



SUFFOLK CONSTABULARY

ORIGINATOR: CHIEF CONSTABLE

PAPER NO: AP25/23

SUBMITTED TO: ACCOUNTABILITY AND PERFORMANCE PANEL –
9 MAY 2025

SUBJECT: TACKLING SERIOUS VIOLENCE

SUMMARY:

1. This report details the current performance, demand, and activity in relation to Serious Violence. It provides an update in respect of activity being carried out within policing to tackle and prevent serious violence.
2. The period of reporting refers to the date range of 01/03/24 – 28/02/2025, the previous 12 months refers to 01/03/23– 28/02/24. The 2019 baseline has now been removed as any residual Covid impact should be viewed as permanent change.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. The Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) is asked to consider the progress made by the Constabulary and raise issues with the Chief Constable as appropriate to the PCC's role in holding the Chief Constable to account.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Tackling serious violence is a Constabulary commitment within the Police and Crime Plan 2022-2025 [Police-Crime-Plan-2022-2025.pdf \(suffolk-pcc.gov.uk\)](https://police-crime-plan-2022-2025.pdf (suffolk-pcc.gov.uk)) and as a priority within the Chief Constable's Force Strategic Plan 2023-2028. [Chief Constable's Delivery Plan 2023-2028 | Suffolk Constabulary](https://chief-constable-delivery-plan-2023-2028-suffolk-constabulary).
- 1.2 It is recognised that the Constabulary's response to offences involving serious violence is imperative to keeping people safe, protecting people from serious harm supporting victims and establishing wider trust, confidence, and satisfaction in our service.
- 1.3 The Serious Violence Duty is a partnership where relevant services work together to share information and target interventions, where possible through existing partnership structures and collaborate to prevent and reduce serious violence within their local communities. A panel convene to agree funding over 12 months around funding of specific intervention programmes. The Serious Violence Strategic Needs Assessment is completed by Suffolk Office and Data and Analytics, [Suffolk Observatory – SODA – Serious Violence Duty – Strategic Needs Assessment](https://suffolk-observatory-soda-serious-violence-duty-strategic-needs-assessment). This was refreshed in January 2025.
- 1.4 The Home Office serious violence strategy defines serious violence as specific types of crime such as homicide, knife crime, and gun crime and areas of criminality where serious violence or its threat is inherent, such as in gangs and County Lines drug dealing. It also includes emerging crime threats faced in some areas of the country such as the use of corrosive substances as a weapon.
- 1.5 This report does include violence without injury, although this is not defined as serious violence, it does provide the opportunity to reflect on Suffolks performance and holistic response to violence as a whole and provides reassurance that reduction in serious violent offending has not had a resultant increase in other violent offending.
- 1.6 The primary offences and themes this report refer to are:
 - Violence with injury
 - Violence without Injury
 - Knife Crime
 - County Lines
 - Clear Hold Build
- 1.7 Whilst Rape and Serious Sexual Offences and domestic abuse could be included within the Serious Violence criteria, these offences are reported on separately in the 'Supporting Vulnerable Victims' report. Other areas, such as Child Exploitation and Gangs, are reported in the Supporting Children and Young People paper. Some reference is, however, made to actions we are taking to tackle broader offences involving Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG), such as Project Vigilant.

2. SERIOUS VIOLENCE REDUCTION

- 2.1 The Constabulary has both internal and external governance structures that governs the constabulary response to Serious Violence. The external governance focuses on the partnership approach to tackling Serious Violence and includes various meetings that report into the Safer Stranger Communities Board:

