



SUFFOLK CONSTABULARY

ORIGINATOR: CHIEF CONSTABLE

PAPER NO: AP26/40

**SUBMITTED TO: ACCOUNTABILITY AND PERFORMANCE PANEL –
4 SEPTEMBER 2026**

SUBJECT: SUPPORTING VULNERABLE VICTIMS

SUMMARY:

1. This report sets out the progress that has been made in respect of the support provided to vulnerable victims. It provides background context in respect of the service provided to victims, an update on the work ongoing to increase the delivery of the Victims' Code of Practice (VCOP) and more detailed updates in respect of the work ongoing to support the most vulnerable victims and victims of the most serious crimes.

RECOMMENDATION:

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

1. INTRODUCTION

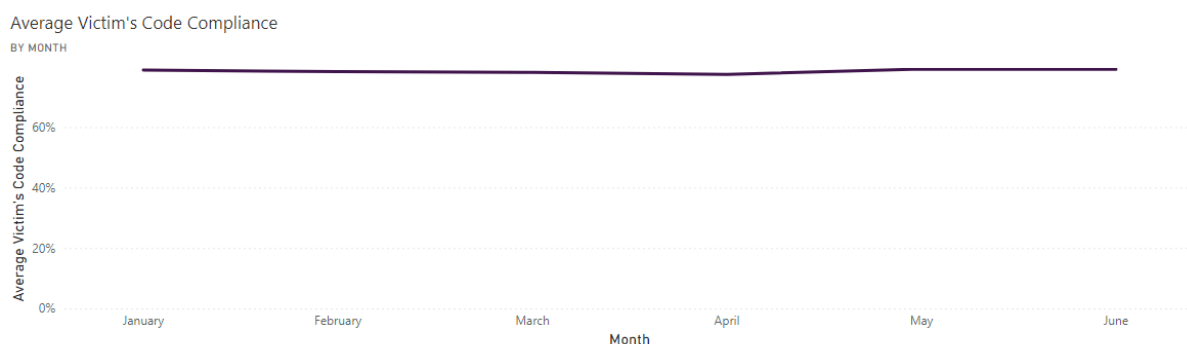
- 1.1 The services provided to victims remain central to Suffolk Police and Crime Commissioner's Police and Crime Plan and the Chief Constable's Delivery Plan. From the first call for service, to a criminal justice outcome the Constabulary aims to deliver a service that delivers the Victims' Code and provides confidence and reassurance for victims and witnesses. Suffolk Constabulary's work in relation to victims focuses on these key elements of the Police and Crime Plan:
- Keeping people informed, and updated, once they have reported a crime;
 - Ensuring compliance with the police elements of the Victims' Code with a strong focus on how the force supports victims through the investigation;
 - Maintaining a continued focus on tackling the crimes which constitute Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG).
- 1.2 The service to victims is overseen through the Supporting Victims Group which is chaired by the Head of Justice Services, and this group is a sub-group of the Investigation Standards Board chaired by the Assistant Chief Constable, Local Policing.
- 1.3 The service provided to victims varies according to need and this paper sets out the work that is ongoing, particularly in relation to VAWG, domestic abuse, rape and serious sexual offences and hate crime. These and other specialist areas of crime are managed within the Crime, Safeguarding, and Investigation Management Command.
- 1.4 The Victims and Prisoners Bill received Royal Assent in May 2024, and a formal commencement date is awaited from the new Government. The aims of the Bill include raising awareness of the Victims' Code and requiring improvement to agency compliance which in turn should improve victims' experience of the justice system. It is important that criminal justice partners work together to ensure effective services to victims throughout the criminal justice process. Through the Local Criminal Justice Board, Suffolk Constabulary works closely with its criminal justice partners to ensure effective services to victims.
- 1.5 Whilst the partnership is strong, there are significant challenges within the criminal justice system locally as well as nationally. Court backlogs continue to be significant for the county and delays are emerging in the Magistrates' Courts as well as the Crown Courts. This issue continues to be actively monitored through the Local Criminal Justice Board and through representation by the National Police Chief Council Criminal Justice Leads. The Constabulary's Victim and Witness Care Unit provides updates to those whose cases are awaiting trial and, with so many more cases in the system, their work has increased significantly. Additional resources have been provided and are likely to be needed until well into 2026.

2. NORFOLK AND SUFFOLK CONSTABULARIES 'SUPPORTING VICTIMS' SUBGROUP

- 2.1 The Supporting Victims Subgroup is made up of representatives from various departments and includes colleagues from the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Suffolk.
- 2.2 The aim of the subgroup is to oversee the delivery of the Victims' Code and to ensure that victims and witnesses are supported through the criminal justice process from first point of contact, ensuring their needs are met and that they receive a consistent, good quality service.

