His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary
and Fire & Rescue Services

# PEEL 2021/22

An inspection of the eastern regional response to serious and organised crime

# Contents

# Introduction

## About our inspection

As part of our police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy (PEEL) inspections, we inspected how well police forces tackle serious and organised crime (SOC). In 2022, we changed how we inspect this aspect of policing, to incorporate inspections of the ten regions, as well as the nine regional organised crime units (ROCUs) throughout England and Wales, and the 43 police forces. This improves our understanding of how well forces and ROCUs work together to tackle SOC.

## About us

His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) independently assesses the effectiveness and efficiency of police forces and fire and rescue services, in the public interest. In preparing our reports, we ask the questions that the public would ask, and publish the answers in an accessible form. We use our expertise to interpret the evidence and make recommendations for improvement.

## About our report

This report includes sections on the following:

- Regional findings – a summary of inspection evidence that identifies good or poor performance within the region; in other words, involving or relating to the ROCU and its constituent forces. The performance of the region isn't given a graded judgement. Instead, we highlight areas for improvement, causes of concern, and innovative and promising practice in this section, where applicable.

- The ROCU and individual forces – the ROCU and each individual force are given a graded judgment, with a summary of the findings from our inspection and highlighted sections for areas for improvement, causes of concern, and innovative and promising practice.

## About ROCUs

Each ROCU serves between three and seven constituent forces (see map in Appendix 1).

The Strategic Policing Requirement defines ROCUs as:

> "The primary interface between the NCA (National Crime Agency) and policing, supporting the co-ordination and tasking of the collective effort against the serious and organised crime threat."

The Government's 2018 SOC strategy states that ROCUs should:

> "Lead the operational response to serious and organised crime on behalf of forces within their regions, taking tasking from the NCA on national priorities, and working together in a more networked way, allowing capacity and capability to be shared where appropriate."

Police forces should work closely with ROCUs, following the objective set out in the national *Serious and Organised Crime Strategy* to achieve a 'whole system' approach to tackling SOC. ROCUs provide a range of specialist capabilities to forces. These include the regional organised crime threat assessment units (ROCTAs), surveillance, undercover policing, sensitive intelligence units, regional asset recovery teams, cybercrime teams, the Government Agency Intelligence Network (GAIN), prison intelligence units and others.

ROCUs are set up under collaboration agreements (made under section 22A of the Police Act 1996) between the chief constables and police and crime commissioners (PCCs) in each region. ROCUs are not statutory bodies. They rely on forces to supply the administrative and support functions they need, including human resources, finance and IT. As a result, each ROCU is set up differently, under different terms of collaboration.

Each ROCU's financing is largely given by chief constables and PCCs, with additional financing from the Home Office. In each region, forces negotiate their financial contribution to the ROCU.

## Changes to how SOC threats are managed nationally

Our previous PEEL inspection reports have referred to how well forces have managed and mapped or assessed organised crime groups (OCGs).

In this report, we refer to SOC threats, which encompass OCGs, SOC priority individuals and SOC vulnerabilities.

This reflects changes introduced nationally in response to the SOC strategy's goal to provide a "single picture of demand". This has been achieved by establishing a national database of SOC threats, which holds information from the NCA, ROCUs, police forces and government agencies that tackle SOC. This database is referred to as the SOC master list and is used to assess which SOC threat is a priority for each agency or force.

# Regional findings

The eastern region consists of seven forces (Bedfordshire Police, Cambridgeshire Constabulary, Essex Police, Hertfordshire Constabulary, Kent Police, Norfolk Constabulary and Suffolk Constabulary) and their ROCU, the Eastern Region Special Operations Unit (ERSOU).

ERSOU has two main functions: ROCU and counterterrorism policing. Forces in the region have agreed to collaborate on several specialist functions to tackle SOC, including undercover policing, cybercrime, economic crime and money laundering. In addition, Kent Police and Essex Police collaborate in their serious crime directorate, providing joint investigative and SOC capabilities.

## ERSOU should take more of a leadership role to improve how it operates and shares best practice

The National Police Chiefs' Council has set out a plan for the ROCUs to improve how coherent, consistent and connected they are. While we found evidence that ERSOU was providing some leadership in these three areas, there are some ways in which this could be enhanced.

During this inspection we found some distinct differences in how forces tackled SOC and the extent to which they worked with ERSOU and the other forces in their region. ERSOU needs to do more, with its constituent forces, to improve regional performance. They are best placed to highlight good practice, make sure learning is shared and promote greater consistency across the eastern region.

**Area for improvement: Eastern Region Special Operations Unit (ERSOU) and its constituent forces should improve how the region works to tackle serious and organised crime (SOC)**

ERSOU, with constituent forces, should:

- improve the effectiveness of the lead responsible officer (LRO) role;
- improve the quality and consistency of 4P plans;
- improve partnership structures across the region;
- improve how SOC disruptions are recorded to accurately reflect regional performance; and
- identify and promote good practice.

LROs should prepare 4P plans to manage SOC threats. These plans are important and should support joint working with relevant partner organisations. The content and quality of the operational 4P plans we reviewed across the region was inconsistent. We found that LROs in some forces were more effective in this area than others.

We found that relationships with partner organisations varied between forces. While some forces appeared to have effective arrangements, others struggled to share information and promote joint working, when appropriate.

ERSOU and its constituent forces record SOC disruption data in different ways. Consequently, it is difficult for the region to fully understand how effectively SOC is being tackled.

ERSOU is good at recording and analysing disruption data relating to its own investigations. It should work with constituent forces to help them improve their recording of disruption data.

**Area for improvement: Eastern Region Special Operations Unit (ERSOU) and its constituent forces should improve how they procure and deploy technical surveillance equipment**

Technical Surveillance Units (TSUs) provide specialist surveillance equipment to support organised crime investigations. In the eastern region, ERSOU and the constituent forces have retained their own individual TSUs.

Most other regions have collaborated fully on the provision of technical surveillance. This has allowed efficient methods of buying equipment. It also makes sure that equipment is compatible and can be shared across the region.

ERSOU and its constituent forces should consider following the approach of other regional organised crime units, by collaborating in a single regional TSU.

**The assessment of SOC threats is inconsistent throughout the region**

The region mostly uses MoRiLE to assess SOC threats. However, we found that some forces were using a different method of assessment for crime groups involved in county lines drug trafficking. They explained that this was a more appropriate tool to deal with the county lines threat, which can be dynamic and less structured than established OCGs. While we understand why forces are taking a pragmatic approach to assessing and managing this criminality, it would be better if this was consistent across the region.

**The legal agreement that establishes regional collaboration is out of date and should be refreshed**

There is a collaboration agreement in place between the constituent forces to manage how ERSOU operates. We found that this agreement hadn't been updated since September 2016 and was out of date. For example, the agreement states that undercover policing is a five-force arrangement when in fact it now includes all seven forces. ERSOU should update the agreement to reflect its current collaborative arrangements.

# Eastern Region Special Operations Unit (ERSOU)

Good

ERSOU is good at tackling serious and organised crime.

## Understanding SOC and setting priorities to tackle it

**ERSOU has developed its intelligence collection to better understand the regional threat from SOC**

At the time of our inspection, ERSOU's intelligence department was growing. This is to enhance its ability to use covert techniques to collect sensitive intelligence. ERSOU has identified gaps in its understanding of some SOC threats and is striving to fill these gaps.

ERSOU has established a regional anti-corruption intelligence unit (RACIU), the first of its kind in England and Wales. The unit became fully operational in January 2022. The RACIU works with force countercorruption units, the sensitive intelligence unit (SIU), the NCA, and HM Prison and Probation Service to improve understanding of corruption across the region. It relies on these partner organisations to investigate any corruption it uncovers. The RACIU conducted a capability review and commissioned Merseyside Police to undertake a peer review. Both reviews have recommended that the unit should have its own officers to investigate corruption. The Merseyside Police review recognised one of the methods developed in the RACIU to identify corruption as good practice.