- 2.2 Criminal Exploitation Steering Group: This meeting directs and monitors the partnership response to Criminal Exploitation, this includes those who are in victim of both criminal and sexual exploitation, this includes those who engage in County Lines.
- 2.3 Violence Against Women and Girls Steering Group: Partnership response to violence against women and girls across the county, targeting activity, engaging with communities, and providing a holistic response. This reports into the Safer Stronger Communities Board.
- 2.4 Combatting Drugs: Combines partners within Suffolk working to an action plan aligned to National requirements. A current strand of work seeks to improve reach and access to class A users at greater risk of synthetic opioids which are seeing increased deaths across the UK in 2024.
- 2.5 Serious Violence Duty Meeting: Steers activity and ensure all requirements of the duty are undertaken, making decisions on behalf of the Suffolk system.
- 2.6 The Constabulary is a vital part of these partnership meetings, and the meeting ensures a co-ordinated partnership response to some of the key drivers of violence that have been identified in the Strategic Needs Assessment. In addition to traditional policing methods there is a focus on primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention to both individuals and communities.
- 2.7 There is also a significant amount of activity at both strategic and tactical level within the Constabulary that focus' on serious violence. These have a range of governance structures that include the following:
- 2.8 Bi-monthly Force Performance Meeting: This meeting reviews force performance, how Suffolk is performing in a national context, as well as reviewing the most similar group forces.
- 2.9 Local Policing Board: This meeting reviews force, command and area performance and monitors crime trends and solved rates. This meeting provides oversight of both internal and partnership working to improve performance.
- 2.10 Domestic Abuse Delivery Group: This directs the force response to Domestic Abuse, which makes up a significant proportion of the overall violent crime.
- 2.11 Violence against Women and Girls Internal Governance: This supports a robust response across the Constabulary, both organisationally and operationally, embedding learning taken from published reports.
- 2.12 Drugs Board: Focuses on the Constabulary response to drugs, directing and monitoring both prevention activity and targeted response to drugs and associated crime across the county.
- 2.13 Tactical Tasking and Co-ordination Groups: Monthly meetings held on area and at force level that monitors violence and directs activity and targets resource to address violence hotspots using temporal and geographical analysis. The meeting also uses Vulnerable Victim, Offender and Location data to ensure that protective measures are put around victims and that offenders are targets. The Force Tactical Tasking and Co-ordination Group meeting monitors the progress of Clear Hold Build for the Constabulary.
- 2.14 Clear Hold Build Strategic Group: Monthly meeting of internal and external stakeholders co-chaired by local Policing Chief Superintendents that provides strategic governance.

3. PERFORMANCE OVERVIEW

3.1 Performance in Suffolk around Serious Violence is consistent and better than the national and 'Most Similar Group' average. Performance is monitored through the Force Performance meeting that are held bi-monthly and aspects, such as Domestic Abuse and Violence against Women and Girls are reported through the Local Policing Board. Monitoring crime trends inform the Area Tactical Tasking and Co-ordination Group (TTCG), who look holistically to identify key locations, repeat victims and priority offenders and review intelligence to identify the causation of any identified changes to trends. This allows for targeted activity where there are increases in crime reporting and impact of interventions are monitored by local commanders.

3.2 The table below demonstrates Suffolk's violence with injury per 1000 per population performance. This is measured against the National average, our most similar group of forces (Norfolk, Warwickshire, North Yorkshire, Wiltshire and Devon and Cornwall) and neighbouring force Norfolk. Suffolk has less offences recorded consistently against Norfolk and the National average although the trend noted from 2022 was a reduced difference against the Most Similar Groups which has now stabilised and remains tracking consistently below.

