SUFFOLK CONSTABULARY

ORIGINATOR: CHIEF CONSTABLE	**PAPER NO: AP26/50**

SUBMITTED TO:	**ACCOUNTABILITY AND PERFORMANCE PANEL – 20 NOVEMBER 2026**

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 1 September 2025 to 31 August 2026.

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 key Constabulary commitment within the Police and Crime Plan 2025–2029 and a priority within the Chief Constable's Force Strategic Plan 2023–2028.

1.2 The Constabulary recognises that an effective response to serious violence is essential to keeping people safe, protecting individuals from harm, supporting victims, and building trust, confidence and satisfaction in policing services.

1.3 The Serious Violence Duty is delivered through a multi-agency partnership, bringing together relevant services to share information and coordinate targeted interventions to prevent and reduce serious violence within local communities. The Serious Violence Strategic Needs Assessment is produced by the Suffolk Office of Data and Analytics (SODA). Data capture and analysis is ongoing to produce the next assessment in January 2027.

1.4 The Home Office Serious Violence Strategy defines serious violence as including offences such as homicide, knife crime and gun crime, as well as areas of criminality where serious violence or its threat is inherent, including gangs and County Lines drug dealing. It also recognises emerging threats, such as the use of corrosive substances as weapons.

1.5 This report includes violence without injury. Although not classified as serious violence, its inclusion supports a broader assessment of Suffolk's overall performance and response to violence, providing reassurance that reductions in serious violent offending have not resulted in a corresponding increase in other forms of violence.

1.6 The primary offence types and themes covered in this report are:

- Violence with injury.
- Violence without injury.
- Knife crime.
- County Lines.
- Clear, Hold, Build.

1.7 While serious sexual offences and domestic abuse may fall within the wider definition of serious violence, these are reported separately in the Supporting Vulnerable Victims report. Other areas, including child exploitation and gangs, are covered in the Supporting Children and Young People report. Reference is made, where relevant, to activity addressing Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG), including initiatives such as Project Vigilant.

2. SERIOUS VIOLENCE REDUCTION

2.1 The Constabulary maintains both internal governance and contributes to external partnership structures to oversee and coordinate the response to serious violence.

2.2 Criminal Exploitation Steering Group: Directs and monitors the partnership response to criminal exploitation, including individuals who are victims of both criminal and sexual exploitation, as well as those involved in County Lines activity.

2.3 Violence Against Women and Girls Steering Group: Oversees the partnership response to violence against women and girls across the county. It is supported by the Violence Against Women and Girls+ strategy and a system-wide action plan, including community engagement, diversion and intervention activity, and coordinated multi-agency responses. The group reports into the Safer Stronger Communities Board.

2.4 Combatting Drugs: Brings together partners across Suffolk to deliver an action plan aligned with national requirements. A current focus is improving access to support for Class A drug users at increased risk from synthetic opioids, which have been linked to rising deaths nationally.

2.5 Serious Violence Duty Meeting: Steers activity and ensures all requirements of the Duty are met, making decisions on behalf of the Suffolk system with a focus on evidence-based interventions.

2.6 In addition, the following internal governance structures support the Constabulary's strategic and tactical response.

2.7 Force Performance Meeting: Reviews overall performance, including comparison with national data and Most Similar Group forces.

2.8 Local Policing Board: Reviews performance at force, command and area level, including crime trends and solved rates, and tracks both internal and partnership activity to drive improvement.

2.9 Domestic Abuse Delivery Group: Directs the force response to domestic abuse, which represents a significant proportion of violent crime.

2.10 Violence Against Women and Girls Governance: Oversees the Constabulary's organisational and operational response, ensuring learning from published reports is embedded.

2.11 Drugs Board: Directs and monitors the response to drugs, including prevention activity and targeted enforcement across the county.

