PEEL: Police effectiveness 2017

A national overview

Contents

Foreword

Our effectiveness inspection covers the many aspects of policing that play such a vital role in keeping our communities safe – from prevention to investigation; from keeping vulnerable people safe to tackling serious and organised crime.

In the wake of several terrorist attacks in the UK in 2017, we have seen the exemplary bravery and professionalism of the police, who put themselves in harm's way to protect the public. We commend the extraordinary service the police gave communities when they needed it most.

In the weeks immediately after those appalling attacks, the police saw a significant spike in the number of calls for help from the public. Over the last year, there have also been dramatic increases in complex crimes like sexual abuse, child abuse and domestic abuse.

It is all the more commendable that, in the face of these substantial increasing pressures, most forces are doing a good – and in one case outstanding – job of keeping the public safe. We congratulate police officers and staff on the way they have largely kept standards high, despite a shrinking workforce and increasing, ever-more-complex demand.

Police are improving in the areas we highlighted last year

We are pleased that the police service has responded well to our recommendations from last year. These recommendations were to encourage forces to improve in the areas where we had major concerns.

Individual forces and national policing and law enforcement agencies have stepped up and worked together to improve the service to the public in areas like neighbourhood policing, crime prevention, investigating crimes and tackling serious and organised crime. We appreciate that it will take time for some of the changes to take effect and to translate into better services for the public.

A small number of forces risk not meeting demand well enough

Despite all these positives, we are still very concerned that policing is under significant stress. On occasions, that stress stretches some forces to such an extent that they risk being unable to keep people safe in some very important areas of policing.

Last year we found that some forces were artificially suppressing demand in a bid to do what they could with the resources they had available. We found less evidence of that this year, but instead we have found a new problem. In a small number of forces, demand is not being suppressed – but nor is it being adequately met.

For example, in a minority of forces, we have seen that, too often, vulnerable victims are not getting a prompt emergency response from the police, because the force has been overwhelmed by the scale of the demand it faces.

We are still seeing some forces using police powers inconsistently, including arrest and prevention orders. As with last year, we are seeing police forces failing to keep pace with assessing and managing the risk associated with registered sex offenders living in their communities. And a handful of small forces are struggling to fight serious and organised crime effectively.

It is vital that police leaders are vigilant, can identify when their force is under such significant stress that the service to the public is suffering, and act swiftly to address those problems.

The shortage of investigators still needs addressing

Too often, crimes have not been investigated properly because one in five investigator positions is either vacant or filled with untrained officers.

This year we have recommended specific things individual forces can do to help address the national crisis in the shortage of detectives and investigators. This builds on our recommendations from last year.

Police are getting better at looking after vulnerable people, but progress is slowing

We are pleased that forces continue to improve how they identify vulnerable victims, respond to them and keep them safe. But we are concerned that progress is stubbornly slow. Twenty forces, nearly half of those in England and Wales, are still not good at this crucial element of policing. There are thirteen forces that, over the last three years, have never been graded as good.

For this reason, we have recommended that the police service, supported by the College of Policing, develops a system of peer support to improve policing for the benefit of the most vulnerable people in our communities.

Police are finding new ways to meet demand from people with mental health problems

This year, for the first time, we have looked at how well forces identify and respond to people who are vulnerable because of mental ill health; we found a very positive picture.

The police service is so often the first service to respond to someone in mental health crisis, and the police are finding new and innovative ways of working with partners to meet the substantial demand put on them. We will set out our detailed findings in a report later this year.

Once again this year, in the course of our inspection, we have met, worked with and talked to innumerable police officers and staff who work tirelessly to keep communities safe in difficult circumstances. We are immensely grateful for their service.

Zoë Billingham

HM Inspector of Constabulary

Effectiveness in numbers

Calls for assistance

Incidents per 1,000 population 12 months to 30 June 2017

282

Anti-social behaviour

Anti-social behaviour (ASB) incidents per 1,000 population 12 months to 31 March 2017

31

Change in ASB incidents 12 months to 31 March 2016 against 12 months to 31 March 2017

-0.05%

Crime (excluding fraud)

Crimes recorded per 1,000 population 12 months to 30 June 2017

77

Change in recorded crime 12 months to 30 June 2016 against 12 months to 30 June 2017

+14%

Crime outcomes*

Charged/summonsed

10%

Evidential difficulties: suspect identified but victim does not support action

13%

Investigation completed but no suspect identified

48%

Domestic abuse

Domestic abuse incidents per 1,000 population 12 months to 30 June 2017

15

Domestic abuse as a percentage of all recorded crime (excluding fraud) 12 months to 30 June 2017

11%

Organised crime groups

Organised crime groups per 1 million population as at 1 July 2017

47

*Figures are shown as proportions of outcomes assigned to offences recorded in the 12 months to 30 June 2017. For further information about the data in this graphic see annex A.

Summary and main findings

Overall, most forces are effective

Our inspection found that overall most forces are still effective at keeping people safe and reducing crime. Over two thirds of forces are still performing at a good standard and one force is still outstanding. Slightly more forces got better than got worse.

We commend police officers and staff for keeping up this good standard of service. They have done so despite dealing with financial constraints and considerable increases in demand in important areas of policing, such as domestic abuse and sexual offences, as well as providing increased security following terrorist attacks in London and Manchester.

We are seeing a noticeable improvement in the way many forces identify vulnerable people, respond to them and keep them safe. Forces are still improving their handling of domestic abuse. However, as with our previous inspection on police effectiveness in 2016, we are still concerned about the extent to which some forces are using all the powers, tactics and techniques they have available.

In this inspection, we considered for the first time how well forces support people with mental health conditions. This was to allow a more detailed inspection in our next assessment of police effectiveness in 2018. This year's results show some promising approaches. We can see that the police service is strongly committed to making sure it supports people with mental health problems. It is important that the police's positive attitude and strong leadership in this area do not result in them stepping into any gaps in the service other local agencies provide.

But we have some concerns

We are concerned that, in a minority of forces, the service is overwhelmed in some aspects of policing.

In these forces, vulnerable victims are all too often not getting a timely police response, as their calls to the police have not been allocated for officers to respond.

This is because, in some forces:

- there are so many calls that staff have not been able to allocate them quickly; or

- there are not enough response officers to send to incidents.

These forces need to put measures in place urgently to make sure they are protecting vulnerable people well enough. Otherwise, the lives of vulnerable people could be at risk.

Individual forces, national policing and law enforcement organisations are all responding to the recommendations we made last year:

- the College of Policing has produced guidelines for neighbourhood policing;

- police forces and the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) are tackling the problem that a considerable number of people who are wanted in connection with criminal offences were not being tracked down (which we reported last year);

- the NPCC is developing a plan to improve the capacity and capability of investigators;

- we have seen a number of forces reduce how many digital devices, such as mobile phones and laptops, are waiting for forensic examination; and

- the National Crime Agency is overhauling the way in which organised crime groups are analysed and recorded.

However, there has not been enough progress on understanding why, in some forces, a large number of crimes are in effect written off, denying the victim an appropriate service from the police.

In too many cases, forces have not acted on recommendations we have made repeatedly in our effectiveness inspections, and they have not given us enough of an explanation as to why. For example, a large number of forces we inspected rarely evaluate their approach to problem solving and tackling crime. This means that, in too many respects, these forces cannot identify and promote evidence-based best practice. We are still finding police forces in which the emphasis is overwhelmingly on tackling serious and organised crime by going after groups and criminals, rather than preventing their crimes being committed in the first place.

Performance: the main headlines

We have graded forces as outstanding, good, requiring improvement or inadequate. We have also graded each of the four areas that make up the overall judgment.[1] This year, we did not inspect all forces on all questions, as we took a risk-based approach to inspection. Forces that have performed well had a lighter-touch inspection than those that have had problems before or face particularly difficult circumstances. There is more detail on this approach in annex C.

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[1] Forces received graded judgments against four areas relating to: 1 preventing crime and anti-social behaviour; 2. investigating crime and managing offenders; 3. protecting those who are vulnerable; and 4. tackling serious and organised crime.

Compared with last year, the overall grades are broadly the same. We grade nearly two-thirds of forces as good. We have not graded any force to be inadequate overall. One force (Durham Constabulary) is still outstanding and two more forces have been graded as good than in 2016.

While the overall grade for each force has stayed broadly the same, it is a different story for the grades we gave for each area of policing we inspect.

Question	Outstanding	Good	Requires Improvement	Inadequate	Declined	Improved
Crime Prevention	2	34	7	0	0	5
Crime Investigation	0	33	10	0	2	9
Protecting vulnerable people	0	23	19	1	7	12
Serious and organised crime	4	34	4	1	2	7
Overall judgment grade	1	30	12	0	6	9

In particular, because more forces have improved their performance in local policing and tackling serious and organised crime, we graded nearly three quarters of all forces as good, with very few cases of performance getting worse.

While we are seeing improvements in how forces support vulnerable people and keep them safe, there are still nearly as many forces performing below standard as those we grade as good. In the three years we have been making graded judgments, it is disappointing that sustainable improvement in protecting vulnerable people in some forces has been stubbornly slow.

Annex B at the end of this report sets out the grades of each force in each of the elements of the inspection and its overall grade.

Local policing and crime prevention: shoring up the service, but this still needs improving

We have longstanding concerns about local policing being eroded and we have been tracking this throughout our PEEL inspection process. A visible policing presence that has the trust of the community and a detailed understanding of local risks and threats is critical to preventing crime and anti-social behaviour.

In 2016, we found the position on crime prevention and local policing was still getting worse. Many forces had failed to adapt their local policing models to fit lower budgets, and changes in demand and communities. We said many forces needed to take action urgently to prevent neighbourhood policing being eroded and to keep up that essential element of proactive and preventative policing.

We are pleased to say there has been some improvement in this area. We have graded 34 forces as good at preventing crime and anti-social behaviour in 2017, four more than in 2016. We have seen some forces changing their approach to neighbourhood policing to make sure they have enough officers and PCSOs dedicated to preventing crime, engaging with communities and tackling anti-social behaviour.

It is commendable that since 2016, nearly half of all forces have increased or maintained the number of staff assigned to neighbourhood policing. This is despite an overall 8 percent decrease in expenditure dedicated to this area. There is also evidence of forces being creative in how they make sure local officers are visible and accessible enough to members of the public.

Concerns about local policing

However, some of the concerns we highlighted in 2016 are still there:

- Some forces still do not sufficiently understand well enough to what extent their officers and PSCOs are being taken away from their local policing duties to handle immediate tasks elsewhere.

- There are still inconsistencies in tackling local problems in a structured way and using approaches the police service knows are effective. Many forces do not evaluate their own approaches well enough to see what works and then give this information reliably to others in the service.

- Despite having a range of powers they can use to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour, officers are using them less than in 2016. In too many cases, in forces that use these powers, we did not find a sound rationale or clear evidence base to justify using them.

- Forces should take action to make sure that their approach to neighbourhood policing meets the new guidelines being established by the NPCC and the College of Policing. Recommendation 1 sets out how forces could do this.

Digital dialogue

Engaging with the public is a vital component of local policing, and one which has often proven to prevent crime and build public confidence. As methods of communication change, forces also need to change how they engage and communicate with the public. Forces need to engage in digital dialogue, not just digital broadcast.

It is positive that forces are embracing social media (all have some Facebook and Twitter presence and the majority are using YouTube and Instagram). Our inspection found many examples of excellent and innovative use of social media. It is important for forces to have coherent strategies for how they use social media and communicate with their communities. Our analysis of police Twitter and Facebook activity found that:

- in some forces approaches are not co-ordinated enough;

- there can be an undue emphasis on broadcasting messages rather than responding to concerns; and

- the topics the police tweet about are too often different from the public's concerns on community safety.

Responding to crime: cracks in the system

From the moment a member of the public contacts the police, officers and staff must reassure and support victims as well as keeping them safe and collecting evidence. This makes it more likely that police will solve the crime and bring the offender to justice.

Responding in an emergency is the public's first priority for the police. In 2016, over 65 percent of the members of the public we surveyed rated this as the top priority (surpassing tackling crime and terrorism). In 2017, this proportion of respondents had increased to over 67 percent.

Our inspection has given rise to some substantial concerns about how some forces respond to those contacting the police, particularly vulnerable people. This is both in terms of failing to respond promptly and appropriately, and what happens when an officer is in attendance.

Delays in responding to emergency calls

Last year we highlighted the concern that a small number of forces were struggling to meet the demand for their services and were finding ways to suppress that demand artificially. An example was downgrading the severity category of calls for help from the public to justify a slower emergency response. Our efficiency report has since found that some forces are experiencing significant stress.

We recommended that these dangerous practices stop and we are pleased to report that they have. However, there is now a new problem. Almost a quarter of forces are not meeting enough of their demand in as timely a way as we would expect, or are managing demand inappropriately. In some cases, these practices are putting vulnerable people at serious risk of harm.

Examples of failing to meet or appropriately manage the demand include:

- thousands of emergency calls being held in queues, largely because officers were not able to respond to them; and

- officers not actively reassessing these emergencies during the delay.

Given the level of risk involved, we have asked these forces to examine their practices immediately to make sure they are keeping victims safe. A range of forces are affected (large and small, urban and rural) and other forces with a similar level of demand have managed to respond to cases from the public more effectively.

Phone investigations: standards need to improve

We have seen forces use different techniques to deal with increasing levels of demand with fewer resources. One example is phone investigation. In cases where there are few investigative opportunities and it is unlikely the force will catch the offender, making enquiries and updating the victim by phone can be a practical way to complete an investigation.

Not all forces use this method. But it has the potential to give victims of crime a prompt and efficient service. The concern, if forces use it inappropriately, is that they will miss opportunities to arrest offenders and to keep vulnerable victims safe. It is very important that phone investigations are properly allocated, well supervised and only used in appropriate cases.

We looked at a small sample of investigations (266 crime files) and found that most cases were suitable for phone investigation (for further information about these data, please see annex A). However, about a third of the investigations were of poor quality and nearly half of them lacked supervision. If forces are to use phone investigation to manage demand, they need to make sure they are using the approach appropriately, are supervising staff effectively and are frank with the public in terms of the types of cases they will generally deal with in this way.

When officers first arrive, they keep victims safe but overlook some evidence

Our inspection has also revealed some problems when officers do respond to calls for service from the public, particularly vulnerable people. While attending officers generally identify when victims are vulnerable, understand how to keep them safe and assess the level of risk appropriately, we saw some weaknesses in the initial response.

It is encouraging that nearly all forces have invested in body-worn video (BWV) technology. This is an important tool for collecting initial evidence. It gives police an incontrovertible record of the scene and the behaviour of those involved. It can also provide crucial evidence to courts if a victim becomes reluctant to testify in person.

However, not all forces have a clear policy on how and when to use it. For example, it was not always clear whether it is mandatory that it should be switched on when the officer arrives at the scene, or whether this should be left to an officer's professional judgment. Our review of crime files showed that in almost a third of cases, the force had not taken the opportunity to use BWV to improve the quality of the investigation. Frontline staff need clear guidelines if they are to maximise the benefits of this technology.

We also found other areas of the initial investigation where forces are not seizing all opportunities to look for evidence. In too many cases, officers do not do house-to-house enquires, identify witnesses and use body-worn cameras to get evidence. Forces should also do more to look for evidence on smartphones, tablets and other devices.