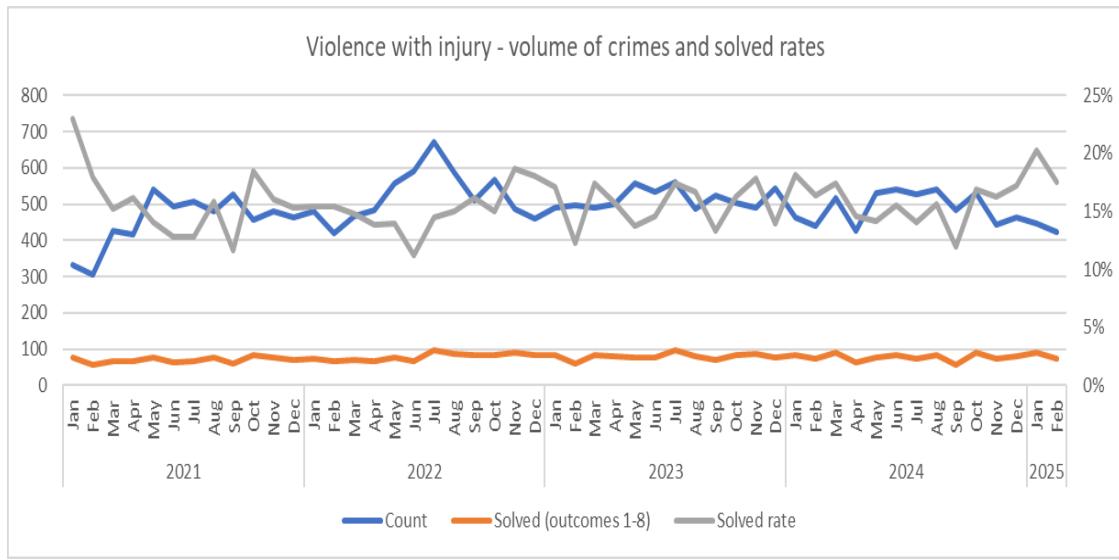


3.3

a) Office of National Statistics (ONS) figures showing number of violence with injury crimes per 1,000 population for the 12 months to the end of September 2024 compared with 12 months to the end of September 2023, September 2022, and September 2021. Comparison is of Suffolk against neighbouring force Norfolk, Suffolk's Most Similar Group, and National rates.

3.4 The chart below shows violence with injury offences and the solved rates at county level. From a peak of reported incidents in the Summer 2022, there has been an overall decrease in violence with injury. There was a slight increase from May to August 2023 which is usual and aligns to peak demand periods during the summer months and is reflected to a lesser degree in May to August 2024. However, the overall crime rates continue a year-on-year reduction. The last 12 months comparative to the previous 12 months show a reduction of 3.6%. This reduction is a continuing trend reflected in the last two reports provided.

3.5 The solved rate has increased against the previous 12 months from 15.9% to 16.0% an increase of 0.1%, with a peak of a solved rate of over 20% in January 2025. This is now showing a positive trend which will continue to be monitored, but early indications are that improvements made to investigative response and criminal justice outcomes are starting to have a positive impact.

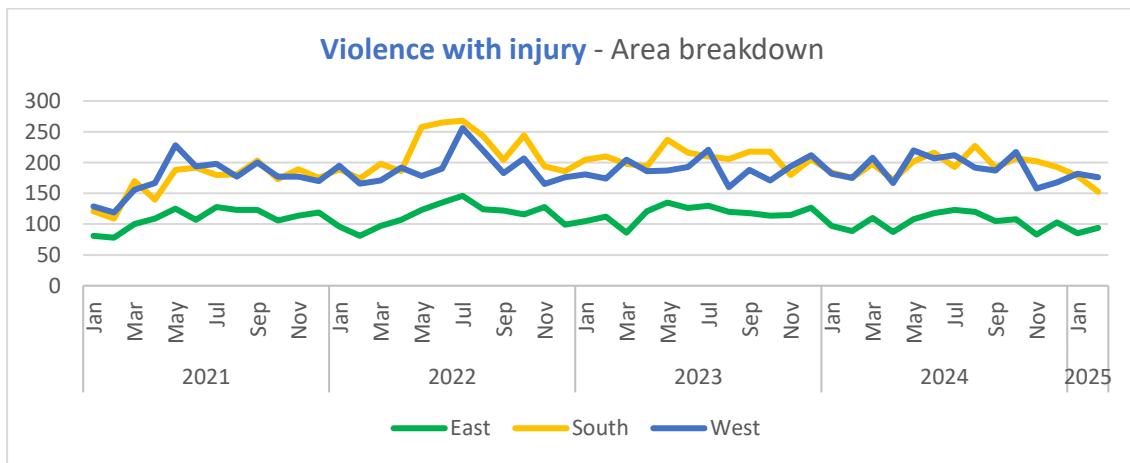


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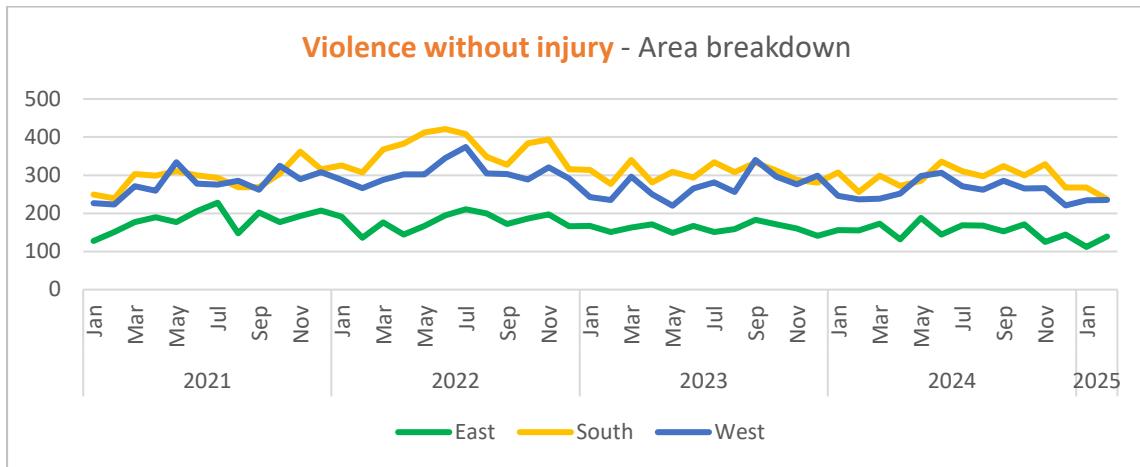
b) Monthly figures for Violence with Injury crimes and solved rates across Suffolk, 01/01/2021 to 28/02/2025