ERSOU also has a regional unit dedicated to the management of covert human intelligence sources, introduced in January 2022. While still in its infancy, the unit appears to have an adequate level of staffing and links with other intelligence units in the ROCU, for example the SIU and the RACIU.

It is too early to assess how effective these new capabilities are. However, we will be interested to see how these improve ROCU performance, and whether similar units are introduced in other ROCUs across England and Wales.

**All forces in the region use the same system for recording intelligence**

ERSOU and all regional forces use the Athena IT system to manage intelligence. This supports effective intelligence sharing across the region. Each identified OCG is researched for available intelligence, including any OCGs monitored by the SIU. This makes sure that the risk each group poses is fully understood.

ERSOU has also introduced a seven-force intranet site to keep officers and staff connected with key messages.

**ERSOU uses technology to analyse its performance against OCGs**

ERSOU records and analyses disruption data. It uses software, such as Power BI, to provide managers with information to help them understand how effective they are. Managers also use this data in tasking and co-ordinating meetings to prioritise operational activity.

## Resources and skills

An assistant chief constable has regional responsibility for ERSOU and counterterrorism policing. ERSOU shares premises with the NCA. This is designed to improve working practices and learning as well as sharing of innovation and good practice.

**ERSOU has capability to conduct financial investigations, but can't always support forces**

Overall, we found investigators were using the powers available under the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 appropriately. In the year ending 31 May 2022, ERSOU's financial investigations department recorded the largest number of disruptions compared to the other ROCUs.

Two main roles are required to conduct financial enquiries in SOC investigations: financial intelligence officers conduct basic financial checks, such as checking bank accounts; financial investigators conduct post-arrest investigations and confiscation of criminal assets, and require additional training.

ERSOU's financial investigations department finds it difficult to meet all regional demands. Some forces have moved all the financial investigators into ERSOU, expecting ERSOU to conduct all financial enquiries on their behalf. This demand on ERSOU is greater than its investigative capacity. ERSOU should work with constituent forces to agree how it can better meet regional demand.

**ERSOU seeks to improve its workforce**

Following a workforce review in 2020, ERSOU introduced an agile working protocol. This approach to greater flexibility in working practices has improved the wellbeing of staff. It has also helped to reduce one of the main barriers to joining ERSOU: travel. This has increased the level of interest from candidates in joining the unit.

ERSOU also conducts regular analysis of the training required, and held, by its staff, to make sure they have the skills needed to be effective in their roles.

## Tackling SOC and safeguarding people and communities

**Area for improvement: Eastern Region Special Operations Unit (ERSOU) needs to improve the way that the region manages organised criminals in prison**

At the time of our inspection, responsibility for the regional prison intelligence unit (RPIU) was passing from the counterterrorism unit to the organised crime unit within ERSOU. It was acknowledged by senior management in ERSOU that some organised criminals weren't being effectively managed while in prison.

The RPIU should:

- map and monitor high-threat individuals in prison;

- make full use of available covert resources to disrupt offenders in prison;

- manage offenders in conjunction with HM Probation Service; and

- manage ancillary orders to prevent organised criminals continuing to commit crime.

Since our inspection, ERSOU has updated that the handover of the RPIU is now complete. It states that this now means that the highest-harm offenders are prioritised for management. We were unable to assess the effectiveness of this change.

**ERSOU debriefs its teams about SOC operations to learn and improve**

ERSOU conducts a review of SOC investigations every 28 days. This involves scrutiny of progress, appropriate use of covert tactics and compliance with legislation. Identified learning is shared via its intranet. We were shown a debrief report for a joint operation between ERSOU and Bedfordshire Police. This was thorough and identified learning from ERSOU and the force.

ERSOU has a protocol to debrief its teams about all reported incidents of kidnap and extortion. It uses trained personnel to identify the learning from the associated operations. Other ROCUs may benefit from adopting this practice.

**ERSOU is good at disrupting SOC threats**

In the year ending 31 May 2022, ERSOU led 651 disruptions against SOC threats. Most of these disruptions were categorised as activities to pursue offenders. However, we also looked at disruptions that ERSOU had conducted to support other agencies. We found that 17 percent of its support disruptions were categorised as activities to prevent offending. This is higher than that of most other ROCUs.

We examined several ERSOU operations, which were focused on pursue activities. We were impressed by a joint operation between ERSOU and Bedfordshire Police. A comprehensive 4P plan had been developed and was being used by the ERSOU senior investigating officer (SIO) and the force LRO. Both officers were correctly recording disruptions under each of the 4P headings: prevent, pursue, protect and prepare.

To make sure that ERSOU can consistently tackle SOC with all constituent forces, ERSOU should assure itself that:

- LROs and SIOs across the region identify risk relating to the prevention of SOC and protection of victims, working together to effectively manage this for all operations; and

- the constituent forces' response to prevent SOC and protect victims is appropriate and adequate.

In early 2023, ERSOU plans to recruit two SOC co-ordinators. One of the aims is to improve how ERSOU and individual forces implement 4P plans to disrupt SOC.

In the year ending 31 May 2022, the regional cyber team was responsible for half of all prevent and protect activities led by ERSOU. The eastern region benefits from a cyber resilience centre, which is hosted by ERSOU. This provides a capability to protect small and medium-size businesses from cybercrime.

We expected to find the regional fraud team worked in similar activity to prevent SOC and protect victims. But we saw little evidence of this.

**ERSOU has supported the establishment of the National Investigation Service**

The National Investigation Service (NATIS) is responsible for investigating public sector organised fraud. It was created in 2020 to target organised criminal gangs defrauding the government financial support schemes that were provided in response to the pandemic. ERSOU has provided training to support NATIS with setting up intelligence collection, OCG mapping, MoRiLE assessment and financial investigation. The head of NATIS explained to us that the support offered by ERSOU had been an important factor in the service now being operational.

# Bedfordshire Police

Good

Bedfordshire Police is good at tackling serious and organised crime.

## Understanding SOC and setting priorities to tackle it

**Force leaders have developed an effective response to SOC**

We found that the force's leadership was committed to tackling SOC. The chief constable is the national lead for the ROCU network. As a result, he has extensive knowledge of SOC management from a national and local perspective. His leadership has had a positive effect, which is evident at all levels throughout the force. And he has contributed to the force's understanding of current and future demand from SOC.

We found that those involved in managing the force's response to SOC understood their roles. The force provides one-page plans about active OCGs, to make sure that frontline staff know about them. Neighbourhood officers were generally confident in their knowledge of SOC. But the understanding of some response and criminal investigation department officers was more limited.

We observed several SOC management meetings. Representatives of specialist departments and senior leaders from the community safety partnerships attended these. The meetings discussed SOC threats and allocated specific actions to tackle them.

**The force makes good use of analysis to understand SOC threats**

Following Operation Venetic, the force reviewed available intelligence and identified several new SOC threats. In response, the force secured funding from the Home Office to improve how it analyses intelligence and crime data to understand SOC threats. This strengthens its understanding of the threat from SOC.

The force has produced strategic and tactical intelligence assessments for SOC. These assessments are informed by MoRiLE risk assessments, and are used in force tasking and co-ordination processes to prioritise its activity against threats. The force has produced an SOC local profile, which includes data from a range of sources. It is refreshed annually. Local authority partners confirmed to us that it reflected local SOC priorities. They use it to inform their own planning and activity, but they don't contribute to some of the actions identified in the profile. The force should improve how it involves partner organisations in this process.

To improve how the force tackles SOC, it has developed an action plan. We thought this approach was good. The force recognised that the plan needed refinement to make it more manageable and were planning to review it.

The force has dedicated staff to collect and analyse SOC intelligence. At the time of our inspection, there were 20 analysts in the force who are aligned to thematic areas. Five supported specific SOC activity, with the remainder working on various other force priorities. Some officers, including LROs, told us that more analytical support would be favourable.