Investigating crime: still lacking capacity

In the 12 months to 30 June 2017, the police recorded 5.3 million offences (including fraud), which equates to 14,500 crimes each day. Forces have to record these crimes accurately, make decisions about whether and how to investigate and then put the right investigators (police detectives, police staff investigators, intelligence analysts, and forensic support staff) on the right cases. They need to make sure these people's skills and capabilities are in line with the complexity of the crime and needs of the victim.

Last year we reported that there was a national crisis in the severe shortage of investigators. We recommended that the police service gain a better understanding of the scale of the problem and should draw up a coherent set of plans to meet the need. We are pleased that police leaders, through the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC), are working with the College of Policing to address this problem. The plans include a number of steps forces can take now to increase the number of investigators, such as better support for those training to be detectives. The plans also cover longer-term approaches to build capacity and address the reasons why people do not want to be investigators.

Despite these efforts, the shortfall is considerable at the moment. Forces report that they have 17 percent fewer investigators than they need. This amounts to a shortfall of over 5,000 investigators in England and Wales (as reported in July 2017) and there are not enough trainee investigators to make up for this. This picture is not the same for all forces: three forces told us they have their full contingent of investigators. By contrast, one force told us that half of its investigator positions are vacant.

Police forces need to take further concerted and co-ordinated action, working with the NPCC lead on investigative resilience, to make sure they have enough investigative capacity in the short, medium and long term. Recommendation 2 sets out how forces could do this.

A shortage of skilled investigators affects the quality of the investigation and victim care. Almost half the police officers we surveyed told us they felt their force was not very effective or not at all effective at investigation. In a survey on behalf of the Police Federation, 75 percent of detectives said their workload is too high and keeping them away from their families. In a number of forces, specialist detectives explained how their increased workloads had adversely affected them over the previous 12 months.

Supervision: forces need to support inexperienced staff better

A recurring issue affecting the standards of investigation is the quality of supervision. Poor or inconsistent supervision means that too many cases do not make the progress they should. Good supervision develops investigators' skills and supports their welfare.

In a third of the crime files we looked at, we saw there was not enough supervision or no supervision. This lack of supervision was particularly severe in so called low-level or volume crimes (for example, theft from the person or common assault).

Good supervision is important to:

- make sure investigations are high quality;

- support and train inexperienced officers or staff; and

- make sure workloads are manageable.

It is particularly important that forces adequately supervise so-called low level crime investigations, such as criminal damage or common assault. These investigations are likely to be allocated to less-experienced, non-specialist investigators. They will often be response officers who have an investigative caseload on top of many other responsibilities.

We are troubled by the number of volume crime investigators who were not supervised effectively. These investigators are not seasoned detectives and they have various daily duties to fit into shift patterns. They need to be supervised if forces are to keep up their standards and meet victims' expectations.

Digital investigations: backlogs are being cleared

Technology gives the police opportunities to investigate crime and apprehend suspects. In too many cases, forces cannot exploit digital investigative opportunities because they do not have enough capability and capacity to do so.

Many investigations depend on retrieving evidence from digital devices such as smartphones, tablets and computers if prosecutions are to succeed. Last year we found 16,000 digital devices were still waiting to be examined. This year we found that more forces have invested in facilities for investigators to download digital evidence more easily; others have contracted this out to the commercial sector.

Overall, forces have reduced the backlogs we found in 2016 by 17 percent. As a consequence, investigations have sped up and the service to victims has improved. However, it is vital that these approaches are sustainable as the demand for digital forensic support is still high; delays in retrieving evidence from digital devices should not compromise the quality of the evidence and jeopardise bringing offenders to justice. In this respect, officers need to do their job in a way that supports the criminal justice system so that justice is properly served.

Catching criminals: some progress but there is more work to do

Last year we had concerns about those who are wanted in connection with crimes. These people need to be found quickly to protect the public, reassure victims and maximise the chance of a successful investigation. People who are wanted for offences may well continue to cause harm until they are caught.

To do this effectively, forces need to track wanted people actively and make efforts to find and apprehend them. As criminals move between different force areas, people wanted in connection with a crime are put on the Police National Computer (PNC) so that all forces are aware of them. This year we still have concerns about the extent to which all forces were pursuing and tracking down wanted persons.

On our recommendation, the National Police Chiefs' Council has issued new guidance to forces to make sure they are promptly entering wanted people on the PNC. Since February 2018, the NPCC has been evaluating this to find out how well it is working. Data we collected this year indicates a more positive picture in some forces[2]. Almost two thirds of persons wanted by forces, but not circulated on PNC, have been wanted for less than three months. Also, four out of five offenders have been wanted for less than six months. This is encouraging as it indicates that forces are either apprehending these people or sharing them more widely with other forces using the PNC.

However, we are still very concerned that some forces stop taking active steps to track down suspects after they have put their details on the PNC. Last year we identified 12 such forces. Almost two-thirds of these forces have addressed our concerns. However, a further seven forces have now developed problems in this area.

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[2] Fourteen forces were able to provide data on those not circulated on PNC.

We have yet to see a reduction in the number of wanted people on the PNC. In July 2017, there were 60,061 wanted records on the PNC, an increase of more than 4,000 over 12 months. Most of these relate to theft offences and violence with injuries, although there are still a considerable number wanted for homicide (374) and rape (1,135).

Supporting vulnerable people: continuing improvements but still more to do

We are encouraged by the improvements we are seeing in how forces identify and support victims of crime and vulnerable people. Protecting vulnerable people is a priority of every police and crime commissioner in England and Wales. The improvement has come from the strong commitment and leadership of chief constables, who have made determined efforts to make sure their front line officers and staff are well equipped to keep vulnerable people safe.

In most forces, we have seen an improvement in the attitudes of frontline staff, who are now better trained and supported in dealing with vulnerable people. This means they are more able to deal with vulnerable people effectively, and are commended for it more often. This year, we graded 23 forces as good. When we first introduced graded judgments in 2015, only 12 forces achieved this grading.

This improvement is all the more commendable as it is taking place in the face of dramatic increases in demand on the police. Domestic abuse crimes now stand at half a million a year, an 88 percent increase from June 2013. Sexual abuse offences have doubled since 2013 and the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children estimates there is an average of 152 cases of child abuse per day.

While it is encouraging that many forces are improving how they keep vulnerable people safe, we are disappointed that nearly half (20) of forces are not graded as good. Thirteen of these forces have struggled to improve their performance over the three years of our effectiveness inspections and have still not managed to achieve a good grade. Clearly it is important that these forces address the problems we raise in their individual force reports. Recommendation 3 proposes that the College of Policing, working with the NPCC leads, should introduce a system of peer review to support improvement in struggling forces.

Identifying vulnerable victims: inconsistent procedures

Most forces are continuing to improve their understanding of who is vulnerable in their communities. We are pleased that so many forces are developing their knowledge of hidden harm (for example, modern slavery and human trafficking). Closer work with other agencies, such as local authorities and, specifically, children's social care, is crucial to improving this understanding. It has led to a better analysis of a range of data to see where and what kind of harm exists within communities.

Overall, forces have a clear definition of vulnerability and communicate this effectively to their staff. Many forces have set out their approach to supporting vulnerable people in a strategy; these are at various stages of being implemented. During the inspection, we found that most frontline officers and staff understand the different types of vulnerability and how to identify and protect vulnerable people.

Our data shows that the proportion of crime involving a vulnerable victim has increased slightly. But there is still an unacceptable variation between forces in the proportion of crime involving a vulnerable person. This ranges between one force where 0.1 percent of victims of crime are identified as vulnerable to a force where 43 percent of victims are vulnerable.

Given that forces give victims different levels of service based on how vulnerable they are, a consistent approach across England and Wales is essential. Otherwise, there is a risk that the quality of the service victims get will depend on where they live.

Registered sex offenders: workload pressures

We are still concerned about the limited capacity some forces have to manage the risk posed by the most dangerous offenders, and the extent to which this could put the public in danger. Many forces are still investing in specialist investigative teams responsible for vulnerable victims. These are generally referred to as public protection units or protecting vulnerable people units. Between 2016 and 2017, spending in these units went up by 22 percent.

The remit of these units often includes protecting vulnerable people from people who are known to pose a risk, such as registered sex offenders (RSOs). Despite this investment, there are still some forces with high workloads and poor supervision in public protection units. In 2017, as with the previous year, we found some forces struggling to assess the level of risk RSOs pose and to manage that risk effectively. Throughout England and Wales, the police have yet to assess the risk represented by 3,300 registered sex offenders; this is an 18 percent increase from last year.

Mental health: a better service for those in crisis

This year, we considered for the first time in a PEEL inspection how well police forces respond to vulnerable people with mental health problems. We considered how well the police work with partners to:

- identify people with mental health problems when they first contact the police; and

- respond to people with mental health problems (often people who are in crisis and may need to be detained for their own safety).

This year's inspection has allowed us to develop our understanding of how the police treat people with mental health conditions. This will help us make a more in-depth examination of this issue in future inspections. Our initial findings are positive.

To make sure frontline staff are aware of their responsibilities to those with mental health conditions, all forces include mental health training in their annual training programmes for officers and staff. We found this training is most effective when it involves representatives of NHS Trusts and other organisations providing mental health services.

Although forces are continuing to develop their understanding of mental health, we recognise that it will take time for forces to develop an accurate picture of the nature and scale of demand in this area. Police involvement in mental health goes wider than helping people who are in crisis or a danger to others. Some people will contact the police because they feel isolated or in despair. This places extra demand on the police and many forces are working to understand how this affects their day-to-day operations.

We found frontline staff are confident in identifying mental health conditions when people first contact the force, skilled at assessing their needs and professional in helping people in crisis. Twenty-one forces have approved mental health professionals (AMHPs), psychiatric nurses or representatives of the mental health charity Mind[3] working alongside call handlers in police control rooms.

Better solutions for people with mental health problems

Forces are also working alongside mental health practitioners when responding to people with mental health problems; for example, having a mental health practitioner in the response car. Where this is happening, forces are identifying more incidents involving people with mental health conditions. They are also finding solutions for people in mental health crisis more quickly.

Immediate access to mental health professionals means that officers can find better solutions for people with mental health problems. Sometimes this can be as simple as asking friends or relatives to look after them. On other occasions, forces have to use legal powers to detain people for their own safety. However, forces are now using detention powers less often; they are finding it more straightforward to get access to care and there are fewer occasions when people in crisis are detained in police stations.

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[3] Mind is a mental health charity in England and Wales. Mind offers information and advice to people with mental health problems and lobbies government and local authorities on their behalf. It also works to raise public awareness and understanding of issues relating to mental health.

This is extremely positive. Police custody is not the best place for people with mental health problems and these vulnerable people need expert medical support, rather than police officers looking after them in police cells or patrol cars. We will publish a more detailed report on how well police forces support victims with mental health problems later this year. We will also look at this issue in more detail in our future inspections.

It is a credit to police forces that they have invested significant time and resources in supporting vulnerable people with mental health problems. The mental health professionals we spoke to were overwhelmingly positive about the care front-line officers give.

Domestic abuse: an overall improving picture

We have said we will inspect forces every year on their handling of domestic abuse until the service victims receive from the police is of a consistently high standard across England and Wales. As such, domestic abuse is still an important part of our PEEL effectiveness inspection.

Domestic abuse is high harm and high risk; 11.5 percent of all recorded crime is domestic-related and just under a third of violent crime. We are tracking how forces' performance has improved since we published *Everyone's business: Improving the police response to domestic abuse* in 2014.[4] We will be publishing a more detailed report on progress later in the year.

As we said earlier, recorded domestic abuse crime has almost doubled to half a million in the last year. This equates to a crime being committed every minute. We have an incomplete understanding as to what is behind this increase: forces tell us it is a combination of more victims coming forward and better recording. Both are positive, but all forces need to properly understand the detail behind the headline increases so they can plan to meet demand effectively in the future, and make sure they have the necessary prevention measures in place.

We are pleased that, as with broader support for all vulnerable victims, forces are improving overall. When we surveyed people working with victims of domestic abuse, 63 percent felt the police response to domestic abuse had improved since we published Everyone's Business.

We are also seeing more forces working with other agencies to support victims and their families. The NSPCC report one in seven children and young people under the age of 18 will have witnessed domestic abuse at some point in their lives. This year, 33 forces have information-sharing arrangements with schools to support these

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[4] *Everyone's business: Improving the police response to domestic abuse*, HMIC, 2014. Available at: www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmicfrs/publications/improving-the-police-response-to-domestic-abuse/

children, a 50 percent increase from last year. With this approach, known as Operation Encompass in many forces, forces let the relevant school know if, in the previous 24 hours, officers were called to a domestic incident where a child was present. This means children can get the support they need.

Using police powers to protect victims of domestic abuse: more consistency is needed

However, despite these positive developments, we still have concerns about the extent to which police officers keep domestic abuse victims safe and bring their offenders to justice. Police officers can:

- arrest a suspect to protect the victim;

- use civil orders to prevent the perpetrator staying at the family home;

- bail a suspect after arrest with conditions whilst continuing an investigation; and

- collect enough evidence to charge the suspect with an offence.

In too many forces, police officers are not doing these things well enough. We will examine this further in our specific report on domestic abuse.

Domestic Violence Protection Order: not used as widely as it could be

The Domestic Violence Protection Order (DVPO) is an important tool for the police service. DVPOs remove the perpetrator from the home for 30 days, protecting the victim. Based on a number of similar approaches in other countries, they are designed to give the victim breathing space to make plans away from their abusive partner.

DVPOs are still not being used as widely as they could be. About 40 percent of forces who gave DVPO data say they are using them less than they were during our 2016 Effectiveness inspection.

The arrest rate for domestic abuse has fallen, but the number of crimes has risen

Positive action at the scene is important to protect victims of crime, particularly in domestic abuse cases. However, overall, the arrest rate for domestic abuse has fallen from 51 arrests per 100 crimes to 46 arrests per 100 crimes. This is all the more worrying as the number of reports of domestic abuse rose by 18 percent between 2016 and 2017.

We are also still very concerned about the wide variation in arrest rates in different forces, from 79 arrests per 100 crimes to 31 arrests per 100 crimes.

Forces are using bail conditions to protect victims less frequently

Forces can use bail conditions to stop an offender intimidating the victim as domestic abuse allegations are being investigated. For example, they can impose conditions that forbid offenders from contacting or going near the victim.

Because of changes in bail legislation last year, there are now fewer occasions on which police can let offenders out on bail while they investigate. As with all crime, the number of people being let out on bail for domestic abuse crimes has decreased markedly, which is the intention of the legislation.

Overall, domestic abuse bail has reduced by 65 percent and the daily use of bail for domestic abuse cases dropped from an average of 119 cases in the nine months to 31 March 2017 to 42 cases in the three months to 30 June 2017. The College of Policing has given some initial consideration to how this legislation has been implemented. However, it is important that an unintended consequence of this legislation is not less protection for vulnerable victims, nor a feeling on their part that they are less supported and protected by the police. Recommendation 4 addresses this.

Too many investigations conclude without a prosecution

Between forces, it varies how often officers close an investigation when there are evidential difficulties and the victim does not support police action, even if they know who the perpetrator is. If this happens too often, it is likely that far too many perpetrators of severely harmful domestic abuse crimes are not being brought to justice and victims are being failed by the police. We raised this problem in 2016. This still varies and, in some forces, more than half of domestic abuse investigations are concluded on the grounds that the victim does not support police action.

In 2017, we asked six forces with high levels of cases concluded this way to explain why. This process was valuable in helping forces understand their own processes and make sure this outcome was used appropriately. More now needs to be done to address the unacceptable level of variation across the country.