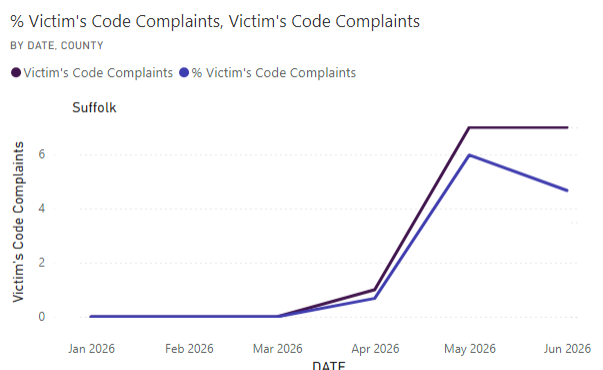
3. VICTIMS' CODE AND COMPLIANCE FRAMEWORK

- 3.1 The Victims and Prisoners Act places a legislative requirement on all police forces and other criminal justice bodies, to collect information, both quantitative and qualitative, to review their compliance with the Victims' Code, to drive improvements to services provided to victims.
- 3.2 The Ministry of Justice launched a consultation on a new Victims' Code on 5 February 2026, following requirements in the Victims and Prisoners Act 2024. The consultation closed on 30 April 2026. The proposed Code aims to: Strengthen victims' rights and make them easier to understand; introduce clearer standards for victim needs assessments; improve the delivery of information and support throughout the criminal justice process; align the Code with the statutory principles established in recent legislation. As of July 2026, the consultation response and final revised Code have not yet been published and confirmed metrics reporting is awaited but expected to be delivered in 2027 with reporting by Police Forces in 2028.
- 3.3 Current Constabulary data on all victims' rights is collated into a specific Victims' Code dashboard. This dashboard secures data automatically from the Constabulary Crime and Intelligence system, Athena. The Constabulary reviews performance against the victim's code at monthly force performance meetings. Managers can also access the dashboard to monitor the performance of their teams in respect of Victims' Code compliance. The Dashboard will be updated to support the new Victims' Code metrics for reporting in 2027 / 2028 once the metrics have been confirmed.
- 3.4 Whilst the Constabulary contributes to all the rights in some way, for the purpose of accountability and recording, only rights 1 to 9 are assessed and contribute to compliance however rights 8 and 9 are generally the responsibility of the Witness Care Unit (VAWS) and not the officer in the case.
- 3.5 The overall Victims' Code compliance across Suffolk Constabulary between 1st January 2026 to 30th June 2026 for Rights 1-7 was 78.49%.



- 3.6 The Supporting Victims Subgroup has identified priority areas from the Police Effectiveness, Efficiency and Legitimacy (PEEL) Inspection report to include Right 4 (*Individual Needs Assessment*), right 6 (*Provided with Information regarding the Investigation*) & Right 7 (*Offer of a Personal Victim Statement*) to support continued improvement performance in these areas.

- 3.7 Right 12 – *The right to make a complaint about a Victim's Rights not being met* currently sits at 3.09% for the period 1st January 2026 to 30th June 2026 which equates to 15 complaints.



- 3.8 The Supporting Victims Subgroup is looking at strengthening the Victims Voice and therefore the Victims Journey through the Criminal Justice System. Victim engagement can be improved through consistent consultation with victims before investigations are finalised, accurate recording of their views, regular communication throughout investigations, and effective supervisory oversight. This will help ensure that victims' voices inform decision-making, improve compliance with the Victims' Code, and increase confidence in policing services as well as ensuring feedback is sought, considered, and acted on.
- 3.9 The Constabulary's Witness Care Unit (VAWS) continues to carry heavy workloads of over 300 cases per witness care officer due to Crown and Magistrates Court backlogs. Court data shows cases are still growing in both the Magistrates and Crown Courts. The team moved to a 'one team' approach in January 2026 and since all staff are now on permanent contracts staff attrition has reduced considerably and workloads are manageable.

4. VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS (VAWG)

- 4.1 Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG) is an umbrella term that covers a range of offences that disproportionately impact on women and girls, such as domestic abuse, sexual offences, stalking and harassment, female genital mutilation and forced marriage. VAWG is a societal issue that requires a whole system approach. Working together with partner agencies through the Safer Stronger Communities Board (SSCB) is crucial to the local response. A new strategy was published in April 2025 to prioritise areas over the next 3 years. The strategy is called Ending Violence against Women and Girls + and can be found [Suffolk VAWG Strategy 2025-28](#)
- 4.2 A county wide action plan that has been in place since 2022 is being redrafted to align to the new strategy to ensure that our partnership response to VAWG remains focused, current, and working towards the Suffolk vision of everyone playing their part in preventing VAWG and supporting victims.
- 4.3 A Rape Scrutiny Panel continues to meet quarterly, reviewing rape investigations. The panel remains focused on investigations where police (with CPS) have decided to take No Further Action and is attended by partners and stakeholders. The output of the Rape Scrutiny Panel is used to inform our Soteria qualitative audits and education opportunities for the wider workforce.
- 4.4 The National Domestic Abuse Joint Justice Action Plan has been implemented and there is now a Domestic Abuse Joint Operational Information Meeting (DAJOIM) with both police and

Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) in attendance, replicating the Rape and Serious Sexual Offences (RASSO) JOIM. This seeks to identify and remove any barriers to successful prosecutions. Our Domestic Abuse and RASSO Delivery Group provides internal governance, enabling performance to be monitored and directive action taken in our efforts to achieve and maintain best practice.