## Resources and skills

**Innovative practice: Lead responsible officers (LROs) are supported by specialists to tackle serious and organised crime (SOC)**

Bedfordshire Police provides training and support for LROs, who manage its response to individual SOC threats.

At the time of our inspection, there were 24 LROs in Bedfordshire Police. Around two thirds of the LROs were from specialist SOC departments; the remainder were from neighbourhood policing teams. The force allocates SOC threats to LROs based on their skills and expertise.

A dedicated team provides support to LROs concerning 4P plans and how to access specialist support. This team includes:

- a tactical advisor to advise LROs on specialist tactics;
- an SOC co-ordinator to improve how the workforce understands SOC threats; and
- an SOC intern to develop learning and good practice, including an SOC toolkit to identify opportunities to tackle SOC.

The outcome of this is that the force manages SOC threats effectively and includes good 4P planning. This has the overall impact of increasing SOC disruptions.

Additionally, Bedfordshire Police has provided LRO training to representatives from each of the local authorities it works with. We heard examples of partner organisations (such as leaders from the local authority and trading standards) assuming the LRO role for some organised crime groups. This has improved working relationships with partners and their understanding of SOC.

**The force has sought to provide staff with the skills required to tackle SOC**

Staff on the dedicated SOC team should be surveillance trained. At the time of our inspection, a quarter of the team were awaiting training. This was caused by a national shortage of surveillance training courses due to suspension of training during the pandemic. The force has been preparing officers in advance of attending the course, resulting in an improved pass rate. Other specialist teams, such as the dedicated source unit and the covert authorities bureau, have received the relevant training to perform their roles.

**The force has limited capacity to undertake financial investigations**

Like other forces in the region, Bedfordshire Police transferred most of its financial investigation capability to ERSOU. This means it has very limited ability to carry out its own financial investigations. We were told that the help it got from ERSOU with financial investigations was sporadic. The force plans to provide enhanced training to financial intelligence officers, who will then be able to undertake some of this work and marginally reduce how much the force relies on ERSOU.

## Tackling SOC and safeguarding people and communities

**The force is committed to improving how it records disruptions**

In the year ending 31 May 2022, Bedfordshire Police led 248 disruptions. Almost three quarters of these were pursue. It also recorded the greatest number (51) and greatest proportion (21 percent) of prevent disruptions compared to other forces in the region. The SOC lead is exploring ways the force can further improve how it records disruptions, particularly those other than pursue.

**The force is committed to working with partner organisations to prevent SOC**

The force and its partner organisations have a strong focus on preventing SOC. One senior officer told us that there was a belief in the force that pursuing offenders alone was seen as failure. The force has ring-fenced 67 PCs and 43 PCSOs, along with school officers, to support prevention work with children from as young as ten years old.

Some examples of the preventative work the force conducts with partner organisations include the following:

- The force is a key partner in the [Violence and Exploitation Reduction Unit (VERU)](#), a network of agencies committed to tackling gang-related crime. All meetings are well attended, and the deputy chief constable sits on the strategic board. The force, with partner organisations, helps identify those who are [vulnerable](#) and/or exploited. The VERU then provides support to these individuals.

- The force has a dedicated proactive team to tackle gang and gun crime: the Boson team. It works closely with the VERU and focuses on gangs with links to SOC. Partner organisations commented on how this work was preventing young people becoming involved with gangs. One partner organisation told us that there was an obvious change in the force's approach: "[child](#) first – offender second".

- To help identify young people vulnerable to organised crime and violence, the force has produced analysis. This is shared with partner organisations, and the most appropriate agency is identified to take the lead and support each young person.

- The force and its partner organisations have increased public awareness of exploitation associated with SOC. For example, they have commissioned a short film that highlights potential impacts of SOC. The film is a component of the [Bedfordshire Against Violence and Exploitation](#) campaign.

**The force is seeking to improve its approach to offender management**

The force uses court orders to disrupt SOC activity. Neighbourhood policing teams are tasked with gathering intelligence and enforcing compliance with these orders.

However, in the force's SOC team, we found limited understanding of these orders. And some response officers told us they had limited time to support this activity.

To improve this, the force has appointed a senior officer to oversee the management of court orders used to disrupt SOC. The creation of this role was also designed to make sure that the force has defined links with the regional [multi-agency response to serious and organised crime (MARSOC)](#) team. At the time of our inspection, the MARSOC team had agreed to manage two people listed in the [Police National Computer](#) database as having been convicted, cautioned or recently arrested, who the force had referred to them.

# Cambridgeshire Constabulary

Inadequate

Cambridgeshire Constabulary is inadequate at tackling serious and organised crime.

## Understanding SOC and setting priorities to tackle it

**Cause of concern: Cambridgeshire Constabulary doesn't fully understand the harms linked to serious and organised crime**

The constabulary's corporate plan identifies modern slavery and human trafficking (MSHT) as a priority threat. However, we found that the constabulary didn't have the necessary intelligence management processes to fully develop its understanding of this threat. This means that some vulnerable and exploited people may not be identified, and opportunities to safeguard them missed.

At the time of our inspection, the constabulary didn't have an intelligence collection plan and didn't provide a clear account of how the constabulary and partner organisations could improve their understanding of MSHT. We were told that there wasn't enough intelligence being gathered from local communities relating to MSHT. The constabulary should do more to help communities understand this type of crime and report it.

Between the inspection fieldwork and the publication of this report, the constabulary has formulated an intelligence collection plan. There were still some fundamental gaps in this plan, and it will take time for the constabulary to demonstrate that it has improved its understanding of MSHT.

**Recommendations**

- By 1 September 2023, the constabulary should satisfy itself that its newly formulated intelligence collection plan is comprehensive and should be able to demonstrate that this has improved its understanding of MSHT.

- By 1 September 2023, the constabulary should establish effective governance structures to manage MSHT.

- By 1 September 2023, the constabulary should develop internal and external communications strategies to improve intelligence collection concerning MSHT threats.

**Area for improvement: The constabulary should develop more effective partnership working**

During our visit we were told that partnership engagement had declined during the pandemic, including the suspension of strategic serious and organised crime (SOC) partnership meetings. Many organisations, including other police forces, have used virtual IT platforms to maintain partnership meetings and engagement. Constabulary senior leaders told us of their desire to re-introduce these meetings. However, no specific timelines were in place and which partner organisations they would ask to attend was unclear.

The constabulary and relevant partner organisations, such as the local authorities and the Government Agency Intelligence Network, have introduced a quarterly SOC multi-agency mapping panel. It aims to use the resources of all agencies to disrupt SOC activity. Because this panel considers local policing areas in rotation, some areas of the constabulary aren't discussed for six months. In response to our inspection feedback, the constabulary has increased the frequency of these meetings, but we were unable to assess whether this was sufficient to make this more effective.

**The constabulary has effective governance to oversee SOC management**

The constabulary meeting structure includes daily management meetings and fortnightly tactical tasking co-ordination group meetings chaired by an assistant chief constable. Both meetings address SOC issues as part of their agenda. Additionally, LROs provide updates at a monthly OCG management meeting on their plans to tackle SOC threats. New and emerging SOC threats are also discussed.

**Constabulary intelligence assessments could be enhanced**

The constabulary has produced a strategic threat assessment, which informs its corporate plan. SOC threats have been assessed and prioritised using MoRiLE. The constabulary has also produced an SOC local profile to identify the threat from organised crime in each of its community policing areas. It is refreshed annually and includes recommendations for police and partner organisations. However, the document is primarily prepared from police data. Better use of partnership data could enhance it.

SOC threats are circulated to officers and staff as a plan on a page for ease of understanding. Local profiles are circulated to LROs and neighbourhood support teams. However, we found that some local policing teams weren't provided with copies of relevant local profiles, at times resulting in a lack of awareness. This was particularly prevalent in the more rural and isolated parts of the constabulary, such as the Fenlands.