It is important for forces to understand why victims might not want to pursue prosecutions. There may be good reasons, particularly if they feel intimidated. However, forces should do everything they can to make sure the abuse stops and perpetrators are brought to justice.

Police are not surveying domestic abuse victims

Since June 2016, the Home Office has asked all forces to survey victims of domestic abuse. Surveys are an important way to check that police are giving victims a good service. It could also help to explain why some victims are not willing to support prosecutions. But twelve forces are not collecting data in line with Home Office guidance.

Tackling serious and organised crime: an improving picture

Serious and organised crime exploits the most vulnerable and blights communities. The nature and scale of organised crime is changing rapidly to become global in nature. Tackling it needs effective action at different levels of law enforcement. This includes local staff in individual forces policing communities, right through to regional and national specialist teams.

Broadly, this is something the police forces working with regional organised crime units (ROCUs) do well. We graded most forces (38 in total) as good. Of the 16 forces we inspected in 2017, six had improved their performance.

Assessing the harm organised crime can cause: forces need a new system of assessment

To effectively tackle serious and organised crime, forces need to understand which groups pose the highest threat, risk and harm to their communities. Forces' understanding of this threat continues to improve. For example, they are improving how they work with other agencies: nearly three quarters of forces use local authority data to identify areas of risk and harm and formally bring this together in neighbourhood profiles. However, there is still room for contributions from other organisations.

The police service assesses the criminal intent and capability of an organised crime group through a process called mapping. We have found in previous years that forces do this inconsistently, which means we have no overall understanding of the threat. This was partly due to the limitations of the mapping system itself, and we recommended last year that the National Crime Agency (NCA) review its suitability and come up with a revised approach.

Our inspection this year found forces were applying the mapping principles more consistently. Also, forces are identifying an increasing number of organised crime groups (OCGs) involved in less traditional types of crime, such as modern-day slavery.

The NCA has conducted a comprehensive review of mapping and improved the current approach. But it still needs to do more work to develop a more sophisticated model. There are also still inconsistent approaches to how forces map other criminal networks, such as urban street gangs[5] (USGs). Often 'county-lines' gangs (drug dealing networks that expand from cities to county towns, with high levels of associated violence and exploitation) fall into this category. Not mapping all criminal networks limits a force's ability to tackle the overall offending of these groups. This needs addressing as part of the overhaul on mapping.

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[5] Urban street gangs and many other gangs evolve into organised crime groups (OCGs). Gangs tend to be less organised than OCGs and more concerned with perpetuating a threat of violence or harm across a particular geographical area related to the gang's main activities.

Getting to grips with organised crime groups and their offending: further progress

We have seen positive developments in how forces tackle serious and organised crime:

- Forces are increasingly working with other agencies and local bodies to tackle serious and organised crime. Two thirds of forces have established serious and organised crime partnership boards so other local services and agencies support the fight against organised crime. This is an increase from last year. The Government Agency Intelligence Network (GAIN) brings a number of agencies and organisations together to share intelligence, better identify threats and disrupt OCGs in various ways. Fourteen out of the 16 forces we inspected are making good use of its facilities.

- We found neighbourhood policing teams are more aware of OCGs in their local areas. They are also increasingly involved in disrupting serious and organised crime. It is often local policing managers who are the Lead Responsible Officers (LROs) for managing the operation to disrupt the work of OCGs over the long term.

- Forces are liaising better with ROCUs and other specialists at regional and national level. However, we have recommended before that some specialist capabilities in forces should move to ROCUs in the interests of quality and cost effectiveness. Progress has been slow in this area.

Preventing serious and organised crime and re-offending: needs more focus

We are still concerned that forces are less able to prevent serious and organised crime than to pursue serious and organised crime groups.

Pursuing organised crime groups is an important role for the police, who have law enforcement and coercive powers. But they should not just rely on enforcement to protect the public from organised crime. Forces can prevent serious and organised crime in a number of ways; they can intervene early to stop people being drawn into criminal groups and put measures in place to stop habitual criminals from re-offending.

Individual forces have patches of promising work to prevent serious and organised crime. But these can often be very local initiatives which are not publicised effectively within the forces. Some forces still lack an overall strategy and a clear lead to make sure they are co-ordinating and sustaining work to prevent serious and organised crime. This year we have recommended that four out of the 16 forces we inspected need to address this. Constantly pursuing criminals rather than stopping them offending in the first place is not an effective approach.

Some offenders keep reoffending despite the efforts of law enforcement agencies or the risk of being prosecuted. There are a number of things forces can do to stop these people re-offending, but the police service does not co-ordinate, log or record these interventions consistently enough. It also does not evaluate enough whether or not they are effective. This makes it difficult to develop a body of knowledge of what works best. Without this, strategies to manage serious and organised crime are unlikely to be effective.

Finally, it is important that the LROs responsible for disrupting criminal groups and minimising the harm they cause to communities have access to proper support and development. In many cases, this responsibility rightly sits with officers working in local policing teams. Eighty percent of the LROs we surveyed had assumed their LRO responsibility alongside neighbourhood policing roles. However, the overwhelming majority of LROs said competing demands made it more difficult to fulfil the role, and over a quarter had not received any specific training.

Specialist capabilities

This inspection also considered how prepared forces were to work together to respond to threats contained within force boundaries. In particular, we looked at how ready forces are to respond to a firearms attack. We found that most forces have a good understanding of the threats they faced. We also saw areas of good practice. We are providing these to the service to strengthen all threat assessments.

Police forces have also received extra funding to increase their armed capacity. All forces have made more armed response vehicles available to help them respond to attacks swiftly and effectively.

Future PEEL inspections

We will be moving to an integrated PEEL assessment in future years. This means we will only inspect each force once (rather than twice as it is now). We will consider all elements of PEEL: effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy.

Our integrated PEEL inspections will be underpinned by the force management statements (FMSs). We expect also to use the information in FMSs in connection with other inspections, including thematic inspections, and monitoring of force performance (efficiency and effectiveness).

Recommendations

Neighbourhood policing

We found that the police service is committed to stopping neighbourhood policing being eroded. The National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) lead for neighbourhood policing, working with the College of Policing, is developing guidelines for neighbourhood policing called *Modernising Neighbourhood Policing* and supporting material.

The benefits of effective neighbourhood policing include:

- a better flow of vital community intelligence, including matters relevant to national security;

- promoting community safety and making people feel safer;

- preventing crime and disorder;

- protecting vulnerable people;

- creating resilient communities less reliant on police support; and

- enhancing police legitimacy so that forces are policing effectively by consent.

The guidelines will be issued by the end of March 2018. The NPCC lead is helping forces review the extent to which they meet the guidelines. We will assess how well forces are implementing the guidelines in the integrated PEEL assessment in 2018.

Recommendation 1

By October 2018, all forces should review their own approach to neighbourhood policing to check whether the service they provide to local communities meets these guidelines. As soon as possible, they should make any changes they need to implement the guidelines.

Shortage of investigators

We found that the police service has 17 percent fewer investigators than it needs. Most forces have a substantial shortage in qualified detectives and other investigators. This constitutes a continuing national crisis.

It will take time to address this crisis. The National Police Chiefs' Council lead on investigative resilience has made a strong start in analysing why this is the case. He has also recommended what national bodies and individual forces should do about it.

It is vital that all chief constables act on these recommendations so that there is a nationally co-ordinated and planned response. We will keep monitoring the extent to which investigative capacity and capability meet demand in the integrated PEEL assessment in 2018.

Recommendation 2

By September 2018, all forces with a shortage in qualified detectives and/or other investigators should develop an action plan. The plan should set out in detail what the force will do to address the shortage in the short, medium and long term. It should be in line with the national plan to develop investigative capacity and capability that all chief constables in England and Wales have agreed.

This plan should draw on the information in the force management statement about:

- the investigative demand the force expects to face in the next four years; and

- how the force will change and improve the condition, capacity, capability, serviceability, performance and security of supply of its workforce and other assets to cope with that demand.

To make sure the plans are consistent, the National Police Chiefs' Council lead on investigative resilience has agreed to provide advice on the areas each plan should cover by April 2018.

Peer review

We found good progress in many forces with how they support vulnerable victims and keep them safe. However, 13 forces have struggled to improve their performance over the three years of our effectiveness inspections and have still not managed to achieve a good grade. The police service has used peer review to help forces improve in some areas of policing. This now needs to extend to the service forces give vulnerable victims.

Recommendation 3

The College of Policing, working with the NPCC leads, should develop an approach to peer review. This approach should support forces to work with each other to improve how they identify, respond to and keep safe vulnerable victims.

The infrastructure to support peer reviews should be in place by September 2018 with the first reviews taking place by January 2019.

Use of bail

We found there is a risk of unintended consequences in the recent changes in bail legislation. The changes could mean victims, in particular vulnerable people, are not well protected enough.

It is important that chief constables have a thorough understanding of how their forces are putting the changes into practice and how well their forces are protecting vulnerable victims. This will help bring potential problems to light early on. The police service can then take action before the problem becomes widespread and entrenched.

We will keep monitoring how effectively forces are using bail in the integrated PEEL assessment in 2018.

Recommendation 4

By September 2018, all forces should review how they are implementing changes to pre-charge police bail, working with the National Police Chiefs' Council lead.

The review should include an assessment of how far vulnerable people are being affected by these changes.

As soon as possible, forces should then put into effect any necessary changes to make sure they are using bail effectively, and in particular that vulnerable victims get the protection that bail conditions can give them.

Preventing crime and tackling anti-social behaviour

People will trust a police force whose officers are present in the community and which has a detailed and up-to-date understanding of the risks and threats the community faces. Such a force will be better at preventing crime and tackling anti-social behaviour than one which does not adopt these approaches. Neighbourhood policing that is focused on solving problems and preventing crime helps to keep people and communities safe. It builds trust, reduces the fear of crime, and leads to greater public confidence in the police service and more willingness to report crime. Effective local policing teams are also valuable assets in the fight against organised crime, and play a central part in keeping the most vulnerable people in the community safe.

What we were looking for and what we found

We measured how effective forces are at preventing crime and tackling anti-social behaviour. We focused our inspection on:

- how well forces achieve this by:

    - giving police officers and staff the time, skills and support they need to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour; and

    - having local policing models that make it possible for them to provide effective crime-prevention services to the public.

- how well forces understand the communities they serve, and identify new and emerging threats by:

    - making sure local policing teams have the time to communicate and interact with their communities, using both traditional and digital methods; and

    - providing opportunities for local people to affect what the police concentrate on locally;

- how well forces tackle crime and anti-social behaviour by:

    - taking effective long-term action to solve problems, measuring its results and working with other organisations; and

    - making good use of legal powers and ways of tackling crime and anti-social behaviour.

Overall performance is improving

Overall performance is improving. Of the 17 forces we inspected in 2017, we graded 11 as good and 6 as requiring improvement. When these grades are added to the grades of the forces that were not inspected this year (whose 2016 grades were carried forward), it is clear that forces have made progress. Of the 43 forces, two (Norfolk Constabulary and Durham Constabulary) are graded as outstanding, 35 are graded as good and six are graded as requiring improvement.

Despite these improvements, we also found some weaknesses among the 17 forces we inspected in 2017. These are shortcomings we have commented on before. We found that a minority of forces:

- do not train staff in ways to solve problems, or use these techniques enough;

- do not use evidence and analysis consistently and do not evaluate the results of their activity;

- redeploy neighbourhood staff to other duties; and

- make sporadic and unco-ordinated use of the powers the law has given them.

What we found in 2016

In 2016, we expressed concern about the erosion of neighbourhood policing. This was the case even in a number of the forces that we graded as good. The public told us that they saw local officers and staff less and less, and some forces could not tell us how they had reconfigured local policing models to match reduced budgets.

This is important because officers who are often in a community find it easier to win local people's trust and confidence. This trust, together with a comprehensive police understanding of the risks and threats each community faces, is central to the prevention of crime and anti-social behaviour.

We found police officers were taken away from their local areas routinely to meet demand for their services in other areas of the force, leaving community teams relying on a shrinking number of police community support officers (PCSOs).

Where neighbourhood policing is poor, efforts to involve communities in crime prevention are all too often limited. We found that many forces were unclear about how they could work closely with local communities, hear their views and give them information.

In those forces where the police involved the public in organised ways, their understanding of communities was far better. We also found that forces were making increasing use of social media, but how they did it – including how they used channels aimed specifically at local communities – varied a good deal.

Apart from those forces that were providing specialist training and support to neighbourhood teams, a number of forces were not dealing regularly with local problems in a structured way. Nor were they adopting and adapting approaches that had proved successful elsewhere. Many were not measuring the effect of the ways they worked to encourage others to adopt good practice. The few forces that did measure their results effectively were working with academic institutions, such as universities, and making good use of the available skills.

Finally, many forces' use of their powers to tackle anti-social behaviour was inconsistent. Allowing for population size, some forces were ten times more likely to use these powers than others.

How this had changed in 2017

In our 2017 effectiveness inspection, we found matters had improved. Progress in some areas has been significant and accounts for the improved grades of five forces.

Almost half of all the forces have increased the number of staff they allocate to neighbourhood policing (referred to as neighbourhood teams or local policing team in different forces). Although we saw this increase in some forces, staffing levels in neighbourhood teams are falling across all forces.

We found that neighbourhood policing is working well where forces have staff dedicated to local communities. When this is present in a neighbourhood all the time, collaborative work with other organisations, like local councils, is often better. This can include joint training, integrated problem solving and increased sharing of information and data. It is also a cost-effective use of resources.

We found evidence of forces working hard to respond to the problems caused by the changes in demand for their services and the overall pressure on resources. Forces have reorganised their services to make neighbourhood policing more effective. Some forces have appointed specialist problem-solving co-ordinators to provide expert support to neighbourhood staff.

In some forces, particularly where chief constables and police and crime commissioners have made crime prevention a priority, we found good examples of frontline staff being held to account for ensuring a lasting, long-term reduction in crime. Local communities are benefiting from this approach. For example, we saw how Avon and Somerset Constabulary was protecting elderly people at risk of being scammed by fraudsters.

Some forces now understand the demographics of their local communities in detail. One force has a detailed profile for every electoral ward. As a result, the neighbourhood policing service works to meet local priorities and local needs in a more informed way. Some forces are using digital communication effectively to strengthen their relationships with local people, hear more of their views, and identify priorities for the police to work on.

We welcome the work of the College of Police and the NPCC lead for neighbourhood policing, in developing guidelines 'Modernising Neighbourhood Policing' and supporting material. The benefits of effective neighbourhood policing include:

- a better flow of vital community intelligence, including matters relevant to national security;

- promotion of community safety and feelings of safety;

- prevention of crime and disorder;

- protection of vulnerable people;

- more resilient communities less reliant on police support; and

- enhanced police legitimacy so that forces are policing effectively by consent.

The guidelines will be issued to all forces by the end of March 2018. The guidelines describe the essential elements of neighbourhood policing and what effective practice looks like. This ranges from promoting the right culture to developing and sharing learning. The guidelines provide a clear and simple way for forces to assess their current approach to neighbourhood policing and improve it where necessary.

The NPCC lead is helping forces to review the extent to which they meet the guidelines. HMICFRS will assess how well forces are implementing the guidelines in the integrated PEEL assessment in 2018.

We are also pleased to see more involvement on the part of neighbourhood officers in combating serious and organised crime. In a number of forces, we found local officers working closely with specialist investigators to safeguard victims and protect communities.