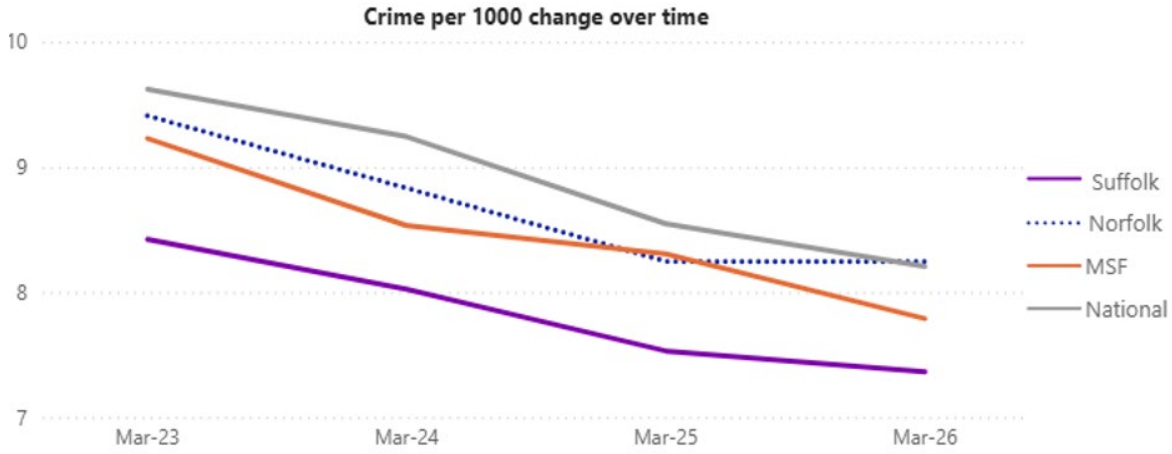
2.12 Tactical Tasking and Co-ordination Groups: Monthly meetings at both force and command level that monitor violence and direct activity and resources to identified hotspots, repeat victims, offenders and locations. The force-level meeting also oversees progress of Clear, Hold, Build.

2.13 Clear, Hold, Build Strategic Group: A monthly meeting of internal and external stakeholders, co-chaired by Local Policing Chief Superintendents, providing strategic oversight.

3. PERFORMANCE OVERVIEW

3.1 Suffolk's performance in relation to serious violence remains consistently better than both the national and Most Similar Group (MSG) averages.

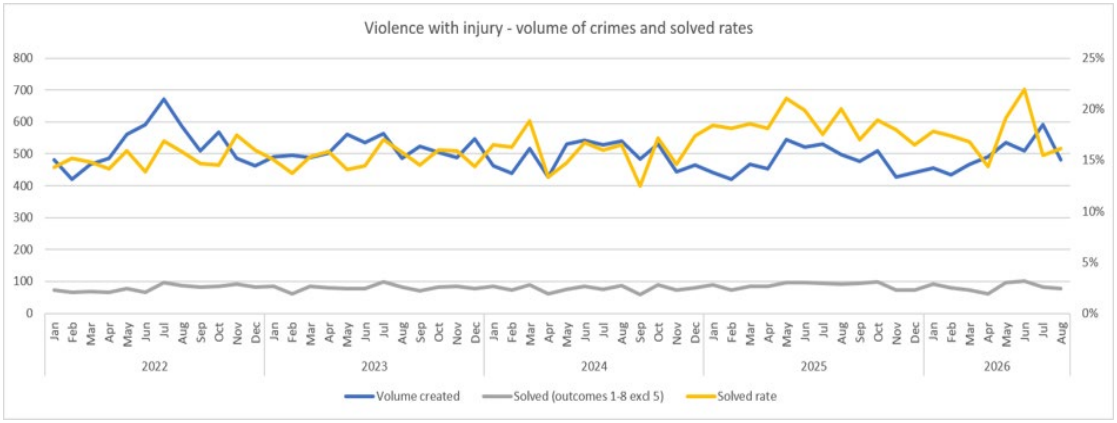
3.2 The table below shows Suffolk's rate of violence with injury per 1,000 population, compared with the national average and its Most Similar Group (MSG) of forces (Norfolk, Warwickshire, North Yorkshire, Wiltshire, and Devon and Cornwall). Suffolk consistently records fewer offences than both Norfolk and the national average. While the gap with MSG forces narrowed from 2022, Suffolk still records the lowest crime rates across the comparison forces.



ONS figures showing amount of violence with injury crimes per 1,000 population for the 12 months to the end of March 2026 compared with 12 months to the end of March 2025, March 2024, and March 2023. Comparison is of Suffolk against neighbouring force Norfolk, Suffolk's Most Similar Group, and National rates.