## Resources and skills

**Area for improvement: The constabulary should make sure that it has enough lead responsible officers (LROs) who are suitably trained to be effective in their role**

Data extracted from the serious and organised crime (SOC) master list on 1 April 2022 shows that Cambridgeshire Constabulary was managing 31 SOC threats, between 4 LROs.

Two of the LROs were struggling to meet demand. There was little evidence that these officers had been given training or mentoring for this role. The other two LROs were more experienced and confident in their role in tackling SOC. They had access to sufficient resources to meet SOC demand.

The constabulary has responded to this feedback by introducing a new model where SOC threats will be categorised according to crime type and harm, and allocated to a more diverse pool of LROs across the constabulary. However, these new LROs will need to be trained and gain experience in role to be effective.

**The constabulary isn't consistently allocating SOC investigations to appropriately skilled officers**

The constabulary recognised that SOC investigations were being allocated to inexperienced officers. To address this, it now allocates these investigations to appropriately skilled officers.

However, we found examples of investigations being allocated to officers who had the appropriate level of investigative skills but didn't understand wider SOC threats. As a result, these officers were dealing with these investigations in isolation, without understanding the wider criminality of the suspects. This has led to missed opportunities to tackle SOC through better use of tactics, such as the seizure of assets.

We also found that some of the older SOC investigations hadn't yet been reallocated to appropriately skilled officers.

**The constabulary has restructured its resources to provide more resilience concerning SOC**

The constabulary has invested in additional digital media investigators and local 'kiosks' for use in downloading information from digital devices, such as mobile phones. This, combined with a triage process for more urgent investigations, has helped reduce waiting times for examinations to be completed.

It has also centralised its analytical capability, which appears to be sufficient to manage the demand for analysis.

**The constabulary should make sure that no risk is posed in allocating LROs to tactical firearms roles**

We found examples of LROs acting as tactical firearms commanders on operations connected to OCGs they were managing. We are aware that there is no specific guidance from the College of Policing on whether this is acceptable. But there is guidance that SIOs shouldn't perform both roles due to potential conflicts of interest. Given this, the constabulary should make sure that conflicts of interest don't arise for LROs when taking on the role of tactical firearms commander.

## Tackling SOC and safeguarding people and communities

**Area for improvement: The constabulary should improve the quality of 4P plans and how they are used to disrupt serious and organised crime (SOC) activity**

During our inspection, we examined some 4P plans that had been created to manage the response to SOC threats. Generally, we found these plans concentrated on pursue activities. We found little focus on other strategies to prevent people engaging in SOC or safeguard communities. Additionally, lead responsible officers weren't always being held to account on the content of the plans or the progress being made.

Disruption data (year ending 31 May 2022) shows that the constabulary records low levels of disruptions that prevent SOC and protect people from it; 92 percent of disruptions recorded were for pursuing SOC offenders. Improving 4P plans should assist the constabulary in improving its prevent and protect performance.

**Area for improvement: The constabulary should improve its understanding of the impact of its activity on serious and organised crime and make sure it learns from experience**

In 2016, the constabulary received this area for improvement in our police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy inspection. As a result, the constabulary has introduced a process to review individual organised crime group investigations as they are completed. However, we found that the constabulary didn't routinely identify and share good practice, or seek to understand the overall impact of the activity undertaken to disrupt serious and organised crime.
The creation of such a process would assist less experienced lead responsible officers and senior investigating officers in learning from others. It would also help the constabulary to achieve greater consistency around the quality and standard of 4P plans.

**The constabulary is working with partner organisations to develop prevent and protect intervention activity**

The constabulary has increased its emphasis on safeguarding. Referrals to partner organisations are made via the multi-agency safeguarding hub. Anyone arrested for drug supply is assessed at a triage meeting to assess their vulnerability to criminal exploitation.

During interviews and focus groups we heard examples of police and partner organisations working together to protect those vulnerable to exploitation. These included referrals for vulnerable adults who it was believed were being cuckooed and the use of the national referral mechanism to protect victims of exploitation.

The constabulary is developing two projects to prevent people being drawn into SOC activity. These include: working with partner organisations to establish a cohort of high-risk young people who could be offered programmes to prevent an escalation of offending; and developing contextual safeguarding programmes that are similar to those being run in other parts of the country. Both projects weren't sufficiently established for us to evaluate them.

However, although the constabulary is doing some prevent and protect work in places, the constabulary isn't clear just how co-ordinated this is and how well it is communicated to partner organisations.

# Essex Police

Essex Police is good at tackling serious and organised crime.

## Understanding SOC and setting priorities to tackle it

**The force has processes in place to help understand its SOC threats**

In January 2022, the force produced its annual strategic assessment, which includes the threat from SOC. This assessment process defines the priorities in the force control strategy. These include MSHT, cybercrime, fraud, drugs and firearms. We found that force documents clearly identified the highest threats from organised crime and what was being done about them. MoRiLE is used as part of the assessment process, which is refreshed regularly.

The force produces detailed strategic 4P plans for SOC threats. These plans include an intelligence requirement section, which identifies gaps in the force's understanding of SOC that it needs to address to inform a more effective response.

In October 2021, the force produced an SOC local profile. This contains detailed analysis of the SOC threats in the force's area. It also contains eight strategic recommendations for the force and its partner organisations. These complement the 4P plans the force uses to manage its SOC threats.

**The force has effective governance to manage the response to SOC**

The force has a governance structure to hold the senior management team to account for managing each of the control strategy priorities.

The force has a series of meetings to manage its response to SOC, including a quarterly strategic partnership meeting across Essex and Kent. The meeting considers progress under the 4P headings and shares best practice when identified.

The force also has a local monthly OCG management meeting. As well as monitoring the progress of investigations, the meeting seeks to identify and record SOC disruptions. There are also local SOC boards and local tasking and co-ordination meetings, which hold LROs to account. In addition to these, LROs have their own

meeting structure where they discuss and agree, with relevant SIOs and local policing teams, plans to tackle SOC threats.

## Resources and skills

**The force has sufficient resources to tackle SOC**

The force collaborates with Kent Police and has sufficient resource to tackle SOC, seldom requiring support from the ROCU.

New teams have been created to tackle modern slavery, organised immigration crime and money laundering.

**The force makes sure that LROs have sufficient capacity to manage SOC**

The force assigns SOC threats to LROs in the appropriate department, based on threat and risk. SOC threats assessed as posing the highest risk are allocated to the serious crime directorate for investigation. Lower-risk crime threats are investigated by local policing teams. There is a process that allows investigations to be escalated if the risk increases and specialist skills are required.

The force monitors the workload of its LROs to make sure they can perform the role effectively. OCGs are reallocated to another LRO if necessary, maintaining an even spread of responsibility. LROs are expected to work with partner organisations and develop 4P plans. The force has three SOC co-ordinators who help LROs to produce consistent 4P plans and build their expertise and skills in tackling SOC.

**Relevant training to manage SOC is available**

The force has invested in training for officers and staff to tackle SOC. Some of this investment comes from criminal funds seized under the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002. The force provides training for local neighbourhood officers and bespoke training about modern slavery. Personnel across the force can access SOC-specific information on the force's intranet site.

We found that, generally, local policing teams had a good understanding of SOC. This has been achieved through training, briefings, taskings and both informal and formal meetings.

Managers of specialist teams told us their teams had been given the training and accreditation required to perform their roles. Individual officers discuss their training needs with their managers annually. In response to an identified lack of knowledge in the money laundering team about cryptocurrency, the force sent three members of the team on relevant training.

We found that LROs were provided with relevant training and support. This included mentoring for newly appointed LROs. However, we were told by some LROs that a national training programme would be welcome.

**The force should improve how learning from SOC disruption activity is shared**

At the time of our inspection, there was a debrief process in place in the force, but this could be improved.

The assistant chief constable responsible for SOC carries out a six-monthly review of SOC work, including some debriefing on lessons that could be learned. Additionally, the force uses the Metropolitan Police Service to carry out peer reviews of some of its SOC investigations.

