477          | 354   |  |

1.28. It is no longer possible to compare performance in this area with other police forces as each force will be surveying different victim types, in different ways. However, with the ability to make year on year comparisons we can now track progress internally. Comparisons indicate increases in satisfaction rates across the majority of the data sets for all crime types. However, satisfaction with first contact among rural crime, hate crime and online crime victims has fallen when compared to the previous twelve months (by 7.8, 2.1 and 4.8 percentage points respectively). Satisfaction with treatment by police for victims of rural crime also fell by 0.4 percentage points in the last year. There are a number of improvements overall (all crime types combined) including how police are keeping victims informed (an improvement of 9.8 percentage points compared with the 12 months ending April 2020) and action taken (an improvement of 5.8 percentage points). Satisfaction with the whole experience for all victims has increased by 6.3 percentage points when compared to the same period last year. While these first year on year comparisons are a positive step forward, more data is still needed before long-term analysis of trends can be carried out.

1.29. The Confidence, Satisfaction and Engagement Board commissioned SBOS to analyse the satisfaction survey results in each individual crime area. Reports for Business Crime, Rural Crime and Online Crime have all been presented to the board. Analysis of Hate Crime satisfaction will be presented to the board in January 2021.

1.30. Analysis of dissatisfaction for the categories rural, business and online crime investigations, over a period of 12 months, indicates that the areas of greatest dissatisfaction are the actions taken and how the victim was kept informed (between 15% and 18% across the three crime types). The most frequent reasons for dissatisfaction in this area were a perceived lack of investigation, the victim not being updated on the investigation and the investigation taking too long. Dissatisfaction in these areas for rural crime was higher for those aged over 55 years and for those with a disability. For Business crime dissatisfaction in these areas was highest for males and those aged between 25 and 34 years old. Dissatisfaction in these areas for online crime was higher for females and those aged over 45 years old. For all three crime categories analysed, the most frequent reason for dissatisfaction with the first contact with police was that it took too long for their call to be answered. Across the three crime categories analysed to date, the rate of dissatisfaction is lowest in the area of treatment with rates between 4% and 7%. The most frequent reasons for dissatisfaction in this area were a perceived lack of fairness, politeness and respect by police. When analysis of the remaining category, hate crime, is complete further analysis into victim dissatisfaction will be included.

## 2. PUBLIC CONFIDENCE, SATISFACTION AND ENGAGEMENT BOARD

2.1. The Constabulary's Public Confidence Board is led by the Assistant Chief Constable for Local Policing. This Board meets monthly and explores the main themes of victim satisfaction in greater depth each month. This work has continued unabated through the Covid epidemic.

- 2.2. Recent months have focused on rural crime, online crime and business crime. All are showing very encouraging improvement as we improve our standards of service and investigation across Suffolk.
- 2.3. Public Confidence data has significant lag, but this does not deter the board in finding ways to improve and it has strong representation from across the Constabulary. For example, it has recently conducted a survey of police buildings from a public perspective and is currently implementing improvements across Suffolk and this aims to be complete by the end of the year. The terms of reference for the board have expanded its remit to include confidence, satisfaction and engagement together so it can better co-ordinate and align the Constabulary effort to provide the best possible service to reassure and protect the public.

### **3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1. There are no financial implications relating to this report.

### **4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS**

- 4.1. There are no other implications and risks associated with this report.