Violence with Injury

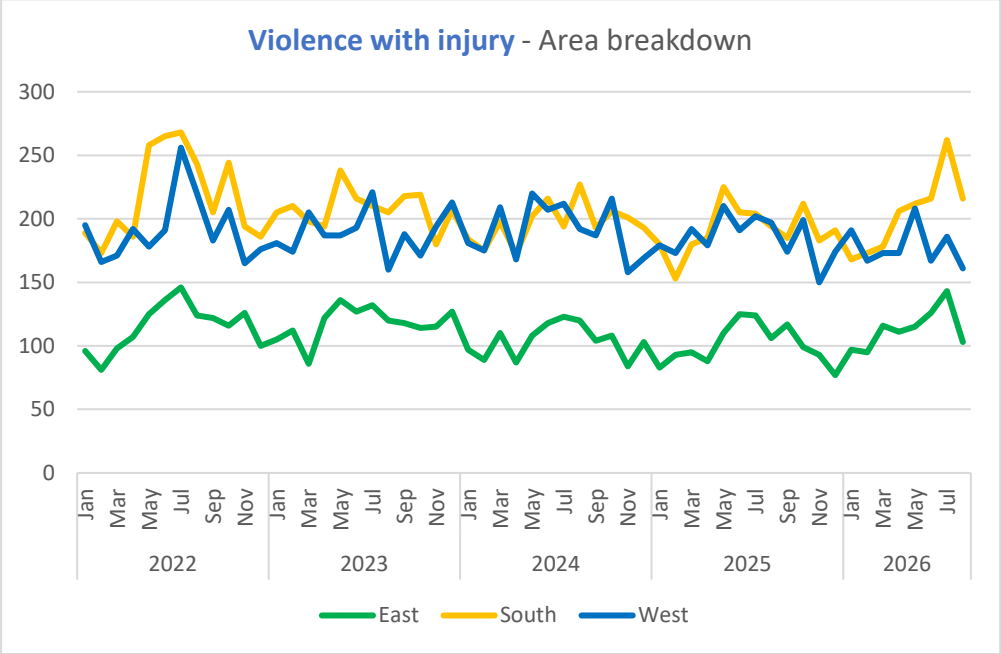
3.3 The chart below shows violence with injury offences and solved rates at county level. Summer 2026 showed a continued rise and peak following summer 2025. However, a corresponding solved peak in July and August demonstrated the response to the increased levels of violence recorded. A Combination of increased heat, summer events and national rises in recorded offences all align with the figures seen in Suffolk.



Monthly figures for Violence with Injury crimes and solved rates across Suffolk, 01/01/2022 to 31/08/2026

3.4 The solved rate has remained at 17.8% compared to the previous 12 months. This represents a positive trend over time, with an increase of around 2% and continues to be monitored through internal governance structures. Improvements in investigative practices, greater use of out-of-court resolutions, and enhanced victim engagement have contributed to this increase.

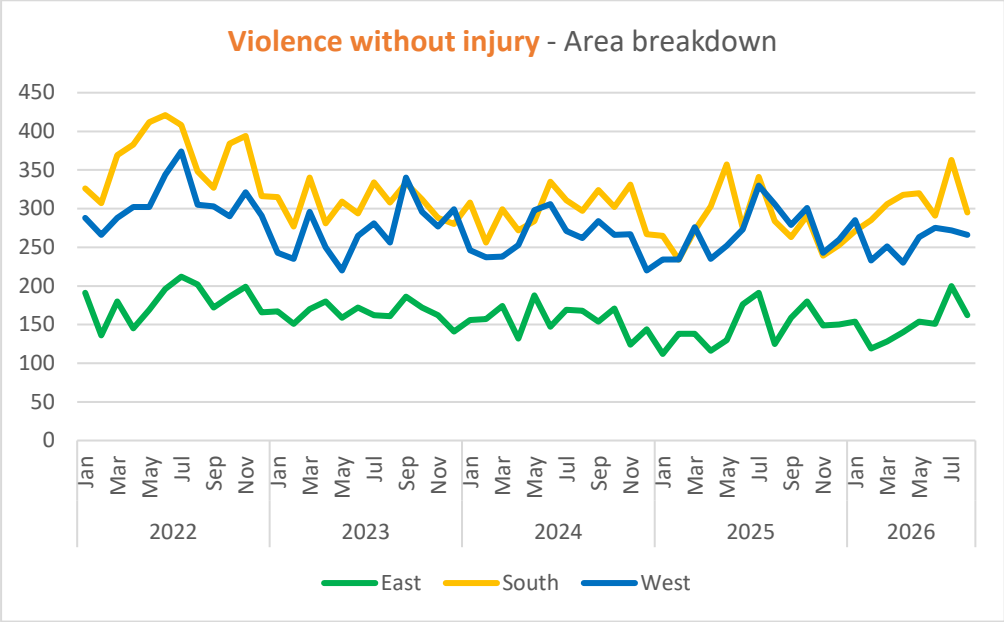
3.5 The chart below shows the longer-term trend in violence with injury across the three geographical command areas over the last four years. Recent increases in the South follow a period of sustained reduction and a lower-than-average early 2026. West and East remain relatively stable following established seasonal trends.