3.7 The following chart at c), shows the longer-term trend of violence with injury broken down into the three geographical command areas over the last 4 years. As previously stated, there is a noticeable peak across all three command areas in Summer, but since that time the levels of Violence with Injury have steadily reduced, and in summer 2024 the peak in violence with injury offences is not as pronounced as previous years and there is an overall reduction in violence with injury offences across Suffolk.

3.8 The chart at d) below shows the levels of violence without injury from 2021 to 2025 across the three geographical command areas. As demonstrated in the previous slides the levels of violence without injury peaked in 2022 following reduced levels during the pandemic. Levels of violence without injury have fallen consistently since.



c) Monthly volumes of Violence with Injury by geographical command area of Suffolk. Data from 01/01/2021 to 28/02/2025



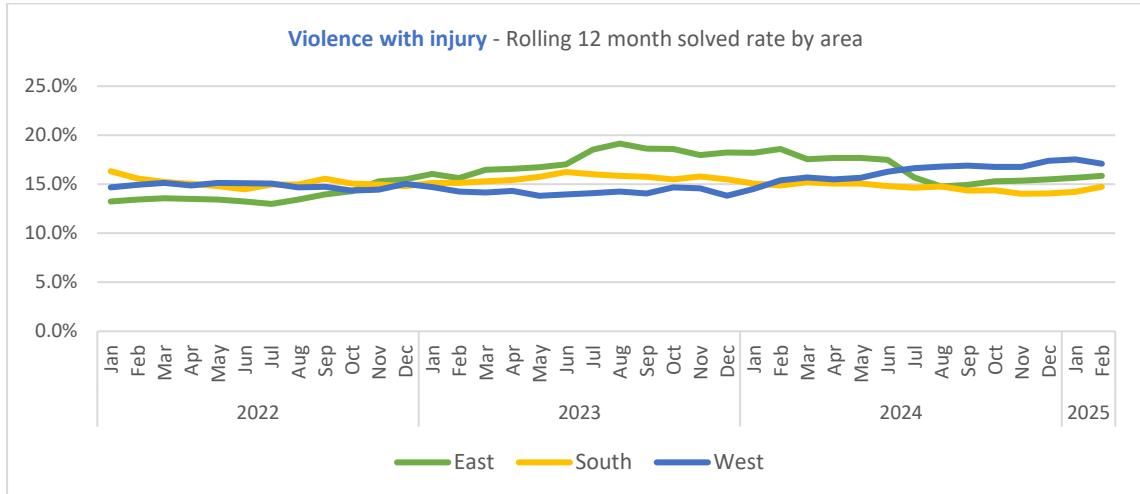
d) Monthly volumes of Violence without Injury by geographical command area of Suffolk. Data from 01/01/2021 to 28/02/2024.

3.9 The below chart e) shows the levels of violence with and without injury comparing the last 12 months, 01/03/2024 to 28/02/2025, to the previous 12 months 01/03/23 to 28/02/24 over the three geographical command areas. All violence has reduced across Suffolk by 526 offences over the last 12 months. There have been reductions in violence with injury in the East and the South, however, the West has seen a slight increase in violence with injury by 20 crimes against an overall reduction in all violent offending of 109 crimes.

		L12M	P12M	Percent difference
Violence with injury	East	1244	1378	-9.7%
	South	2333	2442	-4.5%
	West	2294	2274	0.9%
Violence without injury	East	1818	1926	-5.6%
	South	3526	3642	-3.2%
	West	3133	3262	-4.0%

e) Tabular form showing violence with and without injury by geographical command area for the last 12 months (01/03/2024 – 28/02/2025) and previous 12 months (01/03/2023 – 28/02/2024), and the percentage difference.