However, there are some signs of operational pressures and, in some areas, the problems that concerned us last year remain:

- There is still a pressure on resources and both the money and the number of people allocated to local policing have fallen again (the number of officers assigned to local policing between 2016 and 2017 has decreased from 22,267 to 20,118, a decline of 9.7 percent); the number of PCSOs assigned to local

policing between 2016 and 2017 has declined from 11,771 to 10,474, a decline of 10.4 percent).

- Some forces are still inconsistent in their use of those aspects of local policing that have been shown to reduce crime, such as problem-solving policing and involvement in the community.

- Some forces still do not understand to what extent their officers and PCSOs are being taken away from problem-solving and crime prevention work to cover other duties.

- All too often officers are not using their powers to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour consistently, and use of these powers has fallen by 21 percent since last year.

- Many forces are still poor at evaluating and understanding what works, and at systematically spreading this knowledge through the workforce, so it becomes a deeply rooted part of the force's operations.

Prioritising prevention – different models of neighbourhood policing

All forces allocate at least some resources to preventing crime and anti-social behaviour through neighbourhood or local policing teams. Some forces use a lot of resources in this way. Some assign officers and PCSOs to dedicated neighbourhood teams. In other areas, personnel carry out neighbourhood duties as well as investigative work and response policing (responding to 999 and 101 calls).

How the roles are shared also varies from force to force. In 2016, we found several different models for such teams: 25 forces had dedicated neighbourhood teams; 12 a partially-integrated one; three a fully integrated one; and two, a prioritised one.[6] One force did not specify.

In 2017, the national picture reveals that approaches to neighbourhood policing still vary. One force now has dedicated neighbourhood policing, which it did not have last year. The number of integrated teams has fallen slightly and some forces are adapting these models to find new ways of policing neighbourhoods.

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[6] Dedicated model – staff time spent mainly on engagement, problem solving and prevention activity in a specific location; fully integrated model – neighbourhood and response functions are combined with some investigation; partially integrated model – neighbourhood and response staff have separate functions but neighbourhood staff respond and investigate when demand is high; prioritised model – a fully integrated model which in specific areas has dedicated staff performing neighbourhood functions. These numbers are based on figures forces supplied to the HMICFRS 2016 and 2017 effectiveness data collection.

Investment in neighbourhood policing – variation between forces

To show the differences in the ways that forces allocate resources to neighbourhood policing, figure 1, below, shows the expenditure per head of population allocated to neighbourhood policing and how this has changed since 2016.

Figure 1: Estimated expenditure on neighbourhood policing in England and Wales – 2016/17
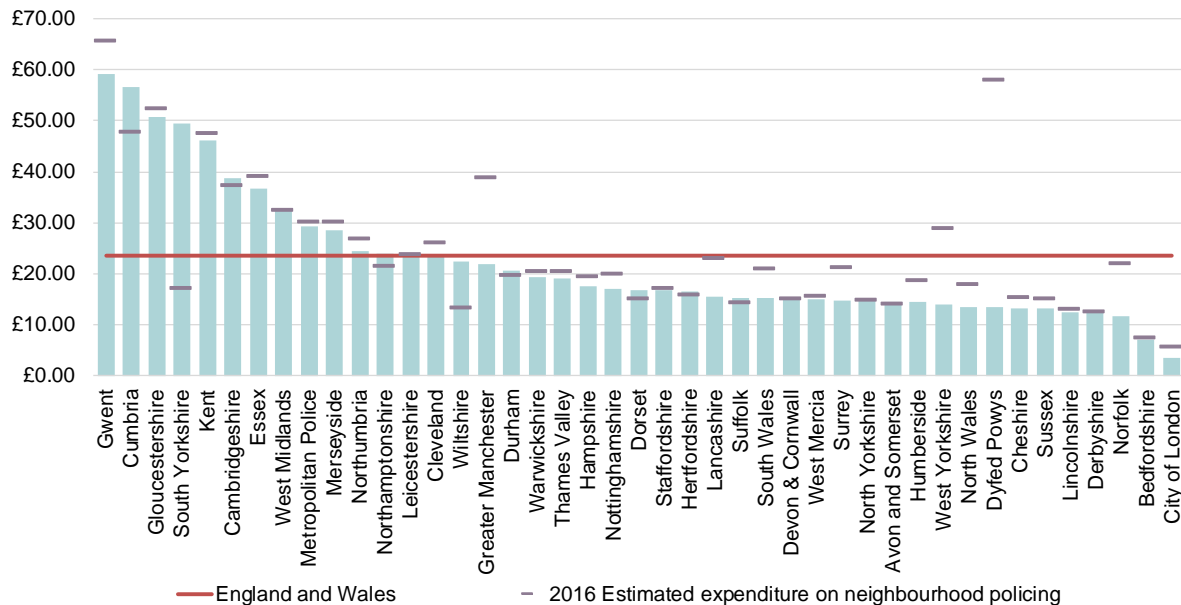
Source: March 2016 and March 2017 Police Objective Analysis
For further information about this data, please see annex A

As the figure above shows, there is considerable variation in how much forces spend on neighbourhood policing and for most forces the amount has reduced since last year. It is difficult for forces to maintain neighbourhood policing at a time of financial constraint, and when demand for their services is increasing. Across England and Wales, the total number of officers assigned to neighbourhood policing has decreased by 9.7 percent in the last year. Nevertheless, 19 forces have increased or maintained the number of officers in their neighbourhood teams.

Humberside Police and South Yorkshire Police are good examples of forces that are giving local policing greater priority. South Yorkshire Police has reinstated its dedicated neighbourhood policing officers and moved 387 officer posts back into neighbourhood policing. However, this has to be seen in the context of an overall declining number of PCSOs who can often be the mainstay of local policing.

Prioritising prevention

Crime prevention works best in those forces whose leaders emphasise its importance. Police officers and staff need to receive the time and skills they need, while external organisations need to play their part in helping to reduce crime.

Some of the 17 forces we inspected did not show that they saw crime prevention as a priority. Others did not show whether they had a coherent approach to crime prevention that they had communicated clearly to the workforce. Some did not fully understand crime prevention, or the tried and tested techniques on which it depends.

Good forces tend to allow staff to concentrate on their prevention work and do not often assign them to other duties. They understand their communities well, and take a co-ordinated, long-term approach to problem solving. Leaders hold neighbourhood officers and staff to account for results, and monitor performance regularly. High performing forces regularly assess risks and tensions in communities. They exploit opportunities to prevent crime by deploying officers and staff equipped with the right skills and powers to help the public and prevent crime.

For example, Cleveland Police has made crime prevention one of its three priorities. Police officers and PCSOs working in neighbourhood policing teams receive the training, guidance and support they need to get involved with communities, solve problems together with partner organisations, and prevent crime. Neighbourhood officers are not deployed away from their communities often, and PCSOs are never diverted from their main tasks. The force's investment in neighbourhood policing includes recruiting crime prevention co-ordinators and schools' liaison PCSOs to help with prevention and early intervention.

Humberside Police has increased the number of police officers and PCSOs it assigns to community policing and who work with partner organisations. It works constructively with other organisations, concentrating on safeguarding vulnerable people, solving problems, and preventing crime and anti-social behaviour. Local officers and staff are well trained in using the SARA (scanning, analysis, response and assessment) problem-solving model to address local concerns.

We found that when chief constables and police and crime commissioners make crime prevention a priority, different departments of the force work better together to prevent crime.

Response versus prevention

Only limited resources can be dedicated to neighbourhood policing, and at times of competing demands and financial constraints it can be difficult to invest in prevention. However, the need to respond immediately and react when incidents happen (response policing) must be balanced against the need to stop incidents from occurring in the first place. If a force concentrates too much on response policing, it risks losing sight of the need for a consistent, focused and planned approach to problem solving and crime prevention.

We are encouraged that some forces have introduced new ways of working into their local policing model. Thames Valley Police, for example, has been highly selective in assigning dedicated neighbourhood officers and staff to specific areas. Its specialist

problem-solving officers, supported by neighbourhood teams, concentrate on the long-term problems that matter most to communities. Essex Police identifies seven geographical areas as priorities for its staff and its partner organisations. It has dedicated community policing officers and staff, trained and skilled at problem solving, permanently deployed to these defined areas.

But too many forces do not make sure that staff working in neighbourhoods and communities have time to focus on this role. Responding to day-to-day policing demands is seen too often as more important than longer-term problem solving. Not all forces understand when neighbourhood officers may be redeployed to other duties; still fewer measure the effects of their redeployment.

Staffordshire Police is striking a good balance between responding to emergencies and long-term problem solving and crime prevention. At those times when demand for its services peaks, the force does redeploy officers from neighbourhood duties to emergency response. However, it has put checks and balances in place to make sure this is not done at the expense of providing proactive and preventative policing services to the community.

Neighbourhood policing staff – how they spend their time

It is for chief constables to determine which particular model of neighbourhood policing is appropriate for their force. However, we expect forces to make sure that officers and staff involve themselves closely with communities, know what worries them, and work with other professionals to bring about long-term solutions to problems.

We are still concerned that, whatever model of local policing a force uses, too often police leaders do not have a good understanding of how much time officers and PCSOs spend on crime prevention, problem solving and working with their communities.

Our survey of (11,158) neighbourhood officers and PCSOs (for further information about this data, please see annex A) asked respondents to estimate how much time they spend on certain activities. We then compared this with the amount of time the chief officers intend them to spend on these activities. Our analysis showed disparities between the proportion of time chief officers want neighbourhood officers and staff to spend on prevention activities, and the time neighbourhood officers and staff estimate they spend on these activities. It showed that officers spend less time on activities associated with neighbourhood policing, such as problem solving and community engagement, than their chief officers intend. PCSOs estimated that they spent more than a third of their time on investigating crime, when chief officers thought that this would account for only 4 percent of their time.

In seven of the forces we inspected, neighbourhood officers reported being removed from their work to cover other duties and respond to more immediate risks. How often this happens, and the effect that it has varies. Officers in some forces told us they did not have enough time to concentrate on crime prevention and problem solving responsibilities as they are too often assigned to other duties.

Forces need to understand how their frontline staff really spend their time, what level of resource they need to meet calls for service from the public and prevent crime. When forces are able to describe this requirement, they will be better able to allocate the right level of resource to each function.

How forces understand the communities they serve

Forces get involved with their local communities in different ways. Those that do it well collect and organise information systematically and keep it up to date. They learn about the communities they serve and what matters to them from a variety of sources. These include: public attitude surveys; user satisfaction surveys; community and ward profiles; and 'problem profiles'[7] showing the pattern of particular types of crime across their area.

High performing forces actively seek feedback from local people. They get their message across through social media and the local press, run surgeries and events, and take part in public meetings. They also communicate with the public through their work with local councillors and Members of Parliament. In these ways, they become aware of any community tensions, whether they are new or long-standing. Then they use this awareness to work in appropriate ways to reduce these tensions.

Gloucestershire Constabulary has a good approach to getting involved with its communities; its neighbourhood teams engage with people through social media and by using a variety of community meetings and events. The force uses a 'neighbourhood alert' system to warn local communities of the need to be vigilant when a series of crime has occurred in their area. Dedicated PCSOs work with communities that normally have little involvement with the police. PCSOs based in local policing areas also carry out two public surveys a month to identify concerns or problems.

[7] A problem profile is intended to provide the force with greater understanding of established and emerging crime or incident series, priority locations or other identified high-risk issues. It should be based on the research and analysis of a wide range of information sources, including information from partner organisations. It should contain recommendations for making decisions and options for action.

Social media – digital dialogue is needed

Digital communication and social media certainly provide good ways of improving discussion between local communities and the police. Last year, we reported that forces were making increasing use of social media. Mainly this is used to focus on local projects rather than conveying messages from the chief officer team. Forces vary a good deal in how often and when they use digital means to communicate with the public. That said, we have found many examples of innovative and effective practice.

Research conducted on our behalf examined the extent to which forces contribute to social media discussions, and when they use it most. Analysis of more than a million Twitter posts shows that the police tweet most frequently about violent crime and theft. Public tweets relevant to policing, on the other hand, are more likely to refer to terrorism, sexual offences and fraud (see figure 3 below). We would expect to see some difference, as the public's messages are more likely to be driven by the news agenda than those of the police. It is important that forces understand matters the public are concerned about and respond to these.

Figure 3: Percentage of tweets by crime category, for police forces and Twitter users in England and Wales from 2 April 2017 to 2 July 2017

■ Tweets by police forces in England and Wales ■ Tweets by Twitter users in England and Wales
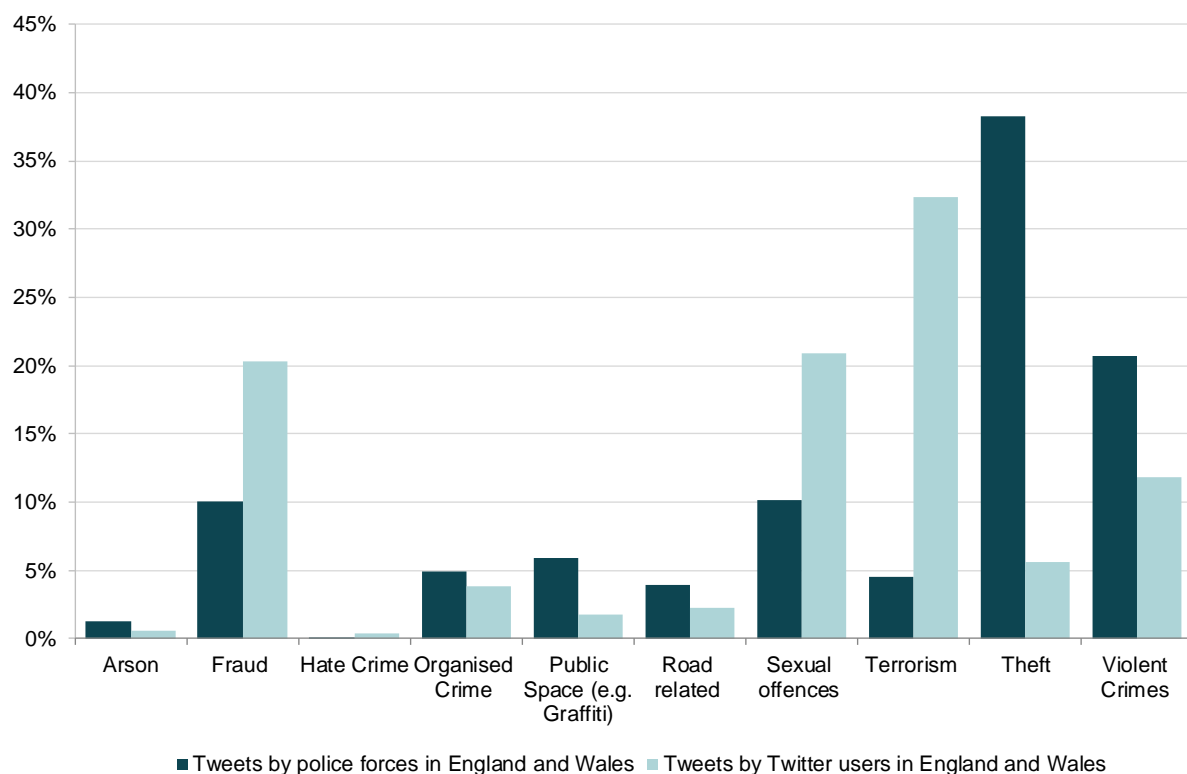
Source: CASM Consulting
For further information about this data, please see annex A

Not all police social media accounts are the same – there may be a corporate force account, accounts used by specialist teams (such as road policing units) accounts for local or neighbourhood teams and personal police officer accounts. Our analysis

of Twitter and Facebook considered all of these accounts. It showed that overwhelmingly forces tend to 'broadcast' messages rather than start and develop discussion with the public. However, those police officers and staff using individual accounts were more likely to enter into a dialogue with members of the public. Our analysis suggested that police use of social media communications is not always linked to a force strategy for engaging the public and reducing crime.