Monthly volumes of Violence with Injury crimes by geographical command area of Suffolk. Data from 01/01/2022 to 31/08/2026.

Violence without injury

3.6 The chart below shows levels of violence without injury from 2022 to 2026 across the three geographical command areas. As noted previously, offences peaked in 2022 following reduced levels during the pandemic and have declined on average since. Summer of 2026 showed a similar trajectory to the violence with injury data across the South and East but remained lower than average in the West.



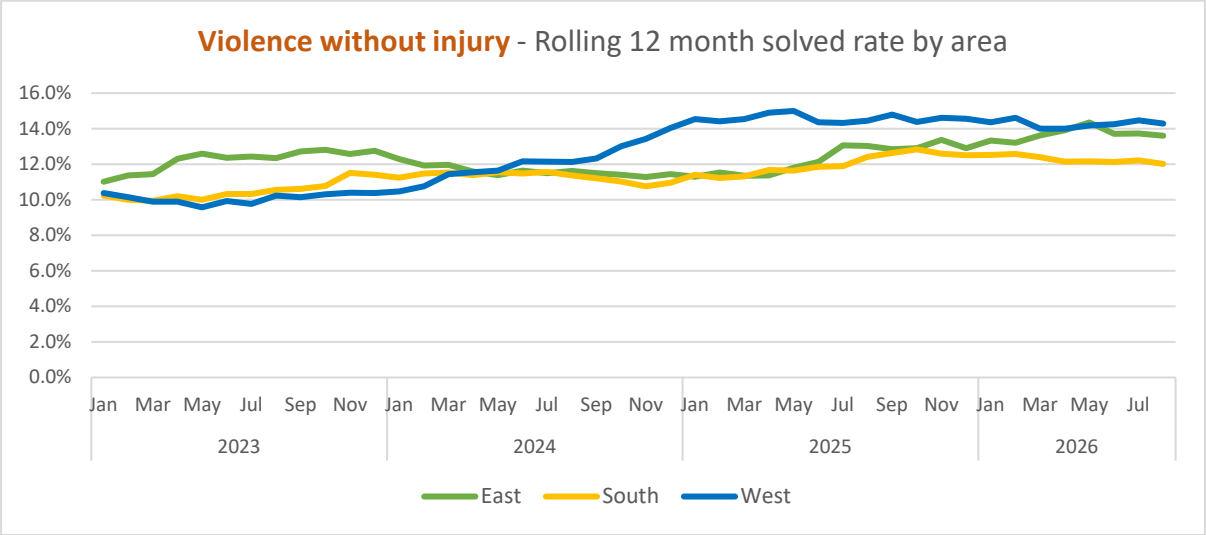
Monthly volumes of Violence without Injury crimes by geographical command area of Suffolk. Data from 01/01/2022 to 31/08/2026.

3.7 The chart below compares violence with and without injury for the last and preceding 12 months (1 September 2024 to 31 August 2025 & 1 September 2025 to 31 August 2026), including percentage differences across the three geographical command areas. Overall, violence has increased marginally across Suffolk by 70 offences over the last 12 months. This returns the overall total to the level seen in 2024/5. Reductions in violence with injury have been seen across the West.

		L12M	P12M	Percent difference
Violence with injury	East	1292	1223	5.6%
	South	2402	2319	3.6%
	West	2123	2253	-5.8%
Violence without injury	East	1846	1719	7.4%
	South	3495	3555	-1.7%
	West	3158	3177	-0.6%

Table showing violence with and without injury by geographical command area for the last 12 months (01/09/2025 – 31/08/2026) and previous 12 months (01/09/2024 – 31/08/2025), and the percentage difference.

3.8 The graph and table below show solved rates for violence without injury broken down across the three geographical command areas over the last three years, alongside total positive outcomes across Suffolk. The overall solved rate has reduced by 0.1% to 13.2%.