- 4.5 The Home Secretary previously set the expectation that by Summer 2029 every Home Office force would have a specialist RASSO team, and the timescale for this has been reduced to December 2027. Suffolk Constabulary already delivers a highly specialist response with dedicated RASSO investigators operating from purpose-designed safeguarding houses. The Constabulary is reviewing its position to ensure it maximises the specialism, providing consistency in levels of service and compliance with Home Office and National Operating model expectations.
- 4.6 Suffolk has engaged the national Beaconport Team in our response to group-based child sexual abuse and exploitation (GBCSAE). The Constabulary has prepared a victim and survivor strategy to ensure effective and consistent service delivery. Funding from the National Beaconport portfolio will be used to embed trauma informed engagement training to our workforce, increase our knowledge and capability of this subject matter and make strides toward treating Child Sexual abuse and Exploitation (CSAE), where suitable, like other Serious & Organised Crime.
- 4.7 In 2022, His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabularies and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) received a 'super complaint' from the Suzy Lamplugh Trust in relation to the police response to Stalking and Harassment. Following review, a series of recommendations were made. In November 2024 Suffolk Constabulary published an action plan to address the recommendations [Stalking Action Plan | Suffolk Constabulary](#). The Constabulary has reviewed the plan against the proposed College of Policing Stalking and Harassment Approved Professional Practice (APP) and is in the process of progressing further actions.

5. DOMESTIC ABUSE

Investigations Recorded

- 5.1 Figure 1 below illustrates the number of domestic abuse investigations and non-crime incidents recorded from 1 January 2019 to the end of June 2026. Over the past 12 months, recorded domestic abuse crimes have increased, sitting 2% above the three-year average, with an average of 652 crimes per month. Non-crime investigations have increased over the same 12-month period, averaging 675 per month — a 10.6% rise above the three-year average.

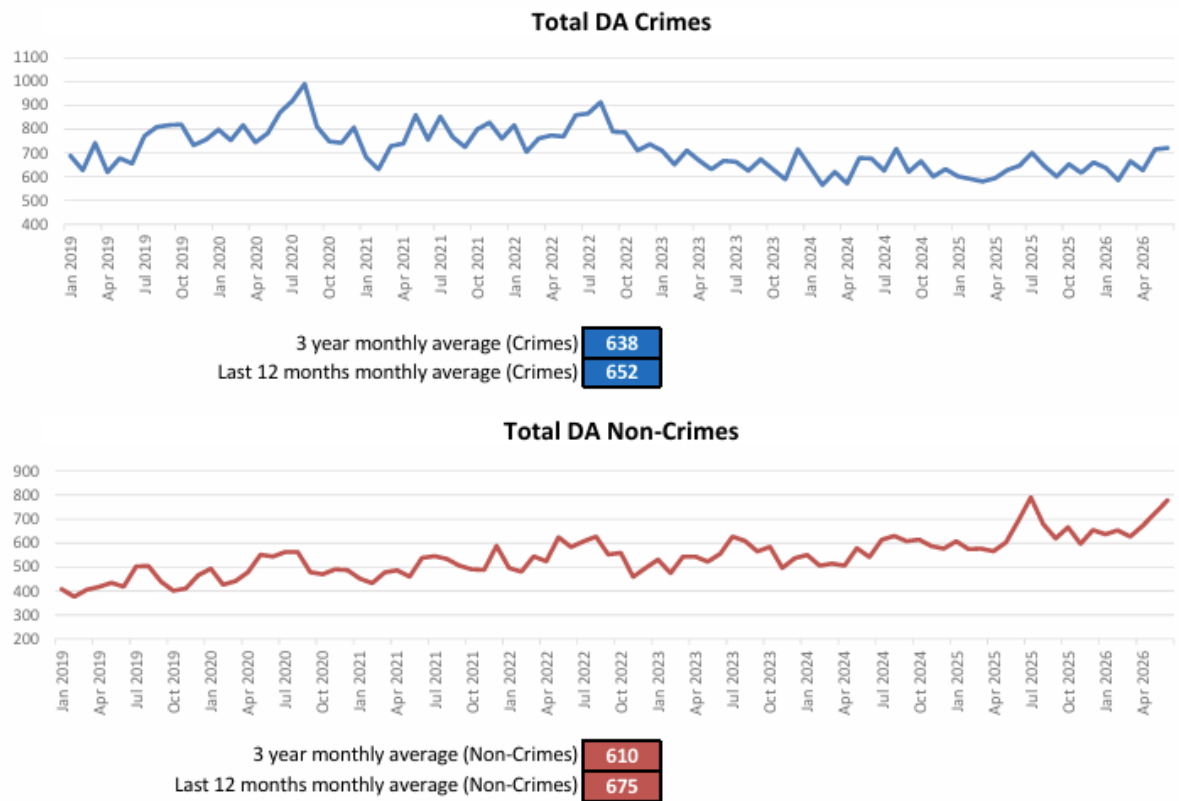


Fig 1 - DA crimes and Non-crimes Jan 2019 – April 2026

Positive Action and Outcomes

- 5.2 Positive action is counted where a suspect has been recorded as ‘arrested’ or ‘interviewed.’ The number of arrests has been consistent and robust over the last 12 months, and the Constabulary is consistently above other Most Similar Group forces with the number of positive actions recorded. Positive action rate is currently 50% for the last 12 months.
- 5.3 The solved rate for domestic abuse crimes over the past 12 months was 12.8%. While there has been a decrease in the rate over the past 2 quarters, the actual number of solved cases increased from 224 to 244 during the same period. Chart 6 below illustrates performance trends from April 2025 to June 2026.