The police service's use of social media is still evolving. Forces now need to build on this strong start. There are positive examples of police forces using social media to find missing persons. Broadcasting messages can be appropriate, for example, in alerting local people about a spate of shed break-ins and asking them to check their security. At other times, such as when the police need to understand local priorities more, they might get a better insight by stimulating and deepening conversations.

Tackling crime and anti-social behaviour

A force's problem-solving method is the way it systematically identifies and analyses crime and disorder problems, develops specific approaches to individual problems, and assesses whether they have succeeded. If they are to work, problem-solving models and plans need to be used consistently across a whole force and be well understood and accepted by all staff.

Most forces use SARA (scan, analyse, review, assess) as their problem-solving model. Another popular model is PIER (prevention, intelligence, enforcement and reassurance), a joint-agency model designed for local problems. Other forces have developed their own problem-solving methodology, or use several models.

Staff involved in preventing crime, not just police officers, should be trained in evidence-led problem solving and crime prevention. Problem solving is more likely to succeed when it is carried out jointly with other organisations, like local councils, ideally located in the same building, with agencies sharing information and data.

Thames Valley Police brings together all the elements of good problem solving very effectively. It has a dedicated neighbourhood policing team that encourages problem-solving officers to work together over the long term to prevent crime. Local volunteers support staff on some prevention measures. The force has improved its case-management system to record problem-solving plans more systematically.

Later in this report we acknowledge that neighbourhood officers and managers are becoming more involved in tackling serious and organised crime. In this section, we describe how forces are assigning supervising officers in local policing teams as lead responsible officers (LROs) for organised crime groups. This is an important role. As well as making sure ruthless criminals are tracked down, those performing this role bring in support from other organisations to protect victims and help offenders turn away from crime.

Problem solving – training and sharing good practice needs to improve

Many of the forces we graded as requiring improvement have things in common that make it more difficult for them to solve problems effectively. Many of them are not training their staff well enough, or making sure they have the right skills to judge when problem-solving projects are effective. Too often, police officers and staff do not work as effectively as they could with other organisations, or they find information sharing difficult because of incompatible IT systems.

Even when some forces do measure how effectively they solve problems, they find it hard to share examples of what works best, or ways of working that might be useful in another part of the force. We have raised this problem several times in previous years.

It is encouraging that some forces are willing to introduce new ways of working. Previously, we found that West Mercia Police and Warwickshire Police tended to be more reactive rather than proactive. Both forces recently introduced community problem-solving co-ordinators who have expert knowledge of the legal powers and other interventions that help to reduce crime. They give a lot of support to local neighbourhood teams and make sure these teams use the full range of tactics and enforcement powers available to them. This is an important step towards deepening police understanding of how to resolve persistent problems in communities and prevent offending.

Anti-social behaviour – the scale and effect

In 2016, we were concerned that some forces were no longer treating anti-social behaviour as a priority. This year forces have made less use of court orders and of other tactics[8] that can help them contain anti-social behaviour and target offenders. Furthermore, even when they do use them, not all forces systematically evaluate the effect of these powers, nor can they always say whether the use of powers has helped resolve community problems.

Forces have reduced their use of the main anti-social behaviour powers in the last year. We examined the use of four specific powers and found these were used on 21 percent fewer occasions in the 12 months to 30 June 2017 than in the previous 12 months. There is also a considerable variation in the extent to which different forces use these powers. Figure 4 below shows the variation.

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[8] Six anti-social behaviour powers: the civil injunction, criminal behaviour order, community protection notice, public spaces protection order, closure power, and the dispersal power.

Figure 4: Rate of anti-social behaviour powers per 1 million population, by force, in the 12 months to 30 June 2017

Legend: England and Wales (red line); 2016 ASB powers per 1 million population (dash)
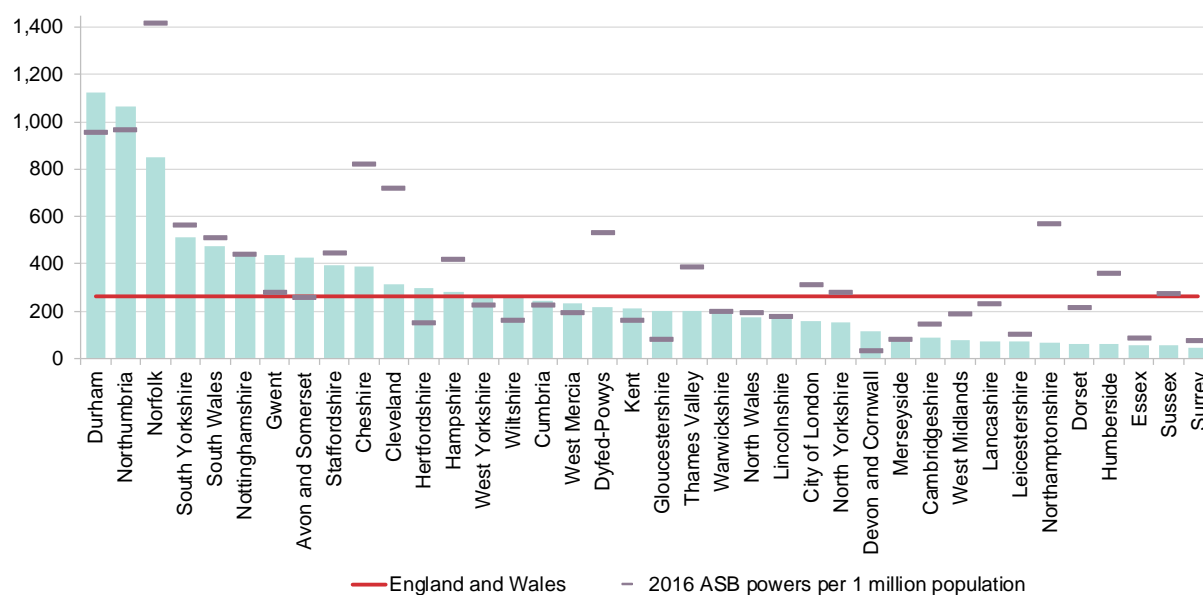
The frequent use of anti-social behaviour orders is not a measure of success in itself. Forces need also to be effectively involved with the community, to work with partners and to measure the results of what they do in detail. Only when all this is done can a force be sure it understands what matters to local people, and find lasting solutions to their concerns.

Nevertheless, forces may find anti-social behaviour powers useful when more conventional law-enforcement measures are less likely to succeed. Some examples of anti-social behaviour are not crimes, so the person who is misbehaving cannot be arrested. Even so, this person's behaviour can have effects that are just as severe as those of a crime, and cause just as much misery to local people.

Police can use anti-social behaviour powers as an alternative to arrest. They can place restrictions on what someone can do, forbidding them from intimidating individuals, for example. They can prevent gatherings in parks or public spaces if people find this menacing. They can also result in the eviction of tenants who abuse their neighbours persistently.

Forces that are making less use of these powers should have a sound understanding of why this is the case. Other organisations can also use some of these powers. It may be that in an effective partnership with the local authority, the force is not the body applying for the orders. However, we found examples where forces did not understand the reasons for the fluctuations. Without that understanding, it is possible that the force is not using all the tactics available to it to reduce anti-social behaviour.

Identifying and disseminating best practice

In previous effectiveness reports we have concluded that the police service needs to get better at identifying and sharing information on best practice. We expect forces to be able to disseminate best practice locally, regionally and nationally. The College of Policing has established a 'what works' website that gives officers and staff access to information about methods that have been shown to work. Some forces have worked with the College of Policing in seminars to identify best practice. We found that, as a result of this, some neighbourhood officers are making better use of their problem-solving model to measure the effect of their actions.

Despite some good examples of best practice being shared within forces, the police service is still a long way from having immediate access to a reliable database that supplies information about what has been proved most effective in reducing crime and anti-social behaviour. Forces should be looking out for cost-effective and well-evaluated solutions to the problems they face. These should then contribute to a body of knowledge that can be shared at the local, regional and national levels, making the best solutions readily available to practitioners.

Investigating crime and managing offenders

One of the principal roles of the police is investigating crime and bringing offenders to justice. The public expects the police to investigate crime well, and the first step in bringing offenders to justice is a thorough and professional investigation.

An accurate assessment of the threat, harm and risk that victims of crime may face is fundamental to a good investigation. Supervisors should review this aspect continually throughout the investigation, to make sure the police are keeping victims and the public safe.

Clear action plans also guide the most effective investigations, characterised by support to the victim throughout the course of the inquiry. Crimes should be investigated by officers or members of police staff who possess the right skills and experience to manage the complexity of the case. The more complex an investigation and the more vulnerable the victim, the more advisable it is to assign a specialist investigator.

What we were looking for and what we found

For these reasons we focused our investigation on the initial investigative response forces provide, including:

How well forces asses risk and the needs of callers when they first make contact;

- how well forces respond to victims in an emergency; and

- how good officers are at taking the first steps at a scene of a crime;

We looked at the standards of investigation, including:

- the effectiveness of investigative support functions; and

- how well investigations are supervised;

And we viewed catching criminals, including:

- the number of investigations brought to a satisfactory conclusion;

- how well forces track down wanted criminals; and

- how good forces are at reducing re-offending.

Overall performance – an improving picture with some areas of repeated shortcomings

In 2017, we inspected 26 of the 43 forces to assess their capability to investigate crime. Of these 26 forces, 16 have been graded as good and 10 have been graded as requiring improvement. Of the forces inspected, we are pleased to see that seven have remained good at investigating crime and nine forces have improved their performance; performance has deteriorated in only two.

When the forces that were graded good in 2017 are considered alongside the forces graded good in previous years, 33 of the 43 forces are reaching this standard. While this is encouraging, it should not mask some well-established areas of underperformance that we have commented on before.

What we found in 2016

In 2016, we noted a 7.8 percent increase in overall crime (excluding fraud), with marked increases in crimes involving vulnerable victims: domestic abuse-related offences had risen by 11 percent and sexual offences by 16 percent.
We commended forces for increasing the capacity of specialist investigative teams but expressed some concern that this might be at the expense of more routine investigations.

Victims of crime who contacted the force by telephone generally were receiving a good level of service. Most forces, although not all, were using a standardised risk assessment process to identify the levels of harm that victims faced.

Most call handlers were recording relevant information and deciding the appropriate level of service that the force should provide. However, there were some troubling cases in a small number of forces, when police were not responding to calls for service. This was happening at times of peak demand when forces were facing resourcing pressures.

Generally, we found that the first officers to arrive at the scene of a crime were doing a good job, but some were overlooking a number of basic investigation responsibilities.

We reported that the shortage of qualified detectives and other investigators was critical. Some forces had taken steps to address the shortfall by fast-tracking recruits into detective posts or by providing career pathways into detective positions.
We raised this significant concern with the NPCC and recommended that, in conjunction with the College of Policing, a national action plan be put in place to deal with the shortfall.

We found that standards of investigation varied. In particular, the supervision of routine investigations of less-serious crime was all too often poor, as was the quality of investigation in some forces. Some investigations were subject to unacceptable delays because forces did not have the right facilities to retrieve digital evidence from smartphone, tablets and computers.

We raised a serious concern about the number of investigations that were concluded where the victim had withdrawn their support for a prosecution. In one force, the proportion of cases completed in this way accounted for nearly a quarter of all investigations; in other forces, only a few cases were concluded in this way. What was most troubling was the lack of analysis to explain these variations, particularly the possibility that victims were being failed. We asked six forces to review their procedures immediately and we recommended that the Home Office, in conjunction with the NPCC, should determine if further guidance was necessary.

Finally, we expressed concern at the number of wanted individuals who, until that point time, had evaded capture. We found it troubling that so many wanted individuals were at large in our communities, and were also concerned at the lack of active management to track them down and bring them to justice.

How things had changed in 2017

Recorded crime continues to increase. Since our 2016 inspection, there has been a 14 percent increase in the overall level of police-recorded crime (excluding fraud). There has been an increase in crime in all forces. Some crime types continue to see sustained increases in the level of reporting: for example, sexual offences have increased by 19 percent and domestic abuse-related crimes have risen by 17 percent in the last year.

Callers generally receive a good service when they first make contact with the police. Forces make increasing use of a nationally recognised risk assessment tool to identify vulnerable callers. However, we did come across occasions when call handlers were not recording important information when they made risk assessments.

This year we did not find the same number of cases where the risk had been downgraded deliberately, to justify a slower response. Worryingly, however, in a minority of forces, operational pressures are so severe that the force cannot respond to members of the public in a timely way. This is a serious concern to HMICFRS and it puts the public at risk.

We found examples of where officers are still not carrying out basic enquiries when they first arrive at the scene of a crime on some occasions. This year, we found a continuing disparity in the quality of investigations undertaken in specialist units

where the quality of investigation is generally good and non-specialist units where all too often the quality of investigation is poor. Lack of adequate supervision is without doubt an important aspect of this finding.

We have more information now about the scale and extent of the shortage of qualified investigators, which we described as a crisis in 2016. Figures provided to us by forces show a shortfall of about 5,000 investigator positions. This affects some forces much more acutely than others. When we raised this as a cause for concern last year, we recommended that the NPCC work with the College of Policing to put in place an action plan to remedy the shortfall. This work is under way.

Through a combination of investing in specialist facilities and obtaining help from external contractors, the number of investigations that are delayed while digital evidence has to be retrieved from smartphones and other devices is falling.

In 2016, we expressed concern about the number of investigations that were concluded where the victim had withdrawn their support for a prosecution. Since then, the proportion of crimes being finalised in this way has risen from 14 percent to 17 percent. Most forces do not have a comprehensive understanding of the reasons for this, nor have they established whether some victims are being failed by the inappropriate use of outcome. In addition, forces are now expressing concern that they may be interpreting guidance on when to finalise a case in this way inconsistently.

This year, we started to examine the effect of changes to legislation that limit the occasions on which an accused person can be released on bail in the course of the investigation. Many forces are now releasing increasing numbers of suspects under investigation. This is not a substitute for police bail; restrictions cannot be placed on individuals to, for example, prevent them from contacting witnesses or otherwise interfering with an investigation. It is important to establish whether this change is having a detrimental effect on victims. It is too soon to draw conclusions at this stage, and Recommendation 4 addresses this issue.

We remain concerned at the number of wanted individuals who have yet to be apprehended by forces. Until forces track them down they are free to offend and harm victims. There are five forces which, although we asked them to improve in 2016, still underperform in this area, and now an additional seven forces who need to improve in this respect.

The initial investigative response provided by forces

When victims first contact a police force – assessing needs and prioritising the response

The investigative process begins when a member of the public contacts the police, whether by dialling 101 or 999, or speaking to an officer in the street or at a police station. Staff engaged at the first point of contact play an important role: often they must support and safeguard victims and collect evidence to solve crimes and bring offenders to justice. They must pay attention to detail from the beginning. They must ensure they record information accurately and take every opportunity to find evidence and keep it securely.