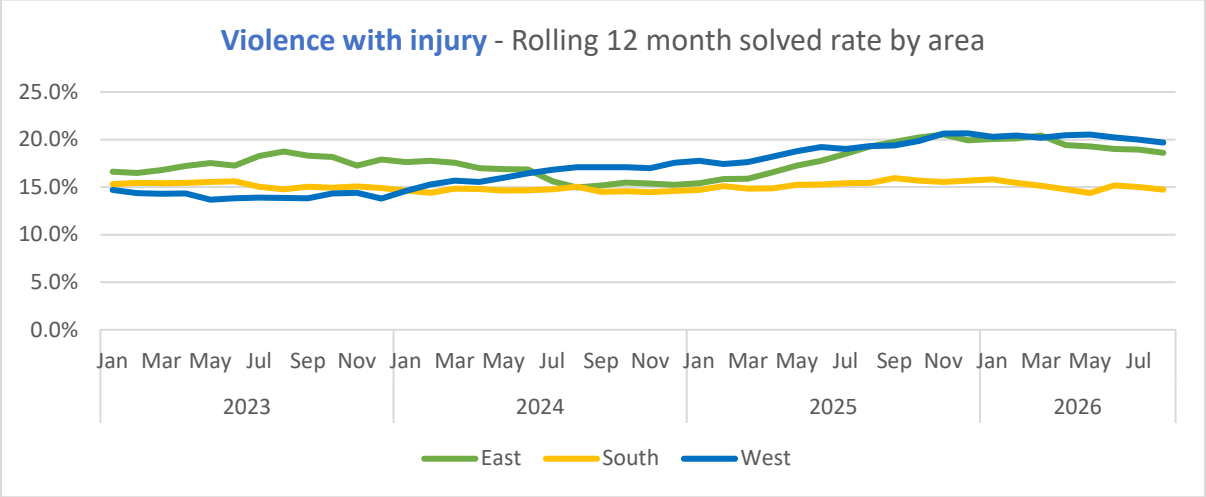
Violence without injury rolling solved rates by geographical command area. Solved rates are calculated for rolling 12-month periods.

Solved rate		L12M	P12M	Percent difference
Violence without injury	Total created	8499	8451	0.6%
	Total disposed	8472	8350	1.5%
	Solved (Type 1-8, excl 5)	1119	1110	0.8%
	Solved Rate	13.2%	13.3%	-0.1pp

Table showing violence without injury volumes and solved rate for the last 12 months (01/09/2025 – 31/08/2026) and previous 12 months (01/09/2024 – 31/08/2025), and the percentage difference.

3.9 The Constabulary continues to demonstrate overall improvement in solved outcomes across all crime types. The enhancement of investigative standards is strategically overseen by the Investigative Standards Board, chaired by the Suffolk Assistant Chief Constable, and supported by dedicated sub-groups. These sub-groups are tasked with driving continuous improvement in investigative practices to support the delivery of positive outcomes.

3.10 The graph below shows the solved rates of violence with injury over the last three years across the three geographical command areas. The solved crime rate across the three geographical areas has reduced marginally to 17.5%.



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

3.11 The table below illustrates the overall numbers of positive outcomes across Suffolk for the last, and previous 12 months.