3.10 The table and graph below at f) and g) show the solved rates of violence with injury across the three geographical command areas over the last three years and the overall numbers of positive outcomes across Suffolk. This shows that the solved rates across the three geographical areas have been maintained at 15.9% (slight discrepancy from numbers in 3.5 due to 0.1% crime not allocated to a command area). The constabulary continues to improve solved rates across all crime, improvement of investigative standards is governed through the Investigative Standards Board chaired by the Suffolk Assistant Chief Constable, supported by sub-groups which focus on raising standards of investigations that will improve positive outcomes.



f) Violence with injury rolling solved rates by geographical command area. Solved rates are calculated for rolling 12-month periods.

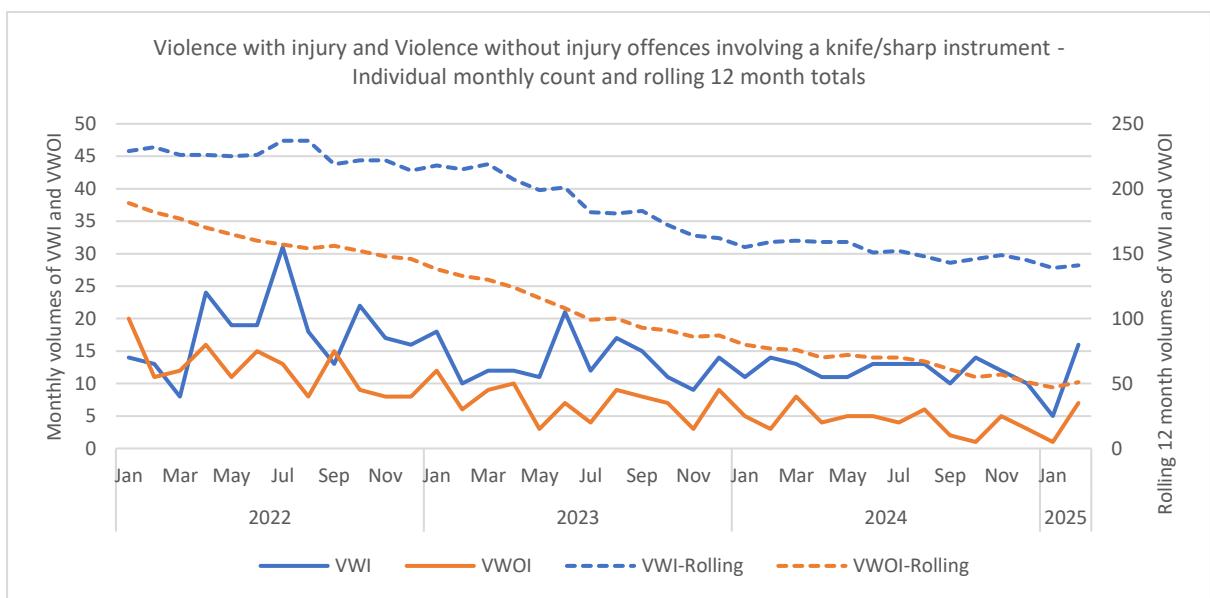
Solved rate		L12M	P12M	Percent difference
Violence with injury	Created count	5871	6094	-3.7%
	Type 1-8 count	933	969	-3.7%
	Solved Rate	15.9%	15.9%	Opp

Tabular form showing violence with injury volumes and solved rate for the last 12 months (01/03/2024 – 28/02/2025) and previous 12 months (01/03/2023 – 28/02/2024), and the percentage difference.

4. Knife Crime

4.1

The reduction of knife crime remains a key focus for Suffolk Constabulary and the number of incidents involving a knife or other sharp incident remains low comparative to other forces. Suffolk has had a further significant decrease in knife crime. According to Office of National Statistics (ONS) data, Suffolk has the third lowest rate of knife crime per 100,000 population in England and Wales, with only Devon and Cornwall and Gwent being lower. This is an area that the constabulary keeps under constant review as the impact to those who are victims of knife crime can be devastating.



g) Knife related VWI and VWOI. Monthly volumes are shown in solid lines and correspond to the left axis. Rolling 12-month totals are shown in dashed lines and correspond to the right axis.

4.2 The above chart g) shows data in two different ways. The dotted lines show the rolling 12-month count, allowing for the direction of travel to be clearly presented. It can be seen since the rolling 12 months of March 2023; the trend demonstrates that the volume of both Violence with Injury and Violence without Injury knife crime has continued to decrease, there is a very slight upturn in January 2025, this will be continued to be monitored, but the reduction over the previous three years is significant.