Supporting vulnerable victims	Last 12M	Previous 12M	Diff against Previous 12m	Long-term average	Diff against long-term average
Domestic Abuse					
Crime					
Crime volume	7580	7325	↑3.5%	7846	↓3.4%
Proportion of all crime which is Domestic Abuse	17.1%	16.8%	↑0.3pp	16.9%	↑0.2pp
Solved number	958	934	↑2.6%	978	↓2.0%
Solved rate	13.3%	12.9%	↑0.4pp	12.4%	↑0.9pp
Charged number	773	696	↑11.1%	767	↑0.8%
Charged rate	10.7%	9.6%	↑1.1pp	9.7%	↑0.2pp
Crimes with High Risk Assessment	452	455	↓0.7%	626	↓27.8%
Crimes with Medium Risk Assessment	3254	2998	↑8.5%	2830	↑15.0%
Crimes with Standard Risk Assessment	3436	2902	↑18.4%	2565	↑34.0%
Incidents					
Incidents with High Risk Assessment	68	86	↓20.9%	87	↓21.8%
Incidents with Medium Risk Assessment	660	605	↑9.1%	658	↑0.3%
Incidents with Standard Risk Assessment	4638	4277	↑8.4%	3735	↑24.2%
Victims					
Number of victims (Unique)	4876	4633	↑5.2%	Data not available	
Victims per 1000 population	6.4	No comparison- strategic measure			
Victim not ready to support	54.5%	52.7%	↑1.8pp	52.4%	↑2.1pp
Offender management					
Domestic Violence Disclosures (Clare's Law)	1911	1613	↑18.5%	1148	↑66.5%
DVPOs	157	73	↑115.1%	Data not available	
DVPNs	170	90	↑88.9%	Data not available	
Satisfaction					
Overall Satisfaction	86.2%	82.8%	↑3.4pp	Data not available	

Data up to end of June 2026

Table 1- Domestic Abuse Crime Outcomes in Suffolk

Use of Ancillary Orders

- 5.4 A Domestic Violence Protection Notice (DVPN) is an emergency safeguarding measure that can be issued by police to provide immediate protection to victims of domestic abuse. Where a DVPN is issued, police can apply to the Magistrates' Court for a Domestic Violence Protection Order (DVPO), which can prohibit contact and exclude a perpetrator from a residence for up to 28 days.
- 5.5 The rolling 12 month data demonstrates a significant and sustained increase in the use of DVPNs and subsequent DVPOs across Suffolk. Following a period of relative stability, there has been a marked upward trajectory since late 2025, with both notices issued and orders granted reaching their highest levels on record. The close correlation between DVPNs issued and DVPOs granted indicates that applications are being progressed effectively and continue to meet the evidential threshold required by the courts.
- 5.6 This positive trend suggests increasing officer and supervisor confidence in the use of protective orders, improved recognition of safeguarding opportunities, and a strong organisational focus on positive action to protect victims and disrupt offending behaviour. Ongoing training and awareness activity has supported this improvement and helped embed the use of DVPNs and DVPOs within Suffolk's domestic abuse response.
- 5.7 Looking ahead, Suffolk is preparing for the anticipated national rollout of Domestic Abuse Protection Orders (DAPOs) from November 2026. DAPOs are intended to replace existing DVPOs and provide a more flexible and robust protective framework, including the ability to impose longer-term prohibitions, positive requirements and electronic monitoring where appropriate. The increased use of DVPNs and DVPOs places the Constabulary in a strong position to maximise the opportunities presented by the introduction of DAPOs and further strengthen protection for victims of domestic abuse.

- 5.8 The data demonstrates a clear year-on-year increase in the use of Stalking Protection Orders (SPOs) across Suffolk, with a particularly notable rise during 2025 and the first half of 2026. Both interim and full orders granted by the court have increased, reflecting improved identification of suitable cases and greater use of stalking-specific protective powers. The increasing number of applications progressing to court and being granted indicates growing confidence in the process and the quality of applications being submitted.
- 5.9 This improvement has been supported by the appointment of a dedicated Single Point of Contact within the Crime Coordination Centre in 2024, together with ongoing work with the force's retained solicitors to strengthen application quality and maximise successful outcomes. As a result, officers are making better use of SPOs as an early safeguarding and perpetrator management tool, helping to reduce risk and provide enhanced protection for victims.
- 5.10 The sustained upward trend is a positive indicator of organisational maturity in responding to stalking, increased awareness of stalking behaviours, and a stronger focus on the use of preventative orders to safeguard victims and disrupt offenders before harm escalates.