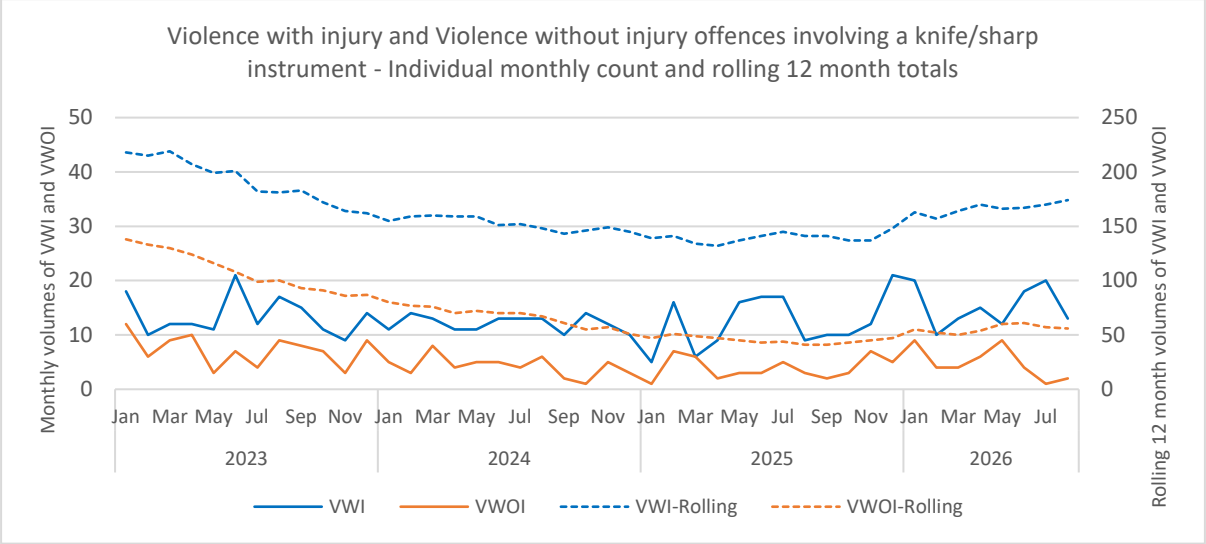
Solved rate		L12M	P12M	Percent difference
Violence with injury	Total created	5817	5795	0.4%
	Total disposed	5744	5704	0.7%
	Solved (Type 1-8, excl 5)	1003	1012	-0.9%
	Solved Rate	17.5%	17.7%	-0.3pp

Table showing violence with injury volumes and solved rate for the last 12 months (01/09/2025 – 31/08/2026) and previous 12 months (01/09/2024 – 31/08/2025), and the percentage difference.

4. KNIFE CRIME

4.1 Suffolk remains among the safest areas in the country in relation to knife crime, with a rate of 0.41 offences per 1,000 population (12 months to end September 2025). This places Suffolk among the lowest in England and Wales (9th) and third within its Most Similar Group (MSG). The rate is significantly below the national average and lower than those seen in many metropolitan areas. This reflects the continued efforts of the Constabulary, supported by strong community partnerships and targeted prevention and intervention activity.

4.2 The below chart demonstrates the sustained reduction in knife-related violence over the past three years. Both violence with injury (VWI) and violence without injury (VWOI) involving knives have shown a general downward trend from 2023 into 2024, followed by a period of stabilisation through 2025 with a slight uptick emerging through 2026. The dotted lines, representing rolling 12-month totals, indicate an overall slight rise from the previous two years of falling numbers, but not back to levels seen in 2023. Ongoing monitoring and strong prevention work is key to ensuring these figures do not continue to rise.



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

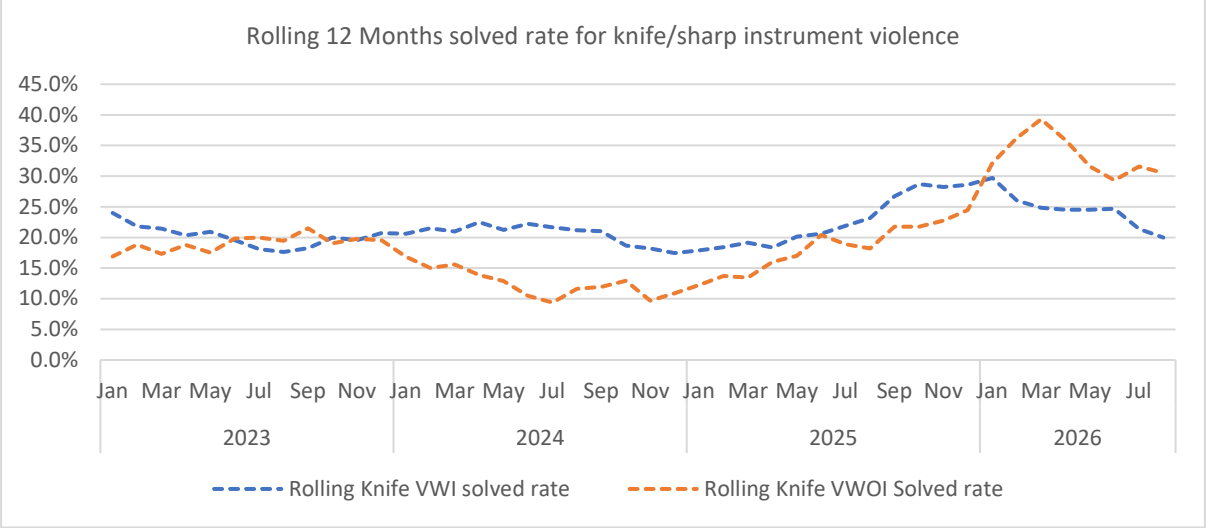
		L12M	P12M	Percent difference
Violence with injury	**County**	**174**	**141**	**23.4%**
	East	30	23	30.4%
	South	73	63	15.9%
	West	71	55	29.1%
Violence without injury	**County**	**56**	**41**	**36.6%**
	East	6	8	-25.0%
	South	32	16	100.0%
	West	18	17	5.9%