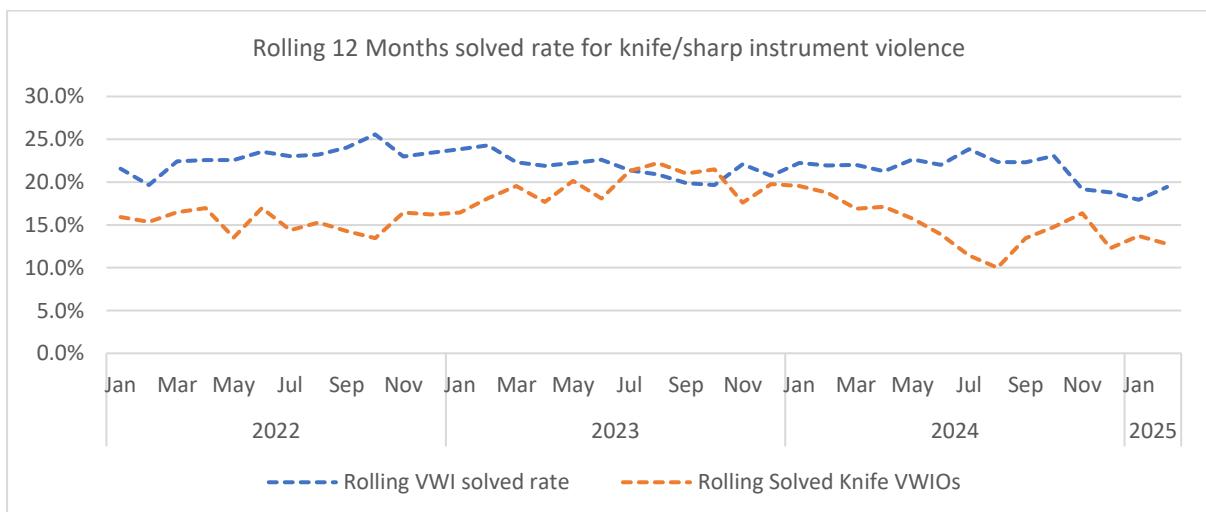
4.3 The smooth lines at the bottom show the volume of Violence with Injury and Violence without Injury offences per month over time, this fluctuates month to month, as expected, there are peaks in the summer months of 2022 and 2023, this is less obvious in the same months in 2024. This may be due to a variety of factors, including an enhanced police presence following the national incidents of disorder following the multiple murders in Merseyside. There were no incidents of similar disorder in Suffolk. There has also been the introduction of the new Operating Model. Overall crime rates in Suffolk have continued to decrease.

		L12M	P12M	Percent difference
Violence with injury	County	141	159	-11.3%
	East	21	34	-38.2%
	South	62	56	10.7%
	West	58	69	-15.9%
Violence without injury	County	51	77	-33.8%
	East	15	16	-6.3%
	South	20	34	-41.2%
	West	16	27	-40.7%

Table showing knife-related violence with injury and violence without injury volumes for the last 12 months (01/03/2024 – 28/02/2025) and previous 12 months (01/03/2023 – 28/02/2024) by geographical command area, and the percentage differences.

4.4 The table above shows violent offences involving a knife and sharp object data crime data from the last 12 months compared to the previous 12 months. There has been an overall reduction across the county, with a slight increase in knife related violence with injury in the South Area, although the numbers are small and there remains a significant decrease over the last 3 years. This will be monitored.

4.5



h) The rolling 12 month solved rates for knife/sharp instrument violence with and violence without injury.

4.6 The table h) shows the solved rates for knife/sharp instrument related violence across the constabulary. It is worth noting that the numbers recorded over the year period are small numbers. The solved rate across both knife related violence has seen a slight decline since September 2024.

Operation Sceptre

4.7 Operation Sceptre was conducted from the 11th of November 2025 to 17th November 2025. Operation Sceptre is the National Operation focused on tackling knife crime. This does not just focus on enforcement activity, but it is also about education and a wider awareness of knife crime.

4.8 The activity included Community Policing Teams working with cadets to establish whether retailers were seeking appropriate identification. Three retailers were subsequently reported to Trading Standards.

4.9 Other results included the arrest of five individuals for knife related offences, 20 weapons sweeps and six stop and searches. Officers also conducted high visibility patrols and held community engagement events throughout the County.