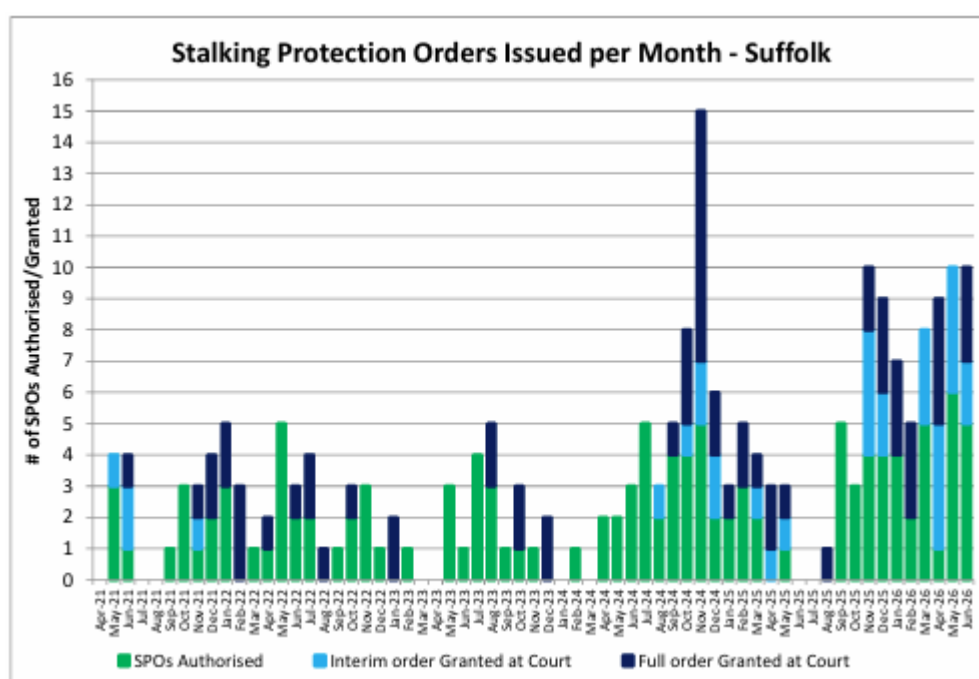


Fig 2 – Stalking Protection Order use in Suffolk 2021 – 2026

6. DOMESTIC VIOLENCE DISCLOSURES SCHEME (DVDS) - (CLARE'S LAW)

- 6.1 The Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (DVDS), commonly referred to as “Clare’s Law”, and the Child Sex Offender Disclosure Scheme (CSODS), known as “Sarah’s Law”, were legislated in 2014 and 2011 respectively. Over time, public awareness of both schemes has grown, and they are now routinely considered as part of daily business. Disclosures can be initiated by police or other professionals under the “Right to Know” (RTK) process, or by members of the public through a “Right to Ask” (RTA) application, either for themselves or on behalf of someone else.
- 6.2 Significant work has recently been undertaken to strengthen governance, improve oversight, enhance risk assessments and review processes, and increase organisational focus on timeliness and safeguarding. A new, dedicated team is now established to provide a timely, consistent and harm-focused approach to these disclosure schemes. Since the new team was

established in May 2026, they have delivered 97% compliance with the 28-day disclosure timeframe. These measures have resulted in sustained improvements in performance and a more proactive approach to identifying and protecting individuals at risk of domestic abuse through the disclosure process.

- 6.3 DVDS demand has continued to increase significantly in recent years, demonstrating the growing reliance placed on the scheme as a key safeguarding measure. Annual application volumes have risen from 819 in 2022 to 1,888 in 2025, representing a 27% increase on the previous year and overall growth of 839% when compared with application levels a decade ago.
- 6.4 The upward trend has continued into 2026. During the first six months of 2025, the Constabulary received 756 DVDS applications; however, the same period in 2026 saw 944 applications received. This represents a further 25% year-on-year increase and indicates that demand for the scheme continues to grow at a significant rate, with RTKs rising above RTAs in June 2026 for the first time in two years. The sustained rise in applications is likely to reflect increased awareness of the scheme, greater confidence in seeking support, and the continued focus placed on its use as an important safeguarding tool.

7. RAPE AND SERIOUS SEXUAL OFFENCES (RASSO)

- 7.1 Following the completion of the last Soteria Self-Assessment, the Constabulary was assigned thirteen (13) bespoke recommendations reflecting our local context, strengths and areas for development. The recommendations are commensurate with our ambition of continuous improvement and reflective of positive feedback from the national Soteria team.
- 7.2 The Op Soteria pillar leads within the Constabulary continue to develop activities to drive our Soteria transformational plan and ensure professional development - a series of quantitative and qualitative audits ensure we are delivering a high-quality service in this area, focused on being suspect-focused, victim-centred and context-led and able to provide feedback to the national Soteria team.
- 7.3 A quarterly Continuing Professional Development (CPD) bulletin continues to be shared with our workforce and remains focused on what is happening here in Suffolk - it captures what we are doing well and where we can improve. To embed best practice, the Constabulary has developed a series of mandatory RASSO learning packages enabling frontline officers/staff and investigators to remain consistent with national guidance and standards.
- 7.4 Monthly Police RASSO lead and regional Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) RASSO lead meetings are well embedded and accompanied by a regional JOIM. This enables early identification of issues, performance reflections and identification of best practice. We have implemented a RASSO gatekeeper role at Detective Inspector rank to drive compliance and quality of investigation case files to ensure timely and effective investigative progress. Suffolk Constabulary is reviewing its practices to ensure compliance with national standards for Visually Recorded Interviews to enable best evidence to be achieved for victims. The playback of visually recorded evidence had been a challenge for the Courts - Police, CPS and HM Courts & Tribunals Service (HMCTS) are working together to ensure the quality of playback can be suitably achieved within criminal justice processes.
- 7.5 Suffolk Constabulary continues its drive to achieve best practice and is making use of early investigative advice, improvement of casefile quality to adhere to national standards and has commenced a bespoke review of investigations open for significant periods to identify

blockers and enable timely progress. Our Op Soteria principles are well embedded and regionally we continue to perform well with victim engagement and attrition.