Table showing knife-related violence with injury and violence without injury volumes for the last 12 months (01/03/2025 – 28/02/2026) and previous 12 months (01/03/2024 – 28/02/2025) by geographical command area, and the percentage differences.

4.3 The table above presents knife-related violence with injury (VWI) and violence without injury (VWOI) across the last 12 months compared to the previous year by geographical command area. Overall, there has been a slight increase in knife related violence across the county, with VWI rising in all three areas. However, these increases are based on relatively low volumes, and when viewed over a longer timeframe, the position still reflects a reduction over the past three years**.**

4.4 In the areas, where the Clear, Hold, Build initiative is being delivered, increased police activity and focus during this reporting period is likely to have influenced recorded levels. Knife-related offending will continue to be closely monitored as the programme progresses. Given the small number of offences in Suffolk, even minor fluctuations can result in disproportionately large percentage changes, and this context should be considered when interpreting the data.

4.5 The chart below illustrates the rolling 12-month solved rates for knife-enabled violence, split between Violence with Injury (VWI) and Violence without Injury (VWOI). Solved rates fluctuate over time, with VWI remaining relatively stable within a consistent range. In contrast, VWOI shows greater variability, declining through 2023–2024 before improving through 2025 and into early 2026. A noticeable uplift in VWOI solved rates is evident in the most recent period, aligning with targeted operational activity associated with Clear, Hold, Build. Overall, the position reflects stable performance in VWI outcomes and an improving trajectory in VWOI, suggesting that focused investigative effort and proactive policing activity are contributing to enhanced results.



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

Operation Sceptre

4.6 Operation Sceptre was delivered in May 2026 and demonstrated a continued proactive approach to preventing and tackling knife crime across Suffolk. Activity included knife amnesties, weapons sweeps, targeted hotspot patrols, retail engagement, and community education. More than 700 knives and weapons were surrendered through amnesty bins, while

specialist resources, including a DK9 weapons dog, supported the recovery of additional weapons during patrols and sweeps.
The operation also focused on early intervention and prevention, including the use of virtual reality technology to deliver knife crime education to a young person identified as being at high risk of exploitation and previously involved in knife crime. Joint engagement with Youth Justice Services, community awareness events, and visits to 61 retailers further supported prevention and safeguarding objectives. Ongoing enforcement, education, and partnership activity will continue to reduce opportunities for knife crime and enhance community safety. Planning is currently taking place for the November 2026 Delivery.

Knife Crime Lead

4.7 A new Knife Crime Lead at Detective Chief Inspector level has been appointed to drive the development and coordination of Suffolk's Knife Crime Reduction Plan. This will align with the Serious Violence Duty and be delivered in partnership with County Policing Command (CPC) and the Community Partnership and Prevention Hub (CPPH). A key element of this work is the introduction of a structured, mandatory support pathway for any child identified as carrying a knife, delivered collaboratively across policing, education and youth justice partners, which launched on 1 April 2026.

Clear, Hold, Build (CHB)

4.8 Clear, Hold, Build (CHB) is a whole system approach delivered operationally to strengthen the local response to Serious and Organised Crime (SOC). It is a preventative, partnership-led model requiring active engagement from statutory, third sector and private sector partners. This Home Office initiative aims to reduce SOC threats while building sustainable community resilience and long-term safety.

4.9 CHB Felixstowe: Following successful Clear and Hold phases, responsibility for CHB Felixstowe has transitioned to local partners and now sits within the Community Safety Partnership. The Constabulary remains a key partner in supporting the area following a successful build initiative and regeneration in the area.

4.10 CHB Newmarket: Following successful Clear and Hold phases, responsibility for CHB Newmarket has transitioned to local partners and now sits within the Community Safety Partnership. The Constabulary remains a key partner in supporting ongoing Build activity, and progress continues to be monitored.