Clear, Hold, Build

4.10 Clear, Hold, Build Clear, Hold, Build (CHB) is an entire system approach delivered operationally to improve the local response to tackling Serious and Organised Crime (SOC) threats. CHB is a preventative partnership approach with requires engagement and active participation including from statutory, third and private sector partners. The Home Office initiative is designed to deliver impact by reducing SOC threats and create change from within communities to build sustainable safety and increase community resilience.

4.11 CHB Felixstowe: There has been a significant decline in violence, drugs and antisocial behaviour (ASB). The threat from primary organised crime group has reduced to a level whereby it is no longer considered viable. 'Clear' activity since inception has seen over 100 verified and accepted including 45 arrests. During the next period police and partners will transition into the 'Hold' phase where activity is already being undertaken by the operational delivery groups established by police and partners, this includes improvements to CCTV, alleyway clearances, lighting improvements, increased youth provision, diversion projects and target hardening. During the next period police will remain a key partner maintaining enforcement to allow successful implementation of interventions and activity.

4.12 CHB Ipswich: This is the most recent CHB site in Suffolk. The Strategic Delivery Group (SDG) implemented in December 2024 and parameters were agreed to identify a suitable site in Ipswich. This was evidenced by analysis from the Suffolk Office of Data Analytics (SODA), based on initial Suffolk Police and Ipswich Borough Council data. This identified a site vulnerable to serious and organised crime (particularly serious violence, robbery, drugs and like offences).

4.13 In February 2025, the site for CHB Ipswich was identified comprising of areas within the Gipping and Westgate Wards and a formal Police & Partnership Structure was implemented. Unlike the other CHB sites, this will use an adapted model, designed to deliver Clear, Hold and Build phases concurrently to maximise the benefits for the community, build intelligence, foster community cohesion, and deter the attractiveness to serious and organised crime from the outset.

Operation Spotlight and Project Vigilant

4.14 Operation Spotlight was launched in April 2024 to coordinate Suffolk Constabulary's response to delivering Hotspot Policing following aware of a national grant of £1m from the Home Office. The hotspot locations were primarily focused on areas at risk from Anti-Social Behaviour the majority of the areas were also identified as areas most likely to experience serious violence. Suffolk Constabulary increased police presence by over 9,000 hours within these key areas during 2024/25.

4.15 The funding was used to support Project Vigilant, specifically nighttime economy deployments to tackle sexual offending and predatory behaviour. Initial deployments have resulted in:

- 62 interventions
- 16 Stop and Searches
- 16 S35 Dispersals
- 2 arrests for Sexual Assault
- 1 arrest for a Registered Sex Offender demonstrating predatory behaviour.

4.16 Suffolk Constabulary have also funded various diversionary activities aimed at raising awareness of the risk of gang violence. This includes purchasing of VR Headsets to support awareness of knife crime with children and young people.

4.17 A new bid is being completed to access similar funds for 2025 to build on the efforts of the last 12 months. This year's hotspots will be identified as being areas most at risk of ASB, Knife Crime and Violence. The grant funding will be distributed to maximise impact across these hotspots.

County Lines Intensification Week

4.18 County Lines intensification Week ran between the 25th and 2nd December 2024. This targets County Lines and its associated criminality. The week is focused primarily on disruptions, although it is also used as an opportunity to engage those at risk of County Lines, including children and others who may be vulnerable. The results were as follows:

- 15 arrests
- 4 charges
- 4 weapons recovered
- 151g Class A seized
- 1.02kg Class B seized
- Street value of drugs seized £18,000
- 22 Stop searches
- 13 vehicle & premises searches

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no financial implications at this stage.

6. OTHER IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

6.1 There are no risks identified at the present time. This will be kept under review.

7. CHIEF OFFICER CONCLUSION

- 7.1 Serious violence is a wide-ranging subject that is focussed on by many areas of the public sector and Constabulary teams. The paper evidences complex governance and strong plans that will seek to make Suffolk even safer where violence is concerned. Importantly, offending rates remain low and have decreased in most areas during the reporting period. There are some slight improvements to outcomes and Suffolk performs well when compared nationally and against MSG partners.
- 7.2 There is extensive evidence of the Constabulary working with partners to impact on the wide range of relevant criminality. There are good initiatives around prevention and pursuing offenders and there has been good progress made against priority areas such as county lines and serious and organised crime.