We found that the serious crime directorate carried out some reviews into major crime. But this appears to be limited to homicide investigations, with limited review of SOC investigations.

The force doesn't have a single repository in which to share learning from SOC investigations.

## Tackling SOC and safeguarding people and communities

**Area for improvement: The force should improve how it records disruptions on the national database**

The force is doing a lot to divert people away from serious and organised crime-related criminality and to safeguard the vulnerable. But much of this work isn't being recorded in its disruption reports.

In the year ending 31 May 2022, the force had the highest proportion of pursue disruptions within the region; however, it only recorded 15 prevent disruptions. We think this isn't accurately reflecting all the prevent disruptions it is involved in.

**The force has a lifetime management approach to high-risk SOC offenders**

The force has incorporated the neighbourhood crime approach in its integrated offender management practices. This means the force chooses to manage some SOC offenders who would previously have been excluded from the integrated offender management programme. We think this works well. The offender management team also identifies and tackles vulnerability linked to SOC. An example was working with potentially vulnerable individuals attending local soup kitchens to reduce the risk of exploitation.

We found that the force worked with HM Prison and Probation Service, the RPIU and the MARSOC team to manage SOC offenders. The force has arranged prison transfers for SOC offenders to disrupt their criminal activities while in prison.

The force is effective at applying for preventative orders, such as serious crime prevention orders (SCPOs). It has recently established a prevention orders enforcement team to improve management of orders used to reduce SOC offending. This will help it to proactively manage breaches of these orders.

**The force works with partner organisations to disrupt SOC**

Strategic partner organisations support the force's response to SOC. We found that the force worked with a range of partner organisations to pursue SOC offenders. These include Border Force, the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority and National Trading Standards. These bodies engage with the force at both a tactical and strategic level in the response to SOC. This includes advising LROs directly and contributing to the SOC governance meetings that take place across the force. The force is keen to involve more partner organisations at a strategic level, particularly concerning the prevent and protect strands of the 4P approach.

There is a culture in the force that emphasises the importance of addressing vulnerability linked to SOC. Indeed, officers we spoke to gave the view that they would put safeguarding victims before a criminal investigation. We think this is a positive approach to adopt.

The force supports victims of modern slavery and county lines drug activity. Victim navigators work directly with victims of exploitation to make sure they are supported and safeguarded. This is in partnership with a charity called Justice and Care, which is also involved in training events and multi-agency activity.

To support those at risk of being drawn into drugs, knife crime, county lines activity or gang activity, the force has established a team to work with partner organisations. The team has developed a process, which so far has identified 30 individuals at risk of being involved in these activities. This has allowed the team to use tactics to divert these individuals away from crime.

The force has five teams targeting county lines drug dealing. A safeguarding officer in each team is responsible for identifying and supporting those potentially being exploited. The officer works with appropriate partner organisations to provide support for people who are vulnerable.

The force has created dedicated 'prevent' officers who concentrate on working with potential victims of cybercrime, fraud and modern slavery. These officers are also responsible for raising awareness of these crimes with neighbourhood policing teams.

The force accepts that there are gaps in intelligence, which may affect its ability to protect vulnerable communities. For example, some eastern European communities may be reluctant to provide community intelligence. The force recognises that it needs to develop better relationships with these communities to better understand harm and vulnerability.

# Hertfordshire Constabulary

Good

Hertfordshire Constabulary is good at tackling serious and organised crime.

## Understanding SOC and setting priorities to tackle it

**The constabulary has a structure to manage its response to SOC**

The constabulary's SOC command manages the threat from organised crime under four headings: covert investigation, serious crime investigations, serious fraud & cyber, and digital forensics & digital media.

In March 2022, the constabulary produced the latest version of its annual strategic assessment. The assessment uses MoRiLE to assess threats, using data from police and partner information systems. It highlights six priority threat areas, two of which relate to SOC:

- drug supply – including county lines
- SOC – including immigration crime, MSHT, cybercrime and fraud.

The constabulary produces 4P plans to manage each of the identified threats. These plans have a nominated owner and fixed annual review dates. The plans are shared with the ten community safety partnerships in the constabulary area.

**Area for improvement: The constabulary should develop an up-to-date serious and organised crime (SOC) local profile to help it, and its partner organisations, to better understand the SOC threat and the response that is required**

At the time of our inspection, the constabulary didn't have an SOC local profile, a document that outlines SOC problems and vulnerabilities for each area of the constabulary. This document should be used to form a multi-agency action plan to tackle SOC.

At the time of our inspection, personnel told us the constabulary was planning to develop these profiles for the ten geographical areas it polices. The constabulary may benefit from identifying good examples of these profiles in other forces.

Since our inspection, the constabulary has updated that it has produced local crime profiles with the ten community partnerships it works with. It is planning further work to produce a constabulary-level SOC profile.

**The constabulary has set out a clear process to manage SOC threats**

The constabulary has an effective structure for managing its response to SOC. It has created Operation Relentless, which is recognised across the constabulary and partner organisations as the brand name for its SOC work.

When a crime group is identified, a lead analyst and an LRO are appointed to develop the response. Initial meetings are held with an SOC tactical advisor to develop a 4P plan. Regular meetings are held to consider progress and whether any further specialist and analytical support is needed.

The constabulary governance structure includes a series of meetings to manage the threat of organised crime and monitor performance. It holds two-monthly SOC partnership boards. These deal mainly with MSHT, child sexual exploitation, county lines and OCGs.

The constabulary also holds a monthly OCG management meeting. This is co-chaired by the head of the SOC command, the SOC detective chief inspector and the director of intelligence. Representatives from ERSOU attend, together with constabulary LROs and SOC teams. Attendees review SOC threat assessments, performance and disruptions.

The constabulary tasking meetings and local daily management meetings provide an opportunity for representatives from local policing areas to bid for resources to tackle SOC. The constabulary has developed an SOC performance dashboard to support decision-making and prioritisation at these meetings.

## Resources and skills

**The constabulary has sufficient resources to tackle SOC**

We found that the constabulary had significant resources to manage its response to organised crime. There is a senior analyst who is assisted by five staff dedicated to working on SOC analysis. We were told that while demand was high, managers prioritised it accordingly. Analytical staff are allocated specific crime types to concentrate on, which has increased their expertise, and staff welcome this approach.

The constabulary's covert investigation unit is allocated OCGs to investigate. The constabulary has a dedicated surveillance team that provides support to constabulary departments when it is available and required. The constabulary also has a dedicated team to tackle county lines criminality. The team was introduced in 2018 and its work is well publicised in the press.

The constabulary uses a triage process to assess SOC investigations for any opportunities to pursue financial investigations. The constabulary doesn't have any financial investigators and relies on ERSOU for this function. ERSOU allocates a financial investigator based on priority and available investigative resource.

**The constabulary has sufficient LROs who are well supported**

The constabulary allocates identified OCGs to LROs to manage the overall response. Higher-risk groups are managed by detective chief inspectors in specialist teams. Locally based chief inspectors take on the role for lower-risk groups.

We found that LROs were well supported in this role. In the previous subsection, we have already explained that dedicated analytical and tactical support is available. LROs can draw on this expertise to support their work. Furthermore, the LROs' workload is closely monitored and managed by the constabulary. Overall, we found that the constabulary had enough LROs to meet its SOC demand.

No formal LRO training is provided by the constabulary. However, an SOC co-ordinator and tactical advisor provide support. This includes providing LROs with advice on disruption tactics, covert tactics and the formulation of 4P plans. Newly appointed LROs are mentored by the SOC co-ordinator. The SOC co-ordinator also circulates SOC updates around the constabulary to improve the understanding of SOC. LROs told us how much they valued the support they received from the co-ordinator. However, there is only one post currently and the constabulary should monitor the resilience in this area.