4.11 CHB Ipswich: The Strategic Delivery Group (SDG) was established in December 2024 with Ipswich Borough Council and Suffolk County Council. In February 2025, the CHB site was defined, focusing on areas within the Gipping and Westgate wards.

4.12 Joint operations have been delivered under Operations Foxtail, Spotlight, Sceptre and Machinize2, alongside intelligence-led days of action targeting traffic enforcement and County Lines Intensification Week (CLIW).

4.13 During this reporting period, CHB Ipswich continues to deliver high numbers of disruptions against organised crime (averaging 25 per month). It continues to lead the way in terms of disruptions, across Suffolk Constabulary. The disruptions have been moderated through a validation process, demonstrating sustained activity across all four strands of the 4P framework: Pursue, Protect, Prevent and Prepare. This does not include additional activity delivered through related operations targeting drugs and other organised crime. In total, over 500 activities or disruptions have been logged.

4.14 In the 18 months since the launch of CHB in Ipswich, enforcement and partnership activity has resulted in 257 arrests (43 resulting in charge), 60 convictions totalling over 100 years of custodial sentences, 21 recalls to prison and 6 deportations.

4.15 Significant seizures include 121 weapons (including crossbows, knives and two imitation firearms), £66,500 recovered under the Proceeds of Crime Act (POCA), 147 drug seizures, and seized 116 vehicles. Two large-scale cannabis factories were identified and closed, with offenders charged, four brothels were closed with immediate safeguarding measures put in place for victims and two shops operating beyond their licenses have been closed.

4.16 Officers have conducted multiple premises visits and cuckooing checks, leading to the safeguarding of vulnerable occupants and children linked to these addresses through the use of Police Protection Order (PPO) powers.

4.17 Community engagement and multi-agency collaboration have supported longer-term resilience. The intention now is to transition towards the hold phase of the initiative, working alongside partners at the council to establish a sustainable and intelligence-led area of focus that will support the long-term embedding of activity and community resilience.

County Lines Intensification Week

4.18 A coordinated County Lines Intensification Week was delivered between 2 and 8 March 2026, underpinned by the 4P framework and strong partnership working across policing and wider agencies. Enforcement activity resulted in 24 arrests, multiple warrants, the seizure of significant quantities of Class A and B drugs, several thousand pounds in cash, and over 50 mobile phones—leading to the closure of seven active drug lines and disruption of further networks**.** Additional outcomes included the recovery of multiple weapons and the seizure of seven dangerous dogs, alongside joint activity at HMP Highpoint targeting the supply of contraband.

4.19 Prevent and Protect activity focused on safeguarding and awareness, including 27 engagements with educational settings and 19 targeted visits linked to cuckooing, resulting in the safeguarding of vulnerable individuals across multiple locations. Prepare activity further strengthened the multi-agency response, with Operation MakeSafe briefings delivered to 80 participants across policing and partner organisations. Collectively, this activity demonstrates a comprehensive, intelligence-led approach**,** delivering both immediate enforcement outcomes and longer-term disruption and resilience against county lines offending.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 No new financial implications.

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 Suffolk Constabulary continues to deliver a strong, partnership-led and intelligence driven response to serious violence, underpinned by clear governance, effective multi-agency collaboration, and alignment with both national strategy and local priorities. Performance remains consistently better than national and Most Similar Group benchmarks, with sustained reductions in violence over the longer term and continued improvements in solved rates,

reflecting enhanced investigative standards, proactive policing activity and a focus on victim engagement.

7.2 The value of the investment into Clear, Hold, Build locations with partners and targeted initiatives such as County Lines activity are realising positive operational outcomes and impact on crime levels including violence. Op Vigilant and Op MakeSafe are good examples of strengthened safeguarding and prevention approaches to support vulnerable victims and future victims.

7.3 However, the picture remains dynamic and demand-led, with some areas showing stabilisation or marginal increases following earlier reductions, particularly in knife-related violence. The Constabulary continues to respond proactively through focused enforcement, prevention, and early intervention through Op Sceptre, supported by strong partnership working and evolving analytical insight.

7.4 Overall, Suffolk remains a safe and low-risk force area. Maintaining this position will require sustained focus on early prevention, data-driven tasking, and coordinated partnership delivery to address emerging risks and ensure continued reductions in harm.