- 7.6 Suffolk Constabulary retains consistent performance for RASSO cases with a 12-month solved rate of 8.3% when compared to the long-term average (6.8%). The Constabulary remains victim-centred, suspect-focused and context-led in its approach. Victim attrition remains a focal point of investigations with 'Victim Right to Review' (VRR) and output from our Rape Scrutiny panel reflected upon to drive forward our approach to delivery of Soteria led principles.

Supporting vulnerable victims	Last 12M	Previous 12M	Diff against Previous 12m	Long-term average	Diff against long-term average
RASSO					
<i>Crime volume</i>	1,997	1,912	↑4.4%	2,043	↓2.3%
<i>Solved rate</i>	8.3%	8.8%	↓0.5pp	6.8%	↑1.5pp
<i>Solved number</i>	163	177	↓7.9%	144	↑13.2%
<i>Charged rate</i>	8.0%	7.8%	↑0.2pp	6.2%	↑1.8pp
<i>Charged number</i>	150	158	↓5.1%	131	↑14.5%
<i>Investigation not possible</i>	2.2%	2.0%	↑0.2pp	2.4%	↓0.2pp
<i>Victim not ready to support</i>	44.9%	42.3%	↑2.6pp	46.0%	↓1.1pp
<i>Evidential difficulties</i>	58.5%	61.0%	↓2.5pp	59.8%	↓1.3pp
<i>Live investigations</i>	692				
<i>SARC referrals - Child (0-17)</i>	59				
<i>SARC referrals - Adult (18+)</i>	244				

Data up to end of June 2026

Table 2 – Rape and Serious Sexual Offence data for Suffolk

- 7.7 The volume of reported Child Sexual Abuse offences has increased in the L12M when compared with our long-term average data; the solved rate has also increased by (2%) when compared to the long-term average. The Constabulary remains engaged with partner agencies to support child victims.
- 7.8 The Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) contract with the current provider has been in place two years. Both the SARC manager and the regional manager posts have been filled - accreditation is awaited and remains in the hands of the provider to achieve, driven and tracked through a regional working group.

Supporting vulnerable victims	Last 12M	Previous 12M	Diff against Previous 12m	Long-term average	Diff against long-term average
Child Sexual Abuse					
<i>Crime volume</i>	1090	823	↑32.4%	990	↑10.1%
<i>Solved rate</i>	14.1%	14.3%	↓0.2pp	12.1%	↑2.0pp
<i>Solved number</i>	143	123	↑16.3%	127	↑12.6%
<i>Charged rate</i>	13.8%	13.0%	↑0.8pp	11.0%	↑2.8pp
<i>Charged number</i>	140	112	↑25.0%	116	↑20.7%
<i>Victim not ready to support</i>	28.9%	29.0%	↓0.1pp	32.1%	↓3.2pp
<i>Investigation not possible</i>	2.5%	1.9%	↑0.6pp	2.4%	↑0.1pp

Data up to end of June 2026

Table 3 – Child Sexual Abuse data for Suffolk

8. HATE CRIME

- 8.1 The Constabulary maintains a Hate Crime Delivery Plan aligned to the College of Policing Authorised Professional Practice (APP) for Hate Crime. This plan is overseen by the County Partnership and Prevention Hub (CPPH).

- 8.2 Suffolk Constabulary is represented at the South East Regional Hate Crime Forum and meets with regional force colleagues every quarter to discuss working practices, community tensions by exception and sharing best practice.
- 8.3 The force policy is up to date and reflects current processes and procedures.
- 8.4 Statistical data relating to hate crimes is compiled by analysts and shared both internally and with partners via the Community Safety Partnerships. This is shared every quarter and provides a breakdown of crimes and incidents, crime types, location types, victims, suspects, and crime outcomes.
- 8.5 Figure 4 below shows the crimes and incidents by quarter and provides a breakdown according to investigation type. It remains that there is no legal requirement for an individual to disclose the specific element of the protected characteristic and therefore there are some challenges in interpreting the data.
- 8.6 Suffolk has seen a slight decrease in reporting of racial hate crime during this reporting period. The graph below shows that reporting jumped in Q3 of 2024/25 and has continued at that higher level for a year. However, the overall volume remains lower than historical averages, with an improving solved rate. Racial abuse continues to be the most reported type of hate crime.