**The constabulary may need to review the training provision for SOC**

We were told that the constabulary had sometimes struggled to provide some specialist training due to shortfalls in its training budget. We found that the constabulary didn't have a current learning needs assessment that informed the co-ordination of training provision. The constabulary should assure itself that it is able to provide sufficient training for SOC specialists.

Continuous professional development events are provided for SIOs who deal with SOC. These include a review of case studies, which are shared and discussed among attendees. Training has also been provided by ERSOU and the NCA. In addition, the constabulary intranet contains a training package for staff to access. Officers told us that the site was easy to navigate.

**The constabulary is good at debriefing its teams about SOC operations and identifying learning**

The constabulary conducts structured debriefs involving LROs and SOC specialist teams to identify learning from SOC operations. This is circulated using the intranet. The constabulary also produces closing reports following operations, including those conducted with partner organisations. Those that we examined were thorough and had gathered relevant learning.

All SOC specialist teams have daily and weekly meetings to discuss learning. In addition, the constabulary has a 'strategic hub', which is available to personnel, to share good practice and learning.

The constabulary has reintroduced OCG champions across each of its community safety partnership areas. They act as single points of contact to provide advice and guidance about SOC to both staff and partner organisations.

## Tackling SOC and safeguarding people and communities

**The constabulary actively manages SOC offenders**

The constabulary's offender management team was created in 2021 to manage ancillary orders, including SCPOs. This team provides proactive management of SOC offenders and includes some covert capability.

The team gives presentations throughout the constabulary. These appear to have improved understanding among officers and staff about the process of applying for SCPOs. At the time of our inspection, the constabulary had increased the use of SCPOs and had 15 in place. Its investment in this team demonstrates a clear commitment to the lifetime management of high-threat offenders, which is notable.

The constabulary records all SCPOs on the national Violent and Sex Offender Register database. This means that these orders are visible to specialist units in other forces and agencies involved in public protection.

We saw good examples of offender management in co-operation with HM Prison and Probation Service. This included intelligence gathering and enforcement operations targeting offenders who were continuing their criminality while in prison or under an SCPO.

**The constabulary is effective at disrupting SOC in local communities**

In the year ending 31 May 2022, Hertfordshire Constabulary led 75 disruptions involving SOC. The majority of these were pursue disruptions. The constabulary recorded only 12 disruptions to prevent SOC. Given its focus on prevention first, mentioned in the following subsection, we interpret this as an issue with recording. The constabulary should improve how it records these disruptions.

The constabulary has a dedicated SOC disruption team. It works with safer neighbourhood teams and provides enforcement capability to local policing. It also assists with collecting intelligence and developing prevent initiatives. One example we heard about involved the identification of a brothel; trafficked people were being forced to act as sex workers. The disruption team worked with the local policing to arrest the offenders and safeguard the victims.

Generally, we found that frontline staff knew how to spot SOC and saw it as core police work. Officers and staff we spoke to had a good understanding of modern slavery and what intelligence they should gather. We also saw examples of local policing teams working with their partner organisations to tackle SOC problems.

**The constabulary works with partner organisations to reduce the impact of SOC**

The constabulary works with partner organisations on local initiatives that either prevent people becoming involved in SOC or protect vulnerable victims. It adopts a prevention-first approach. It has two members of staff who work with individuals, businesses and agencies to reduce offending.

Many of the personnel we interviewed gave examples of the preventative work done by the constabulary, such as activity in schools to reduce knife crime and work with trading standards to target sellers of nitrous oxide cannisters. Another example was working with haulier associations to educate lorry drivers about the use of HGVs to smuggle trafficked persons into the county.

The North Herts Community Safety Partnership co-ordinates the local responses to organised crime. LROs attend the partnership's Responsible Authorities Group, which includes senior representatives from other agencies, such as the fire and rescue service, and registered social landlords. In addition, the youth safety partnership concentrates on diverting young people away from crime through pathways programmes.

# Kent Police

Good

Kent Police is good at tackling serious and organised crime.

## Understanding SOC and setting priorities to tackle it

**The force has effective strategic management and governance to manage SOC activity**

The force has effective governance to manage the response to SOC. This includes meetings at strategic and operational levels where officers are held to account for their plans and offered support when required.

**The force makes use of intelligence to identify, understand and prioritise SOC and inform effective decision-making**

The force has a good understanding of the threat from SOC and has the resources to collect and analyse intelligence. It has developed its SOC strategic assessment from a range of intelligence sources.

The force doesn't use MoRiLE on the SOC master list to assess all threats, for example some county lines groups. It uses another method to assess them, which means it is managing much more demand than is recorded on the SOC master list. We understand that the force takes this approach to reduce the bureaucracy in managing these groups in a small number of cases.

The force has introduced a portal through which partner organisations can submit intelligence directly. It also gives partner organisations quarterly presentations explaining local organised crime threats.

There are two multi-agency hubs, located in Folkestone and Dover. The force works with agencies, such as Border Force and UK Visas and Immigration, to share information and develop its response to immigration crime, including corruption at the border.

The force has improved how it includes local policing in its response to SOC. Frontline staff are provided with up-to-date information to increase their understanding of active local OCGs. During our interviews it was evident that staff from community policing teams understood how their role in disrupting SOC was linked to force priorities.

**Area for improvement: The force should develop an up-to-date serious and organised crime (SOC) local profile to help it, and its partner organisations, to better understand the SOC threat and the response that is required**

At the time of our inspection, the force didn't have an up-to-date SOC local profile, a document that outlines SOC problems and vulnerabilities for each area of the force. This document should be used to form a multi-agency action plan to tackle SOC.

The SOC local profile for the force was last completed in 2019, when it was included within the SOC strategic assessment. Since then, there has been no local profile produced. The force states that it provides local profiling as part of its strategic analytical cycle. We consider this approach to conflict with the principles of local profiling. Strategic assessments and force management statements don't adequately detail local SOC threats and vulnerabilities, nor do they outline recommendations on how the police or partner organisations tackle them.

**The force seeks to review its SOC operations to understand how it can improve and develop best practice**

Operations are subject to a structured debrief and learning is shared on Insight, the intranet site accessible to all force personnel. In the tactical tasking co-ordination group process, some time is dedicated to discussions about best practice and learning, which can be shared with operational leads. A force review team can also be asked to conduct more detailed operational reviews.

## Resources and skills

**The force is committed to developing staff so that it can effectively respond to both current and emerging threats**

The force has worked with Essex Police to develop combined specialist teams to tackle SOC. This allows each force to operate largely without the need for additional support from the ROCU. However, the force maintains a good relationship with the ROCU and can access additional specialist support when required.

The force has identified its priority SOC threats. One priority area is MSHT. It established an MSHT team in 2019 to respond to this threat, improve the understanding among frontline officers of safeguarding and vulnerability, and involve key partner organisations.

**LROs are largely supported in their role**

The force allocates SOC threats to chief inspectors who take on the role of LRO. They develop 4P plans to target an SOC threat with the assistance of specialist capabilities and relevant local partner organisations. The force has introduced the role of OCG co-ordinator, to support LROs with their 4P plans and give tactical advice.

LROs have an informal network to give each other support and advice when appropriate. The force has no specific training for LROs but intends to fill this gap.

## Tackling SOC and safeguarding people and communities

**The force takes a problem-solving approach to tackling some SOC threats**

In the year ending 31 May 2022, Kent Police led 168 disruptions involving SOC. This was 11 percent of all the disruptions in the eastern region and the third highest in the region. Twenty-five percent of disruptions were prevent or protect disruptions; the remainder were pursue.

We mentioned in the Regional findings section that some groups involved in criminal activity aren't always assessed to see if they should be considered as an OCG. Kent Police is a case in point. The force uses a problem-solving process (OSARA) to tackle these groups. This is mainly carried out by community policing teams, who already use a problem-solving approach to tackle other neighbourhood problems.

Working with the PCC, the force has secured additional funding to tackle serious violent knife crime, which overlaps with the threat from county lines. As a result, the force works with partner organisations, such as the British Transport Police, to run knife arch operations at railway stations. (A knife arch is a walk-through metal detector, which can detect hidden knives.)