Many forces use a risk assessment tool to help them understand the level of threat, harm and risk posed to an individual when contact is first made. A commonly used tool is THRIVE.[9] This helps staff to assess what the caller needs from the beginning by asking a set series of questions. Forces then prioritise the level of response that is needed. The model also enables them to decide whether any other organisations can help to safeguard the caller. We found good examples of other service providers, such as mental health professionals, being involved even before officers had been sent to the incident or a crime had been recorded.

Operational pressures – a quarter of forces struggling to respond

We do not underestimate the demands and complexities of responding to members of the public who need police assistance. However, we have significant concerns about the way some forces respond to people who contact the police, particularly vulnerable people. These concerns relate to the failure of some forces to respond promptly and to their actions when they do respond.

Last year, we emphasised that a small number of forces were suppressing demand in busy periods by re-grading calls. They were changing their original assessment of risk to suggest it was less serious than it was, exposing vulnerable victims to unnecessary harm. While we did not find such troubling cases this year, our file review suggests that on occasions risk sometimes is still being described as lower than it should be.

It is more worrying that we came across occasions, when demand was highest, when some forces could not respond to victims at all, or did so badly. HMICFRS is concerned by this finding, because it shows that the system is under severe strain

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[9] The threat, harm, risk, investigation, vulnerability and engagement (THRIVE) model is used to assess the appropriate initial police response to a call for service. It allows a judgement to be made of the relative risk posed by the call and places the individual needs of the victim at the centre of that decision.

and in some forces the cracks are showing. This is resulting in the following problems:

- In two forces, we found considerable delays in allocating calls for assistance. As a result, some members of the public - including vulnerable victims - did not receive the response they needed.[10]

- In four forces, we found that the police could not respond to calls (including emergency calls) immediately, and had not always considered whether the needs of the victims had changed during the delay. This meant that they did not always re-prioritise incidents for attendance as a result of increased risk.

- In one force, between 20 and 50 percent of incidents to which a unit should have been sent within 24 hours were not attended within this target time period.

- In some forces, we found that staff were making appointments to meet domestic abuse victims when they needed a more urgent response. In one force, scheduled appointments were used in nearly one-third of domestic abuse cases.

Where these practices put the lives of members of the public at risk forces were asked to examine their procedures immediately.

Figure 5, below, shows the demand placed on the police service by individuals contacting forces. The graph shows the number of incidents created by the force for every 1,000 head of population, and how this has varied between 2016 and 2017.

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[10] Most forces categorise the calls for service they receive as requiring an emergency response (usually within 15-20 minutes), a prompt response (usually within an hour) or a routine response (usually an appointment scheduled at a later date).

Figure 5: Number of incidents recorded by forces per 1,000 population, in the 12 months to 30 June 2017 and 12 months to 30 June 2016[11]
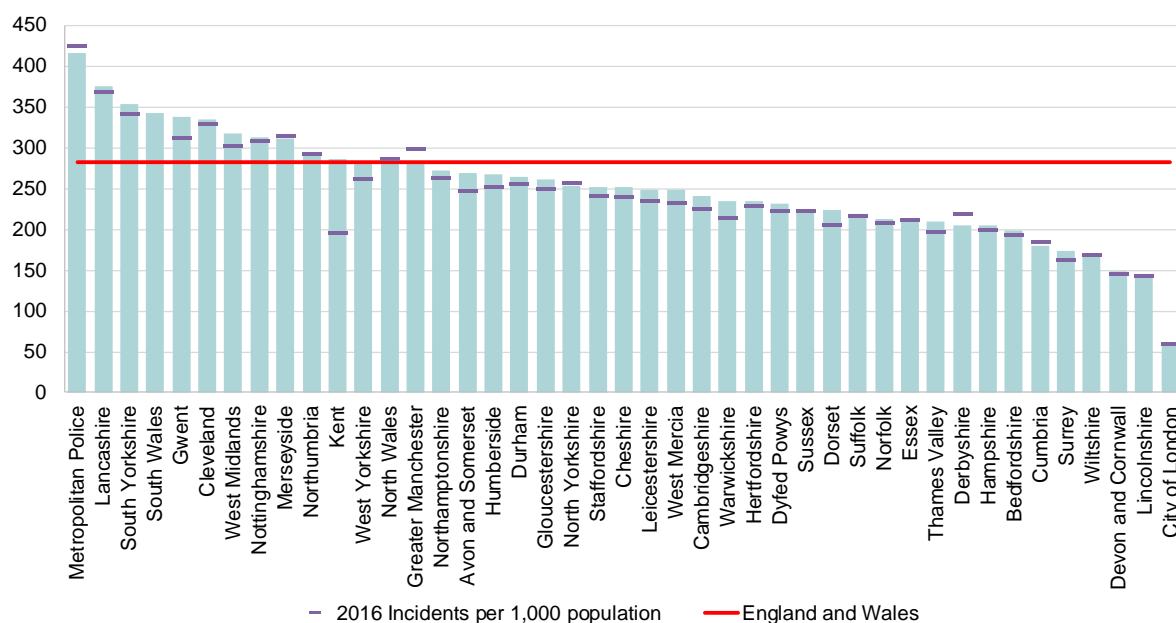
2016 Incidents per 1,000 population   England and Wales

Source: HMICFRS 2017 effectiveness data collection
For further information about this data, please see annex A

Standards of investigation

Investigations are most likely to succeed if they are planned well and managed by skilled and experienced staff whose supervisors support them properly. In response to financial constraints, many forces have changed the way they operate in recent years, in order to provide a long-term service at the same time as making savings. We found that many forces have introduced new ways of working, or are about to undergo significant organisational change in order to improve their service to vulnerable people.

There are signs in some forces prioritising resources for specialist investigative units (supporting vulnerable victims) is having a detrimental effect on other areas of investigations. While forces must find ways to support the most vulnerable, they should not do this at the expense of other victims, or make it less likely that their cases will be brought to a satisfactory conclusion.

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[11] South Wales Police was unable to verify data on the number of incidents recorded for the 12 months to 30 June 2016.

The first officers to arrive at the scene of a crime – vital first steps

Normally, uniformed officers are the first to respond to a crime, and have a number of important responsibilities. Many of these are about keeping the victim and other people safe, but the officers must also carry out other vital aspects of investigation effectively. Among other things, they must find evidence and keep it secure, preserve the scene of crime for forensic investigation and speak with witnesses. Many investigations depend on the retrieval of this evidence from smartphones, tablets and computers if prosecutions are to succeed. These tasks are known as 'golden hour enquiries'.[12] It has long been recognised that failure to complete these properly is likely to undermine investigations, lead to duplication of effort and perhaps, ultimately, mean that guilty parties escape justice.

We found that in the vast majority of cases, officers who respond to these incidents take the correct steps to arrest offenders and protect victims and anyone else involved that is vulnerable, particularly children. However, responding officers overlook some of the golden hour responsibilities on occasions and seven forces needed to improve this aspect of their investigations.

We conducted a review of 2,700 crime case files[13] and this supported these fieldwork findings. In over 50 percent opportunities to identify an offender were missed; on a quarter of occasions, house-to-house enquiries in search of witnesses were not made; and the possibility that CCTV evidence was available was not followed up in one of every six occasions.

Investigative standards – specialist and non-specialist investigators

This year's inspection showed that the difference between the quality of investigations carried out by specialist and non-specialist investigators is widening. These findings are based on our review of 2,700 crime files, interviews with investigators, and spot checks on investigations during the course of the inspection.

In specialist teams, investigations generally lead to satisfactory results for victims, who receive a good standard of service throughout. Usually, these teams investigate more serious, complex crimes and those involving vulnerable victims. By contrast, the quality of investigations into 'volume crime'[14] is poorer. Many forces give these

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[12] 'Golden hour' refers to the time after a crime has been committed, during which the potential to recover forensic evidence is greatest.

[13] We reviewed 2,700 investigation case files from all force in England and Wales. This gives us good insight into the quality of investigations but is not a representative sample so findings need to be corroborated with other inspection findings. For more information see annex A.

[14] Volume crime is defined as: any crime which, through its sheer volume, has a significant impact on the community and on the ability of the local police to tackle it. Volume crime often includes priority crimes, such as street robbery, burglary and vehicle-related criminality, but can also apply to criminal damage or assaults.

investigations to uniformed officers in response or neighbourhood teams, who manage this workload alongside a number of other responsibilities. Too often, these investigations showed: an inconsistent service to victims; no investigation plans; important lines of enquiry overlooked; missed opportunities to find important evidence; and poor standards of supervision.

More than a quarter of crime files reviewed that required an investigative plan showed no such plan when this would have helped the investigator. Lines of enquiry that were overlooked included: the gathering of CCTV evidence; talking to witnesses; carrying out house-to-house enquiries; and use of body-worn video cameras issued to officers to get evidence. It is significant also that in most of these cases there was either no supervision or it was inadequate.

To obtain a better understanding of the quality of investigations, in 2017 we surveyed members of the police service, on a voluntary basis, to understand how effective their force had been at investigating offending. Of the 11,158 staff who responded to the survey, 41 percent told us that they felt their force was 'not very effective, or not at all effective' at investigating crime.

Investigating volume crime

Volume crime is the category most likely to be investigated by non-specialist investigators, often to a poorer standard. Often these crimes investigated by frontline staff such as response officers or neighbourhood officers who are not specialist investigators.

However, the expectations of victims are likely to remain the same. All crime has an effect; victims will expect a professional service, whether or not the investigating officer has specialist training and experience.

The police must be careful to avoid the impression that volume crime is trivial or that its effect on its victims is not deemed important. Included in this type of crime are offences that can traumatise victims and do lasting damage, including some domestic abuse cases, assaults and burglaries involving losses. We are concerned that non-specialist officers (in response teams or neighbourhood teams) carry out most of these investigations. When we reviewed investigation cases only just over 70 percent of them were investigated to a satisfactory standard. Specialist teams, on the other hand, reached the standard on 90 percent of occasions.

When considering the poor standard of investigations that non-specialist staff, normally response officers, carried out, we examined whether the demands on their time were undermining the quality of their investigations. Although some concerns were expressed about this, officers qualified it by saying that, in serious cases, they were given the time to remain and secure evidence.

Raising standards and giving practical support to investigators

Forces should make better use of recommended standards to ensure that the investigations that non-specialist investigators manage are as good as those that specialist investigative teams manage. Since 2013, the College of Policing has published professional guidance on standards of investigation in the form of Authorised Professional Practice (APP).[15] However, we did not find evidence that all forces are making practical use of this.

Forces should consider how best to translate these standards into practical tools and guidance, which can support busy and pressured non-specialist investigators in this important and complex role. It would be possible to develop a less-complex set of investigative standards.

As investigative demand increases and as forces assign more investigative work to non-specialist staff, it is important not to jeopardise the service to victims of volume crime. Of the 26 forces inspected this year seven need to improve the quality of investigations. For this reason, and because many investigations that non-specialist investigators complete are supervised poorly (which is discussed later in the report), HMICFRS is concerned about the overall quality of some investigations.

Allocation of crime to investigators – generally sound procedures with some exceptions in times of peak demand

Each force has procedures in place to allocate crimes for investigation. In some forces, the allocation procedure depends on the type of crime being investigated; elsewhere, it is the level of risk or harm that a victim faces that determines who will investigate the case.

Irrespective of force policies and procedures, a victim will expect the investigator to be sufficiently competent to undertake all necessary enquiries as well as care for their needs during the course of the investigation. Most forces have a crime allocation policy that assures that investigations are allocated to individuals who are competent to manage all aspects of the case.

However, on some occasions, we found this not to be the case. Particularly when forces were experiencing high levels of demand for their services, we found examples of cases being allocated to staff that did not have the requisite skills to complete the investigation successfully.

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[15] Authorised Professional Practice is authorised by the College of Policing as the official source of professional practice on policing. Police officers and staff are expected to take account of APP in discharging their responsibilities. Available at: www.app.college.police.uk/about-app/

Phone investigations – improvements needed

Another different way of working for many forces is telephone investigation. When there are few opportunities to take investigation forward, or when it is unlikely that an offender will be identified, this can be an appropriate way of managing demand and of providing a service to victims. It avoids the need to send officers to a crime scene when there are limited evidential opportunities, and keeps them available for work that is more likely to have a positive result.

Not all forces have telephone investigation units and, where they exist, forces use them differently. Some telephone investigation units take full responsibility for investigations; others provide a triage or screening function before allegations of crime are sent elsewhere for investigation.

Irrespective of whether a crime is investigated over the telephone or by an officer attending, the essential hallmarks of an effective investigation are the same: structured planning, skilled staff and supportive supervision. Our review of 266 telephone investigations showed that, in most cases, the matter was suitable for investigation in this way. However, a third of these investigations did not follow up obvious lines of enquiry. In addition, we judged a third to be ineffective; four out of five were not properly supervised.

Forces increasingly favour telephone investigation units as a way of managing the workload of investigations. The best examples are very effective: they are well led and properly resourced, and standards of service are clear. However, in some cases we examined, it was clear that investigations were not as thorough as they should be. This is likely to be unsettling to victims, especially if their expectations are not managed properly. Telephone investigators need to follow all possible and practicable lines of enquiry, and supervisors need to oversee this and ensure standards are maintained. We are concerned that some telephone investigation units undertake little more than administrative procedures in an effort to close the inquiry as quickly as possible. It is important that forces are frank with the public in terms of the types of cases they will generally deal with in this way.

Investigator capacity – too many vacant positions

Forces have to match the resources they have available for investigation (such as police detectives or police staff investigators, intelligence analysts, and forensic support staff) with the range of crimes they need to investigate. They need to make sure that the skills and capabilities of the resources match the complexities of the crimes and the needs of the victims.

Some forces are coping well with the marked increase in the number of complex crimes, such as serious sexual offences; in other forces a lack of qualified detectives and other investigators is potentially exposing victims to risk. A number of explanations for this shortage exist. For example, significant growth in specialist

areas, such as counter-terrorism, sexual abuse and other investigations involving vulnerable people, has resulted in a need for more qualified and specialist investigators. Such investigations require the highest levels of skills and competence, which take years to develop. Furthermore, as these officers become more specialised, they become less available to work in other areas where there are operational pressures.

Reasons why investigator positions are vacant

As we set out last year, there are several reasons why the police service has struggled to keep pace with the increase in demand for investigative capacity. The work of the NPCC has also examined the reasons why this problem exists.

They are:

- Officers are reluctant to specialise as detectives because of: high workloads; a lack of experienced mentors to support them during training; unsociable working hours, which are not rewarded with pay increments; and the intense scrutiny they come under if there is some form of investigative failure (in the next chapter, we also consider some of the pressures detectives in public protection roles experience).

- It takes time to gain investigative skills and experience. To become qualified as a detective takes several years and involves examinations and work-based assessment. By contrast, other career opportunities in the police service may seem more attractive.

- It is difficult to retain detectives. Their skills are becoming increasingly attractive to the commercial sector. For example, a number of highly trained financial investigators have been lost to banks and other financial institutions, which offer greater personal rewards.

- To balance budgets, some forces have cut back on programmes to introduce more police staff investigators. This has increased the pressure on detectives.

The scale of the problem and the problems it causes

The Police Federation's national detective survey supplies further evidence of the underlying problems. Three-quarters of detectives who responded to it reported excessive workloads. A significant number also reported teams that were too small, which created stress and undermined their wellbeing.