Supporting vulnerable victims		Last 12M	Previous 12M	Diff against Previous 12m	Long-term average	Diff against long-term average
Hate						
Crime						
	<i>Crime volume</i>	753	765	↓1.6%	847	↓11.1%
	<i>Solved rate</i>	19.7%	18.0%	↑1.7pp	17.2%	↑2.5pp
	<i>Solved number</i>	145	139	↑4.3%	146	↓0.7%
	<i>Victim not ready to support</i>	32.2%	33.6%	↓1.4pp	32.9%	↓0.7pp
	<i>Investigation not possible</i>	1.0%	1.9%	↓0.9pp	2.3%	↓1.3pp

Data up to end of June 2026

Fig 4 – Hate Crime in Suffolk

- 8.7 Hate Crime is a core responsibility of our Community Policing Teams (CPT), supported by the County Partnership and Prevention Hub (CPPH) and a Diverse Communities Coordinator.
- 8.8 Vulnerability, Victims, Offenders and Locations (VVOL) data and the Hate Crime Dashboard provide community policing teams the ability to identify different trends in hate crime and implement problem solving responses. Problem Solving Plans (PSPs) and Police Activity Logs (PALs) are recorded to support the policing response and are scrutinised at a Monthly Intelligence Meeting (MIM) each month.
- 8.9 The force has a Diverse Communities Coordinator post within CPPH. This role was filled in early June after being vacant for 5 months. This post holder works to build on existing relationships, developing new links with hard-to-reach communities and improving Constabulary investigation standards. They will be a subject matter expert for the force and policing teams including hate crime recording and management; supporting victims and communities subject of hate crime; and supporting problem solving.
- 8.10 The Diverse Communities Coordinator reviews all Hate Crimes and all Non-Crime Hate Incidents (NCHI) to assess the standard of recording and investigation. This not only ensures compliance with College of Policing and Home Office Guidelines, but also ensures that victim referrals have been made, expert advice provided, and any trends identified.

- 8.11 Proactive engagement with vulnerable and diverse communities is undertaken by CPT Officers, supported by the Diverse Communities Coordinator. These engagements intend to increase confidence and reporting and are the subject of scrutiny at the Neighbourhood Policing Working Group.
- 8.12 Data accuracy for Hate Crime remains a priority nationally due to challenges in the availability of information regarding protected characteristics. Victims are often reluctant to disclose voluntary information and as such the Constabulary, through CPTs and the Diverse Community Coordinator, are working to build confidence within communities to improve these disclosures locally.
- 8.13 The Constabulary is awaiting the new guidance for recording Non-Crime Hate Incidents (NCHI) once agreed by the National Police Chiefs' Council NPCC and College of Policing.

9. MODERN SLAVERY AND HUMAN TRAFFICKING (MSHT)

- 9.1 Suffolk Constabulary has Victim Liaison Officers (VLOs) across the three localities. These officers are trained to provide enhanced support when victims are either first encountered or required to assist with ongoing investigations where additional support and rapport building would be beneficial. The VLOs have continued to assist investigations either as first responders or during the ongoing process. The VLOs and the Constabulary Modern Slavery and Organised Immigration Crime Advisor (MSOICA) previously had access to the victim navigator network provided through the Eastern Region Special Operations Unit (ERSOU), but this service has recently been discontinued. As a result, the VLO initiative is currently being reviewed with a view to ongoing and future requirements, including ongoing support of the officers trained. The MSOICA has undertaken the 'Train the Trainer' course for delivering future VLO training.
- 9.2 The MSOICA continues to provide support and training to frontline officers and staff in various departments using training packages of varying duration and detail, all illustrated by Suffolk examples encompassing Modern Slavery and Organised Immigration Crime. Joint work with the County Council Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children Team continues, with fifty arrivals into Suffolk since January 2026, both through the National Transfer Scheme (NTS) and spontaneous arrivals.
- 9.3 The Advisor continues to be proactive in supporting multi-agency visits to local businesses and communities, highlighting the signs and indicators while also providing advice, support, and signposting to those affected. The Advisor undertakes regular attendance at community events and maintains good relations with media, collectively raising awareness of modern slavery and vulnerability issues to a wide-ranging local and national audience. The Advisor is proactive in developing and applying local, regional and national intelligence, in synergy with statutory requirements and guidance, to inform working with frontline staff. This includes ad hoc provision of advice through to instigating and providing support during days of action, accompanying staff on visits to provide 'at scene' Modern Slavery tactical input.
- 9.4 Operational staff across Suffolk Constabulary continue to be signposted to briefings and training on the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) process for victims of MSHT. Changes to the statutory guidance are reviewed, summarised, and disseminated to all staff promptly. Joint training with key partners has been delivered, with a reviewed process to ensure the early sharing of NRM details between agencies where appropriate.
- 9.5 Officers continue to identify potential victims of modern slavery and exploitation during the investigative stage. Many investigations are linked to criminal activities such as drug supply, labour exploitation, sexual exploitation, money laundering, fraud and immigration offences.