**The force works effectively with partner organisations to safeguard those at risk of being involved in SOC**

During our inspection, the force SOC partnership meeting was observed. 4P plans were presented and the identification of vulnerability and subsequent safeguarding in communities was discussed. The emphasis from the meeting was on protect, prepare and prevent activity, and what joint action could be taken with partner organisations (such as the fire and rescue service and HM Prison and Probation Service).

The force has introduced a protect and prevent lead, who works with police personnel and partner organisations to prevent SOC and protect victims. Force SIOs told us that engaging with the lead had improved how they tackled SOC.

We found that neighbourhood officers worked alongside staff from local authorities to support vulnerable members of the community. They also conduct school visits to try and prevent young people becoming involved in crime. Neighbourhood officers are generally aware of the national referral mechanism and could provide examples of using this to safeguard vulnerable people.

# Norfolk Constabulary

**Requires improvement**

Norfolk Constabulary requires improvement at tackling serious and organised crime.

## Understanding SOC and setting priorities to tackle it

**Area for improvement: The constabulary should improve how it shares information relating to serious and organised crime (SOC) with partners and frontline staff**

Frontline officers, staff and key partners told us that information on SOC threats wasn't routinely shared with them. Staff from one partner agency stated they felt "blindsided" by their lack of knowledge around SOC threats. The constabulary should share information with partners consistently. Currently it is done on a case-by-case basis.

Some partners told us that the constabulary tried to introduce a vetting policy for partners participating in local organised crime partnership boards. This has led to some partners disengaging from the board. Consequently, the constabulary has been reluctant to provide detailed updates around SOC to the board. This is affecting how partners are informed about SOC threats.

**Area for improvement: The constabulary should make sure that its SOC local profile provides detail of how SOC affects its communities and this should be reviewed at frequent intervals to help it, and its partner organisations, to better respond to local SOC threats**

At the time of our inspection, Norfolk Constabulary and Suffolk Constabulary had a joint SOC profile. This profile assessed SOC threats in each constabulary area, but not at a local level. The constabulary informed us that it reviewed this over a three-year cycle. This isn't frequent enough to make sure that the constabulary and partner organisations are focused on tackling threats in the right areas or identifying emerging areas of SOC vulnerability.

**Strategic documents are used to set priorities but the contribution of information and intelligence from partner organisations is limited**

Norfolk Constabulary uses police information and intelligence to prepare its strategic assessment; this is supported by a control strategy. These are used to identify and prioritise the threats from crime that the constabulary faces. In the first area for improvement, we have already explained that some partner organisations weren't always aware of the threats from organised crime locally. This has limited their contribution to the production of the strategic assessment.

## Resources and skills

**LROs are supported in their role**

The constabulary SOC lead decides who should be allocated the LRO role for each identified SOC threat. In most cases this is either an inspector or a chief inspector from local policing. But, when appropriate, a specialist from the SOC department takes on the role.

Newly appointed LROs are provided with a training pack and are also briefed by the constabulary SOC lead. We found that LROs sought to identify good practice and learning through various forums, including an LRO group.

LROs create 4P plans and work with SIOs who manage the investigative element on their behalf. However, later in this report we highlight an area for improvement for the constabulary regarding the quality of 4P plans.

**The constabulary has limited financial investigation capability**

The constabulary has allocated much of its financial investigative resource to the ERSOU collaboration. However, ERSOU isn't able to support all financial investigations on behalf of the constabulary. It is clear the constabulary isn't using financial investigation routinely to disrupt or target organised crime.

**The constabulary has sufficient analytical capability**

The constabulary's analytical capability is split into three areas: strategic, performance and tactical. There are sufficient resources in each of these disciplines to provide the analytical services required to tackle SOC.

**The constabulary is working to tackle SOC coming from Western Balkan OCGs**

The constabulary has secured Home Office funding to create a post to support the Western Balkan communities in Norwich. At the time of our inspection, the postholder had been in post for six months. They were working to develop links with relevant communities to improve community intelligence. It is too early to assess the effectiveness of this post, but it appears to be a positive step.

## Tackling SOC and safeguarding people and communities

**Area for improvement: The constabulary should improve how it records disruptions on the national database**

In the year ending 31 May 2022, the constabulary recorded 57 disruptions on the national database. This is the third lowest number recorded by a police force in England and Wales. Of these disruptions, 39 were pursue, 10 protect, 6 prevent and 2 prepare.

The constabulary has told us that it is maintaining a record of disruptions relating to a high-risk, priority serious and organised crime (SOC) vulnerability it has identified. In accordance with national recording guidelines, these disruptions can't be submitted on the national database. This demonstrates that the constabulary is undertaking activity to disrupt some priority threats.

However, it also suggests that not all disruption activity is being recorded for all threats identified. Several personnel we interviewed stated that disruption activity wasn't being fully recorded. The constabulary should raise the awareness of what SOC disruption activity is and how it should be recorded. This will help it to understand its performance in tackling SOC.

We have detailed that the constabulary should improve partnership working and the management of 4P plans. Improvements in these areas will assist the constabulary in recording all disruption activity.

**Area for improvement: The constabulary should improve the quality of 4P plans and how it manages them**

Lead responsible officers should produce a comprehensive 4P plan for each of the serious and organised crime threats they manage. The 4P plans should be regularly reviewed, and activity updated. We examined several of these and found that the quality of plans was inconsistent. There was also little contribution from partners in formulating these plans. The constabulary should seek good practice from others and provide relevant training to staff.

**The constabulary should do more to manage SOC offenders in prison**

The constabulary doesn't routinely monitor SOC offenders in prison to challenge ongoing criminal activity. We found that analysts weren't aware of any work to map OCGs in prisons or any ongoing offender management process. They weren't involved in or sighted on SCPOs or other preventative order work.

The constabulary should review how it works with the RPIU, managed by ERSOU, to track and challenge offenders who continue to carry out criminality in prison.

**The constabulary is focused on identifying those vulnerable to exploitation, but some investigators are missing opportunities to safeguard those vulnerable to SOC**

We found that the constabulary's approach to identifying vulnerable people linked to SOC was sometimes inconsistent. At times, some SIOs lacked understanding of safeguarding procedures and available support services. Partner organisations gave examples of when they had to intervene to make police aware of the vulnerability of some young people, who would otherwise have been prosecuted. The problem we have already described regarding how the constabulary works with partner agencies and shares information may be contributing to this.

This contrasts with examples of active support and safeguarding for victims of organised crime, such as trafficked females being exploited as sex workers by criminal gangs. We heard of the good work done in the multi-agency child exploitation team, whereby police officers work closely with Norfolk Children's Services to identify children at risk of exploitation, assess their vulnerability and implement a plan to provide support and intervention based on risk. The constabulary reported that vulnerability assessments had reduced in severity for those children subject to structured intervention activity.

The constabulary is improving further how it identifies exploited people. It has recently introduced a vulnerable adult risk assessment conference with partner organisations. This monthly forum is aimed at identifying and diverting individuals who have been coerced into SOC activity, such as cuckooing or county lines.

The constabulary should make sure that the workforce has a consistent knowledge of safeguarding and improve how it works with partner organisations to support and protect those who are vulnerable to SOC.

**The constabulary is taking a public health approach to some aspects of SOC**

Norfolk Constabulary works with Project ADDER, a Home Office-funded programme to reduce drug use and disrupt drug markets. As part of this, the constabulary employs dedicated youth workers in custody suites to identify and refer drug users to services such as drug intervention programmes and housing. The project aims to break the cycle of addiction for drug users through support, while targeting drug suppliers through enforcement.