Pressures on the police are acute. Overall, in July 2017, forces had 17 percent fewer investigators than they needed. In total, this amounts to a shortage of more than 5,000 investigators who are qualified to investigate serious and complex crime and major crime under the Professionalising Investigations Programme (PIP)[16.] The shortfall in each force is shown in figure 6.

Figure 6: Percentage shortfall in trained investigators – reported on 1 July 2017[17]
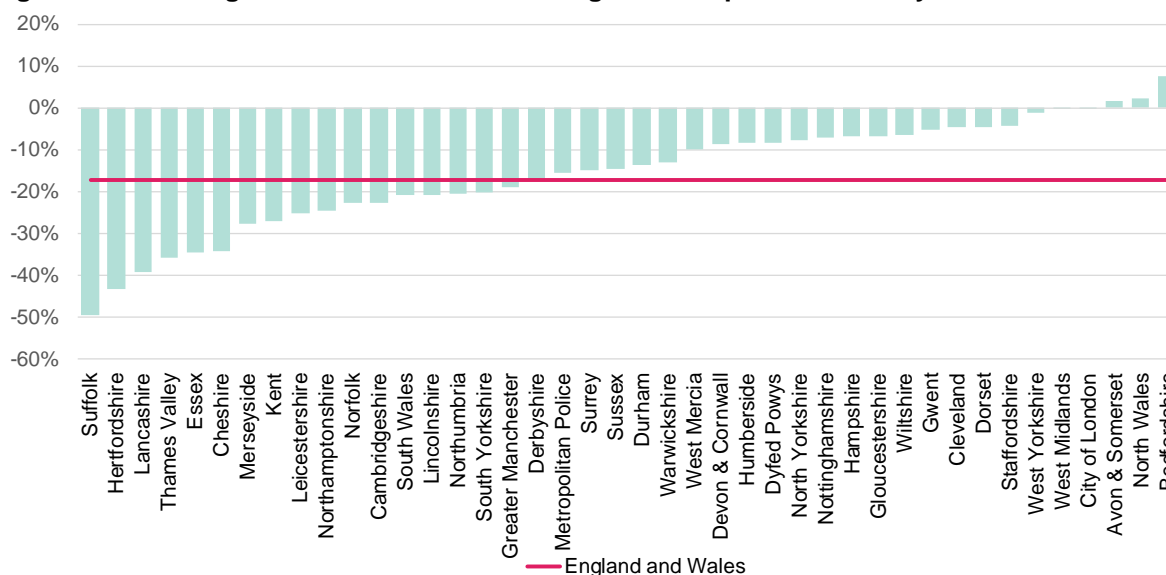
Source: HMICFRS 2017 effectiveness data collection

The picture is not the same across all forces. Three forces do not report a shortfall in investigators; others report that almost half of their investigator positions are not occupied by qualified staff. There is evidence also that there are not enough detectives nationwide for any of them to be sent to help those forces where the shortfall is severest. In addition to the pressure on individual forces, the police service has struggled to find enough detectives to support major investigations, such as the inquiries into child sexual abuse.

Finding solutions to reduce the shortage

Last year, we raised the shortage of investigative staff as a cause for concern. We made two recommendations: that the NPCC and the College of Policing should report by June 2017 on the steps needed to address the shortfall; and that they should publish a national action plan to address the situation by December 2017.

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[16] The aim of the Professionalising Investigations Programme (PIP) is to ensure staff are trained, skilled and accredited to conduct the highest quality investigations. PIP level 1 – priority and volume crime investigations, PIP level 2 – serious and complex investigations, PIP level 3 – major investigations and PIP level 4 – strategic management of highly complex investigations. Available at: www.college.police.uk/What-we-do/Learning/Professional-Training/Investigation/Documents/PIP_Policy.pdf

[17] Cumbria Constabulary was unable to provide data on trained investigators.

In response, in April 2017, the NPCC led a piece of work to assess what was being done to deal with the shortfall, both by forces and at a national level, and consider whether this was enough. The work of the College of Policing and HMICFRS has contributed to this assessment. As a result of this excellent work the service has a better sense now of the scale of the challenge and of the barriers it needs to surmount.

The NPCC has started a considerable programme of work to address the shortfall already. This includes:

- Work with the College of Policing and force colleagues on interventions to fill vacancies, including pay and reward structures and revised entry routes.

- Taking steps to ensure that in the shorter-term, policing can respond to urgent, operational needs by adding capacity from a reserve of former-officers. This is done in many forces (by the temporary recruitment of retired detectives directly or through agencies) and the NPCC is working to ensure a co-ordinated national approach.

- Considering how to improve the retention and development of officers and staff in investigative roles, their career pathways and issues affecting their wellbeing. The question of pay and reward in 'hard to fill' roles is also being examined.

HMICFRS is very encouraged by the strong start the police service has made in addressing the lack of skilled investigators. Recommendation 2 follows on from our recommendation last year and addresses the continued problem of the shortfall in investigators.

Supervision of investigations – more support is needed for inexperienced staff

We remain concerned about standards of supervision. In 2016, we reported that in just under half of all forces needed to improve supervision. Again, in 2017, when we inspected 26 forces, we found the standards of supervision in half of them were below the expected level.

The most worrying aspect is that supervisory standards are lowest in investigations of volume crime. We have set out our findings in the section on raising standards practical support for investigators. Standards of investigation by non-specialist officers (who are not PIP-level qualified) do not match those of their specialist colleagues. Clearly, the investigation of volume crime is an area where regular and intrusive supervision is necessary. Inexperienced members of staff deserve better support from their managers, and victims deserve a more assured service.

It is best practice for a supervisor to review the case in consultation with the investigating officer at the beginning of the investigation and formulate a plan to take enquiries forward. This plan should be recorded in line with rules setting out the

evidence that should be handed over to the accused person's defence team. Typically, investigation plans include securing CCTV, making house-to-house enquiries near the crime scene, finding witnesses and deciding how the victim is to be kept up to date with progress. Our review of crime files showed that investigation plans are not always used, that standards vary, and that some investigators do not follow them in any case.

During the inspection, we found that conversations between supervisors and investigating officers were not being recorded on occasions. Many of these conversations were useful and contributed to the progress of the case. This can lead to problems, particularly if a case is passed on to another investigator. For example, if a crime is reallocated, new investigators may unknowingly repeat enquiries that have been made already. This results in an unnecessary duplication of effort and can also affect a victim's confidence in the force's ability to investigate the crime. North Yorkshire Police has found a good method of overcoming this problem. It has developed a detailed checklist that sets out the precise enquiries that have been completed – and those tasks that await action.

Of the 2,700 crime files reviewed nationally, 1,037 cases did not demonstrate effective or even a limited level of supervision. It is also common for unsupervised investigations to lack an investigation plan. During our inspection, we found that the standard of investigation supervision for more serious and complex crime generally has improved. This is to be expected, given the additional training provided to specialist investigators and the nature of their work. However, we were surprised to find that some rape enquiries did not have an investigation plan.

Downloading digital evidence – forces invest in new technology

Digitalisation and advances in technology have changed the way in which some criminals commit crime. Many prosecutions now rely on digital evidence that must be retrieved from smartphones, tablets and other devices. Most forces have specialist units, sometimes known as high tech crime units, which are responsible for the retrieval of this evidence.

Since 2015, we have raised concerns about whether forces can manage the demand resulting from the need to examine an increasing number of digital devices. Backlogs of examinations of digital devices were making some investigations unnecessarily drawn-out, having a negative effect on victims and, on occasions, resulting in suspects being inappropriately released from custody.

Last year, we noted that 13 forces needed to reduce unacceptable backlogs in retrieving and examining evidence from digital devices. Forces across the country have made strenuous efforts since then to deal with this problem and build capacity. This year, we saw examples of forces filtering the demand on the basis of risk: the more serious cases, such as sexual offences and rape, are given priority for examination. Some forces have started to assign digital forensic work to external

contractors to help manage the rise in demand; this is also improving examination turnaround times. Many forces have also introduced self-service kiosk facilities that enable investigators to retrieve digital evidence without the need to involve forensic experts.

Despite this improving picture, the performance of a small number of forces remains unacceptably poor.

In 2016, 16,162 digital devices were awaiting examination nationally. On 1 July 2017, this number had been reduced by 17 percent to 13,404. Only four forces are now required to make specific improvements. Figure 7 shows the overall picture of reducing backlogs in the examination of digital devices between 2016 and 2017.

Figure 7: Digital exhibits awaiting examination per 100,000 population – 1 July 2016 compared with 1 July 2017
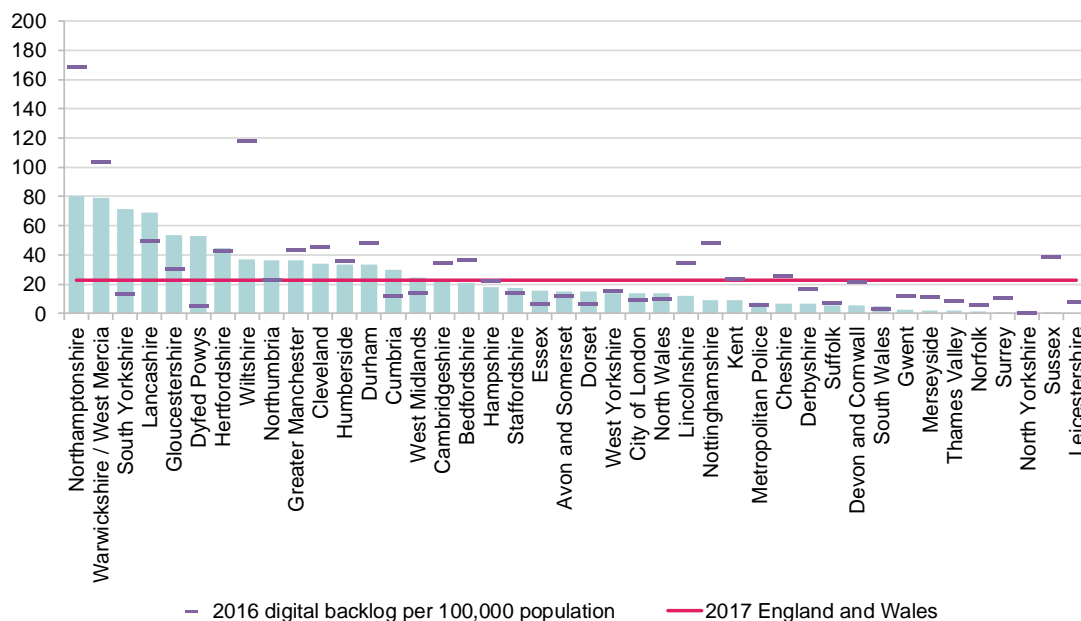
Source: HMICFRS 2017 effectiveness data collection

The collapse recently of some high-profile trials due to failures to disclose digital evidence means that public interest in this area will remain strong. We will monitor developments carefully.

Victim care – a better deal for victims

Victims should be at the heart of any investigation and it is most important that they are supported throughout the course of enquiries. In support of this, some forces, such as Dyfed-Powys Police, have invested in victim care units. The Goleudy victim and witness service provides personalised, practical and emotional support to individuals at all stages of the criminal justice system. Avon and Somerset Constabulary's Lighthouse unit also provides an enhanced service to victims who are vulnerable, feel intimated, or are persistently targeted.

We also found good examples of victim care in Surrey Police. In some cases, Surrey Police assigns PCSOs to victims soon after a crime has been committed. These officers play an important role in visiting the victims, providing reassurance, and in offering practical help and guidance during the course of the investigation.

The *Code of Practice for Victims of Crime*[18] sets out the standards of service that victims can expect. It requires all organisations involved in the criminal justice system, including the police, to identify and meet the needs of victims. This includes agreeing contracts with victims, setting out how often they can expect to be updated on progress and how they wish to be contacted. The code also obliges the force to make sure victims who are vulnerable or targeted persistently receive the attention to which they are entitled.

Of the 2,700 crime files we looked at as part of our inspection, it is encouraging that over 80 percent showed good levels of victim care. This standard fell slightly in telephone investigation units, where only a minority of cases contained evidence that victims were kept up to date with the progress of enquiries. Despite the positive picture of victim care overall, we identified Essex Police, Hertfordshire Constabulary, Humberside Police, Staffordshire Police and Thames Valley Police as forces that need to improve in this important area.

Fraud

This year, we inspected approaches to fraud, and in particular referrals made to forces by Action Fraud.[19] Inspection findings showed forces are providing a mixed response to this type of crime; some are more advanced than others in dealing with referrals, in conducting effective investigations and in providing reassurance and support to victims.

We are planning to undertake a further thematic inspection on fraud, which will be the subject of a separate report in due course.

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[18] See www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/476900/code-of-practice-for-victims-of-crime.PDF

[19] Action Fraud is the UK's national fraud and cyber-crime reporting centre. It provides a central point of contact for information about fraud and cyber-crime. For more information see: www.actionfraud.police.uk

Catching criminals

Since April 2014, police forces in England and Wales have been required to use an outcomes framework to record how investigations are concluded.[20] The outcomes framework provides a good insight into the results of investigations. There are 21 different possible outcomes in total.

The framework is also a useful measure for judging how well forces carry out their investigations. For example, investigations that concluded with a charge or summons, a penalty notice being issued or an informal community resolution, all show that the force identified an offender. By contrast, a number of investigations will always be less successful and the offender will remain unknown. The outcomes framework also provides an indication of how forces could improve their performance in certain areas.

Investigative outcomes – the number of occasions when victims do not support police investigations is increasing

During our 2016 effectiveness inspection, we raised concerns about how often investigations were concluded with outcome 16. Outcome 16 indicates evidential difficulties where, although the suspect has been identified, the victim does not support police action. There are a number of reasons why victims are reluctant to work with the police and prosecutors to bring offenders before a court. This may occur, for example, when a victim is intimidated, fears recrimination, or is too frightened to give evidence and re-live the experience. Our main concern in this regard is that forces take all reasonable steps to work constructively with victims to bring offenders to justice. Forces can also bring offenders to justice without the support of the victim; it is for police officers to build the case for the victim and not the other way round.

The 2016 inspection found that too often forces with high percentages of outcome 16 conclusions did not understand clearly why this was the case. This concerned us. We need to assess the extent to which forces work closely with victims to be sure they do everything possible to help convict offenders. A high proportion of outcome 16 results might indicate that investigators accept victims' statements that they are unwilling to assist the police too easily or as a reason to take no further action. It might even suggest that investigators are using outcome 16 as an easy way to conclude enquiries.

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[20] Crime outcomes in England and Wales: year ending March 2017, second edition. Available at: www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/633048/crime-outcomes-hosb0917.pdf

Unsuccessful investigations – the underlying causes are still not understood

We asked six forces to review their use of this outcome type and supply us with analysis of why it is used so frequently. In some forces, this analysis has shown that the more violent crime is recorded, the more often outcome 16 is used – but the underlying reasons for this were not fully understood. Audits in other forces have shown that this category often is used incorrectly. Furthermore, forces appear to be interpreting the outcomes framework guidance differently, which brings into question the validity of these data.

Hampshire Constabulary is a good example of a force taking the steps that we would expect to understand the use of outcome 16. The force audited a large sample of files and identified a number of occasions when it used outcome 16 in error. This is being rectified through better supervision. The force has also retrained its staff to make sure officers encourage less confident or reluctant victims to support the investigation. In the 12 months up to June 2017, Hampshire was using outcome 16 in 25 percent fewer occasions compared to the 12 months to June 2016.