- 9.6 The former Constabulary Scorpion Teams regularly conducted intelligence-led visits in connection with concerns regarding sexual exploitation, seeking to provide support and reduce vulnerability. These visits are now undertaken by the new Proactive Disruption and Investigation Team and will continue. The visits are focused on live intelligence related to sex work locations, while locally led or multi-agency-based interventions target other areas of interest.
- 9.7 The grey economy is also subject to operational activity in line with national and regional taskings. On average, two to three multi-agency days of action are carried out most months and include a range of partners with differing powers. Examples of stakeholder organisations deployed during 2026 include Immigration Compliance and Enforcement (ICE), Trading Standards, HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC), Fire Services, Environmental Health, and Local Housing Officers. These multi-agency days will continue throughout 2026. Significant amounts of counterfeit goods have been seized, along with vehicles and cash. Three Closure Orders relating to vape shops have been successfully applied for, with another three orders under development. This activity collectively disrupts opportunity for exploitation. Arrests have been made under the Customs, Excise and Management Act 1979, the Modern Slavery Act, and various other associated offences. Victims have been identified and supported through use of NRMs or Duty to Notify (DtN) referrals. Protective Orders are sought at every available opportunity. The Constabulary's work in this area has received national recognition as best practice.
- 9.8 The intranet page for MSHT has been redesigned, making it easier for staff to access support and guidance when dealing with victims. This continues to be reviewed and updated with current guidance.
- 9.9 NRM figures have increased nationally over the last 12 months; however, this trend has not been reflected to the same extent in Suffolk, where numbers have increased slightly. There have been 138 NRM and DtN reports submitted from July 2025 to June 2026, with 36 submitted for the quarter April to June 2026. The highest figures are for British nationality, followed by Albanian over the year and quarter. For the year, Vietnamese nationality is the third highest figure; for the quarter, it is Romanian.

Supporting vulnerable victims	Last 12M	Previous 12M	Diff against Previous 12m	Long-term average	Diff against long-term average
Modern Slavery					
Crime					
<i>Crime volume</i>	99	59	↑67.8%	70	↑41.4%
<i>Solved rate</i>	4.3%	3.9%	↑0.4pp	4.2%	↑0.1pp
<i>Solved number</i>	4	3	↑33.3%	3	↑33.3%
<i>Charged rate</i>	4.3%	3.9%	↑0.4pp	4.2%	↑0.1pp
<i>Charged number</i>	4	3	↑33.3%	3	↑33.3%
<i>NRMs</i>	139	109	↑27.5%	127	↑9.4%

Data up to end of June 2026

Table 4 – Modern Slavery data for Suffolk

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 As our safeguarding opportunities and obligations continue to grow, and efforts to optimise public and victim confidence continue, reports and referrals grow too. The partnership Vulnerability landscape is also growing in scale and complexity, so the Constabulary must continue to adjust and adapt, through ways of working, harnessing partnerships and technology innovation. Each of these represents some level of financial pressure.

11. OTHER IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

11.1 None.

12. CHIEF OFFICER CONCLUSION

12.1 Suffolk Constabulary continues to prioritise the support provided to vulnerable victims, ensuring they receive clear information, timely updates, and appropriate assistance throughout their journey in the criminal justice process. The force's work is guided by the Victims' Code of Practice, the Police and Crime Plan, and strong partnership arrangements across policing, local authorities, the CPS, health services, and the voluntary sector.

12.2 Overall compliance with the Victims' Code remains strong, and dashboard tools are helping teams monitor performance and improve consistency. Specialist teams continue to make progress in key areas such as domestic abuse, sexual offences, stalking, hate crime, and modern slavery. Protective orders are used effectively, victim engagement in Rape and Serious Sexual Offence investigations has strengthened, and multi-agency activity to support victims of exploitation and modern slavery continues to be recognised as good practice.

12.3 The increasing use of ancillary orders shows a whole-system approach to safeguarding but also represents new and significant monitoring and enforcement requirements, which must be absorbed into already stretched resources.

12.4 System-wide pressures continue to affect victims' experience, particularly the significant delays in both Crown and Magistrates' Courts, which have led to increased workloads for the Victim and Witness Care Unit. In addition, the force continues to work with health partners to address wider safeguarding and support challenges.

12.5 Despite these pressures, Suffolk Constabulary remains committed to improving services for vulnerable victims. Ongoing development of specialist training, improved partnership structures, and additional resources in key areas are supporting this work, ensuring that victims receive a compassionate, consistent, and effective service.

12.6 Suffolk Constabulary has recently established Operation Sika to oversee a comprehensive programme of improvement focused on strengthening domestic abuse risk assessment, safeguarding arrangements, governance and performance oversight. The programme has been developed as part of the force's ongoing commitment to ensuring vulnerable victims receive consistent, effective and victim-centred safeguarding and support.

12.7 Early activity has included enhanced governance and oversight arrangements, the introduction of additional audit and scrutiny processes, strengthened supervisory review of domestic abuse risk assessments, and the development of improved performance monitoring. A detailed review of domestic abuse investigations and risk assessment practices has also been completed, providing valuable organisational learning and helping to identify opportunities to further strengthen safeguarding arrangements.

12.8 Alongside this work, the Constabulary is progressing the development of a Domestic Abuse Secondary Risk Assessment model designed to improve the identification of cumulative risk, repeat victimisation and escalating patterns of abuse. Work is also underway to enhance the use of police-held information, improve intelligence and research products, and strengthen the use of technology to better identify vulnerability and support safeguarding decision-making.

- 12.9 The programme is complemented by a review of wider safeguarding and vulnerability governance, operating models and organisational ownership arrangements. Together, these programmes are improving the Constabulary's understanding of risk, strengthening organisational oversight and providing greater assurance that vulnerable victims receive the right safeguarding intervention, from the right service, at the earliest opportunity.