**The constabulary is developing diversionary activities in emerging communities vulnerable to SOC**

We have already commented on the work the constabulary is doing concerning Western Balkan criminality. It told us that it was engaging with Albanian communities to develop effective diversionary interventions for young people. This work is in its early stages and at the time of our inspection hadn't yet progressed to any tangible diversionary activity that we could evaluate. However, we note that the constabulary is actively looking to carry out bespoke prevent activity around SOC in these communities.
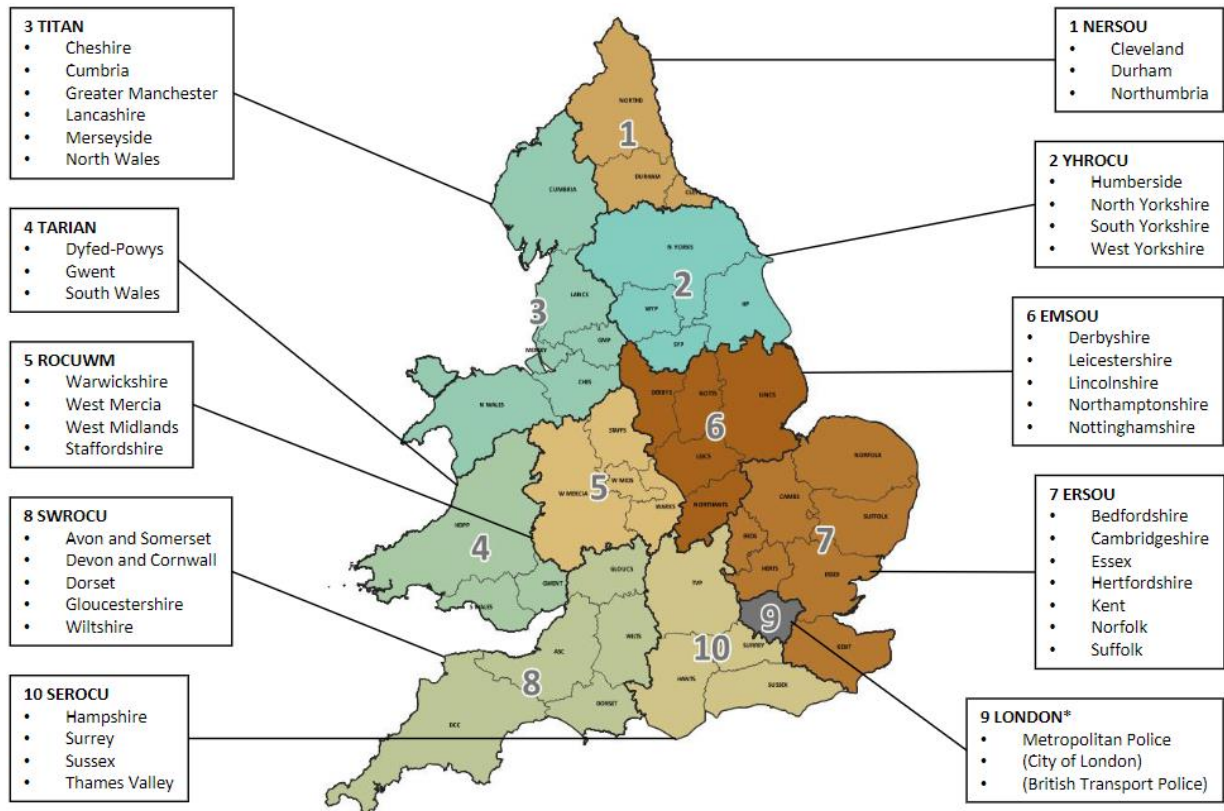
# Suffolk Constabulary

Good

Suffolk Constabulary is good at tackling serious and organised crime.

We inspected this constabulary under the previous PEEL SOC inspection programme. You can read the findings in the PEEL 2021/22 inspection report.

# Appendix 1: Map of regional organised crime units



**3 TITAN**
- Cheshire
- Cumbria
- Greater Manchester
- Lancashire
- Merseyside
- North Wales

**4 TARIAN**
- Dyfed-Powys
- Gwent
- South Wales

**5 ROCUWM**
- Warwickshire
- West Mercia
- West Midlands
- Staffordshire

**8 SWROCU**
- Avon and Somerset
- Devon and Cornwall
- Dorset
- Gloucestershire
- Wiltshire

**10 SEROCU**
- Hampshire
- Surrey
- Sussex
- Thames Valley

**1 NERSOU**
- Cleveland
- Durham
- Northumbria

**2 YHROCU**
- Humberside
- North Yorkshire
- South Yorkshire
- West Yorkshire

**6 EMSOU**
- Derbyshire
- Leicestershire
- Lincolnshire
- Northamptonshire
- Nottinghamshire

**7 ERSOU**
- Bedfordshire
- Cambridgeshire
- Essex
- Hertfordshire
- Kent
- Norfolk
- Suffolk

**9 LONDON***
- Metropolitan Police
- (City of London)
- (British Transport Police)

There are ten regions in England and Wales containing nine ROCUs:

1. The North East Regional Special Operations Unit (NERSOU) covers Cleveland, Durham and Northumbria.

2. The Yorkshire & Humber Regional Organised Crime Unit (YHROCU) covers Humberside, North Yorkshire, South Yorkshire and West Yorkshire.

3. The North West Regional Organised Crime Unit (shown as TITAN) covers Cheshire, Cumbria, Greater Manchester, Lancashire, Merseyside and North Wales.

4. Tarian covers Dyfed-Powys, Gwent and South Wales.

5. The Regional Organised Crime Unit for the West Midlands (ROCUWM) covers Warwickshire, West Mercia, West Midlands and Staffordshire.

6. The East Midlands Special Operations Unit (EMSOU) covers Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire and Nottinghamshire.

7. The Eastern Region Special Operations Unit (ERSOU) covers Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Essex, Hertfordshire, Kent, Norfolk and Suffolk.

8. The South West Regional Organised Crime Unit (SWROCU) covers Avon and Somerset, Devon and Cornwall, Dorset, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire.

9. The London region – see the note below.

10. The South East Regional Organised Crime Unit (SEROCU) covers Hampshire, Surrey, Sussex and Thames Valley.

Note: There is a separate collaborative arrangement for the London region, incorporating the forces of the Metropolitan Police Service, the City of London Police and the British Transport Police. There isn't a ROCU in this region, but forces share some ROCU capabilities. For the purposes of this inspection the region has been inspected, but as it isn't considered a conventional ROCU, it hasn't been awarded a ROCU grading.

# Appendix 2: Data methodology and caveats

The data used in this report was extracted from the national database: the Agency and Partners Management Information System (APMIS).

APMIS contains data that is recorded by police forces throughout England and Wales, ROCUs, the NCA and other agencies, such as His Majesty's Revenue and Customs and Home Office Immigration Enforcement.

This data includes:

- the SOC master list, which contains all MoRiLE assessments for the SOC threats identified by forces and agencies;

- event-based disruption data ('disruption data') that is recorded following national minimum standards. At the time of our inspection, minimum standards stipulated that disruption data should only be recorded against OCGs and not priority individuals or SOC vulnerabilities; and

- lead disruptions. Police forces across England and Wales submit disruption data to APMIS differently from ROCUs. Police forces can record only disruptions that they have led. ROCUs can record disruptions that they have led and also disruptions that they have conducted to benefit another force or agency. The latter are known as 'support disruptions'. We report only on lead disruptions. We exclude support disruptions and report them only by exception. We make it clear in the report when we are referring to support disruption data.

MoRiLE assessment data was extracted from APMIS on 1 February 2022. Any changes made to assessments since that date will not be accounted for in the analysis. The following filters were used on columns to extract this data: Type is Tactical, Moderation status is Moderated, SOC is SOC, Tier is not Tier 5 and Phase is not contains Closed.

Disruption data was extracted from APMIS in June 2022 and includes all lead disruptions made after 1 June 2021 until 31 May 2022. The following filters were used on columns to extract this data: Disruption type is Lead Disruption, Record data is greater than 1 June 2021, less than 1 July 2022, and Assessment Category is Major, Minor and Moderate.