In the 12 months to June 2017, the overall use of outcome 16 rose from 10.6 percent to 12.9 percent across England and Wales. Individual forces used it between 1.6 percent and 20 percent of the time. In some forces, use of the outcome has shifted notably over time. For example, Durham Constabulary used this outcome the least often of all forces in 2016 (in 2 percent of investigations). But in 2017 it used it to conclude 20 percent of its investigations. Figure 8 shows how often forces use outcome 16, and how this has varied between 2016 and 2017.

Figure 8: Percentage of offences assigned the outcome evidential difficulties; suspect identified; victim does not support police action' – 12 months to 30 June 2017[21]
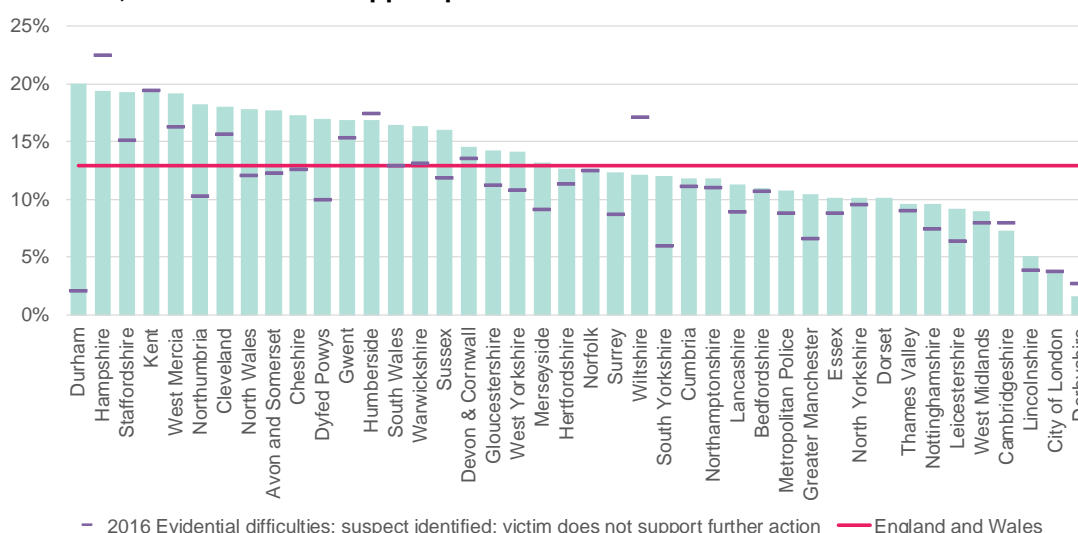
Source: Home Office Crime Outcomes 2017
For further information about this data, please see annex A

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[21] Dorset Police was unable to provide data on the outcome evidential difficulties; suspect identified; victim does not support police action in 2016.

By contrast, the percentage of investigations concluded in which offenders were charged, summonsed or cautioned fell nationally from 19.2 percent to 15.6 percent. It is clear that the police service does not understand the reason for this. We are concerned about the reduction in positive outcomes and the increases in the number of cases concluded with victims withdrawing their support; this may reflect poorly on the quality of police investigations.

Investigative outcomes – a review of current practices is needed

In our effectiveness inspection last year we recommended to the Home Office that, together with the NPCC and forces, it should consider the issue of additional guidance on the use of the outcomes framework. These considerations are still at a very early stage. In the course of the 2017 inspection, we encountered further anomalies, unrelated to outcome 16, in the use of the outcomes framework. These concerned: poor understanding of the outcome categories, leading to incorrect use; use of the framework that was not supervised and checked for quality; some of the outcomes recorded not reflecting possible lines of enquiry that might have led to prosecutions; and chief officers not appearing actively to ensure that personnel complied with the requirements of the framework.

Given the concerns that we raised in 2016, the increased use of outcome 16 in 2017, and a wider trend towards inconsistent use of the outcomes framework, it is vital that there is more progress on implementing our recommendation from last year.

Bail management

When a crime is reported, investigators need to determine the ongoing risk to the victim. Investigators have an option to arrest accused persons or to interview them voluntarily (this is known as voluntary attendance.)[22] To arrest an accused person, the investigator must be in a position to show that there is both a legal power and a 'necessity' to use it. One reason that may make an arrest necessary is a concern that a victim could become the subject of intimidation, or made afraid by the accused person. An arrest offers a victim a certain amount of protection. This protection may result simply from the accused person being in custody or, if he or she is released on bail, the conditions of release may help protect a victim. These can include measures to prevent accused persons from contacting victims again or to prohibit them from being near where the victims live.

Changes to bail legislation came into force on 3 April 2017. The aim was to end the police practice of keeping people on bail for long periods without independent judicial scrutiny. The intention was to ensure that, where bail is used, the circumstances of the investigation justify it fully. When bail cannot be justified, accused persons are

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[22] A voluntary attendance is where a suspect is interviewed voluntarily, under caution, by the police. The suspect is not under arrest, has the right to access free and independent legal advice and may leave the police station at any time unless and until they are arrested.

'released under investigation'. However, in such cases, no restrictions can be placed on their release. In the six months since the new legislation came into force, use of bail has fallen by 75 percent.

Forces across the country expressed concerns regarding the fall in the use of bail. There needs to be a better understanding of the extent to which bail is now being used appropriately. The police service needs to understand the impact of the legislation and whether the increased use of 'release under investigation' is having a harmful effect on victims.

The College of Policing has completed a limited review of the new bail legislation since it was implemented and the national policing lead has conducted some initial research with a number of police forces. This use of bail needs to be the subject of close, continuing scrutiny and we will continue to engage with interested parties and examine the results as they emerge. Recommendation 4 addresses this potential problem.

Offender management – some progress but weaknesses remain

Criminals present a constant threat to communities. Some are harmful because they offend frequently and randomly; the predatory nature of others means their chosen victims can be exposed to considerable harm. This threat places an obligation on forces to track down offenders who are wanted and to minimise the offending behaviour of persistent criminals. To achieve this, forces need to have effective procedures to catch and convict wanted persons and work closely with other organisations to prevent them from reoffending.

The Police National Computer (PNC) is an important means of tracing wanted criminals. It has a database onto which details of wanted persons can be uploaded, and so maximises the possibility that fugitives will be arrested promptly and brought to justice. All forces have access to the PNC; checks made on it about individuals, frequently as part of stop and search exercises, are a common method of identifying whether someone is wanted.

Wanted offenders – twelve forces need to improve their performance

The swift arrest of wanted persons is essential to reducing the risk they present to communities, while they are at large. In 2016, we reported serious concerns about delays in catching offenders. Too many forces did not devote enough focus, supervision and purposeful activity to the arrest of wanted suspects. We saw inconsistencies and weaknesses in how quickly forces circulated information about them on the PNC, and we also saw inadequate efforts to track them down. In particular, we drew attention to 12 forces that needed to improve in this critical area.

Our 2017 effectiveness inspection highlighted again that forces were failing to track offenders and develop intelligence to identify their whereabouts. There are five forces who have not improved sufficiently since last year. In addition to these five forces, we have asked another seven to improve their performance in this area.

We have yet to see a reduction in the number of wanted people on the PNC. In July 2017, there were 60,061 wanted records on the PNC, an increase of more than 4,000 over 12 months. Most of these relate to theft offences and violence with injuries, although there are still a considerable number wanted for homicide (374) and rape (1,135). We also examined over 200 cases involving wanted offenders who were entered on the PNC. In around half of these cases, more could be done to monitor and develop intelligence to find suspects. In one third of these cases, supervision was absent or poor.

Figure 9 shows the number of records of wanted persons on PNC in each force and how this number has varied between 2016 and 2017.

Figure 9: Number of records of persons wanted for offences on the Police National Computer, per 10,000 population, in England and Wales – in July 2017 and August 2016
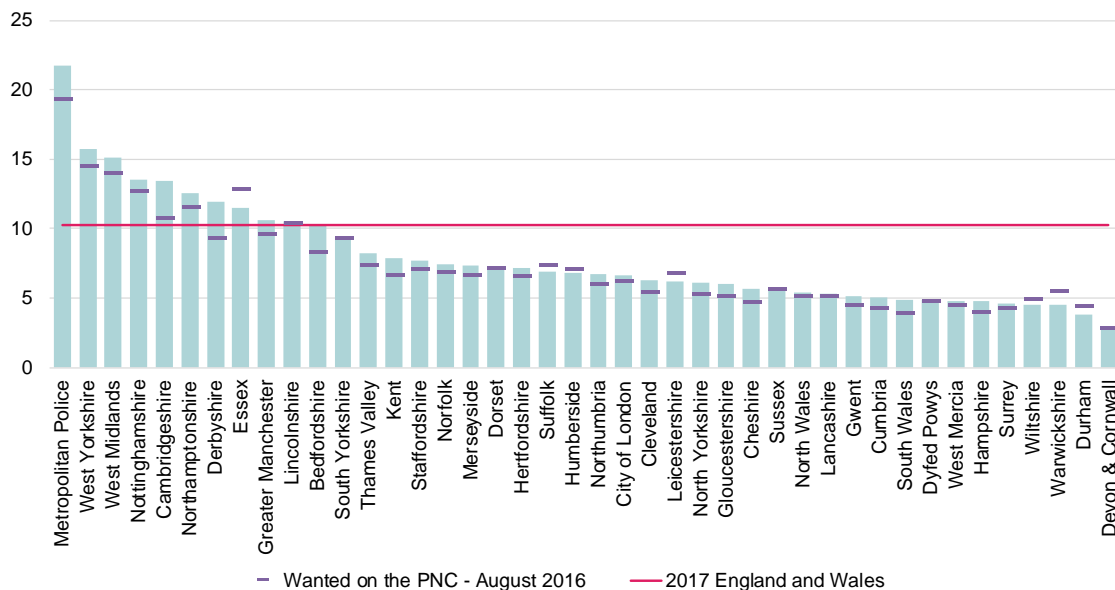
Source: Police National Computer
For further information about this data, please see annex A

Wanted offenders – better use of the Police National Computer is still needed

In 2016, we expressed concerns to some forces about their erratic use of the PNC to alert other forces in England and Wales when offenders are wanted. We identified 67,000 people suspected of committing crimes whose details were not on the PNC. We recognise that on occasions there will be good reasons not to circulate offenders nationally, for example, if the case against them is still being developed. However, the high number of persons suspected of committing crime that had not been circulated nationally – and the fact that forces did not have a firm grasp of who should and should not have been circulated – concerned us.

We recommended that the NPCC should work with forces to encourage better use of the PNC, and publish guidance on entering wanted persons on the PNC. The NPCC issued new guidance to all polices forces in September 2017 and was due to evaluate the new procedures in early spring 2018.

The data we collected this year suggested a more positive picture[23]. Almost two thirds of persons wanted by forces, but not circulated on PNC, have been wanted for less than three months. Additionally, four out of five offenders have been wanted for less than six months. This is positive. However, in some forces, we still found occasions when wanted persons were not circulated nationally in circumstances that could not be justified.

It is unclear whether the increase in the total number of people who are circulated on the PNC is a consequence of us urging forces to make more use of the PNC. It is important that forces set out a clear rationale on whether a person should be circulated nationally or not. This should include the likelihood of these persons reoffending, the need to protect victims and the probability of communities being exposed to harm.

Foreign national offenders -– background checks are being missed

We found that forces are not making routine use of intelligence databases to make background checks when they arrest foreign nationals. All forces have access to the criminal records of foreign nationals through contact with the Association of Chief Police Officers Criminal Records Office (ACRO).[24]

Forces should make use of this facility when foreign nationals are arrested. If an individual's offending history in other countries is not known to police forces in England and Wales, it is difficult to make an accurate assessment of their likelihood of re-offending or of the level of harm they might present to the public.

Between 2016 and 2017, the number of background checks referred to ACRO decreased by 5.6 percent. Furthermore, the number of referrals had fallen in 22 forces. We also found that the management of foreign offenders differs in forces:

- Less than half of forces allocate staff permanently to manage foreign offenders;

- Twenty-one forces have personnel from Border Force and UK Visas and Immigration working alongside their own staff;

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[23] Fourteen forces were able to provide data on those not circulated on the PNC.

[24] ACRO was founded in 2006 and facilitates the exchange of criminal records with European and other signatory nations.

- Only a minority of forces work effectively with the Home Office Central Command Unit, which identifies whether a person arrested is in the UK unlawfully and liable to deportation.

Preventing re-offending – innovation in some forces

All forces work with other organisations to manage persistent criminals and offenders who cause the most harm in communities. Many offenders have complex personal problems, such as drug addiction, mental health conditions, unemployment or substandard housing, which can encourage offending behaviour. Constructive work with the probation service, drug and alcohol treatment providers and other charities as part of integrated offender management (IOM) has proved successful in helping to rehabilitate offenders.

In the past, there has been a tendency to select individuals for IOM on the basis of how often they offend, rather than on account of the harm that they cause. We are encouraged that IOM teams are taking a more flexible approach to considering offenders for inclusion in rehabilitation programmes.

In Dyfed-Powys Police, we found excellent examples of working together as part of the 'Wales integrated serious and dangerous offender management' (WISDOM) programme. WISDOM forms part of IOM Cymru. Offenders managed through WISDOM include domestic abuse perpetrators, violent offenders and individuals who have been identified as posing a risk or threat to the community but who have yet to be convicted. WISDOM's goal is to work with offenders before they become so deeply entrenched in a criminal lifestyle that interventions cease to have any impact. This is seen as a positive step towards rehabilitating offenders and keeping victims and the wider public safe.

Protecting from harm those who are vulnerable, and supporting victims

Protecting vulnerable people should be a top priority for all forces. Vulnerable people are people who are vulnerable because of their age, disability, or because they have been subjected to repeated offences, or are at high risk of abuse. Failing to protect them is likely to expose people with the most needs to the greatest risk of harm. It can also quickly undermine the reputation of a force and dent the public's confidence in its ability to provide its services fairly and professionally.

Among the most vulnerable people in our communities are those who suffer from mental health conditions. In our 2017 inspection, we looked even more closely at the services that police forces provide these people than in previous years. This involved examining files and documents and seeing how mental health procedures are working in practice. It also involved speaking to mental health practitioners to find out how effectively they think the police support people with mental health conditions.

We first examined the service that forces offer victims of domestic abuse in 2014. Since then, the number of reported offences has increased considerably. We believe this is a consequence of several important factors: more victims coming forward in the knowledge that their allegations will be taken seriously; forces are giving greater priority to domestic abuse offences; and crime is being recorded more accurately.

What we were looking for and what we found

To assess how effectively forces protect vulnerable people and support victims, HMICFRS evaluated how well they:

- identify those who are vulnerable, including:

  - how forces identify vulnerability and how well this is understood;

  - the number of cases involving people with mental health conditions; and

  - the support available to individuals who are repeatedly victimised;

- respond to vulnerable victims, including how they:

  - recognise vulnerable people when they first make contact with the force;

  - make them safe if they are facing harm; and

  - make certain that expert help is available from other organisations;

- take subsequent action and work with partner organisations to keep victims safe, including how well:

  - forces investigate offences involving vulnerable victims;

  - the action of the police supports the work of other organisations; and

  - they reduce the risk posed by dangerous offenders and sex offenders.

Performance is improving but greater momentum is needed

This year, we have judged 23 forces to be good at protecting vulnerable people, 19 as requiring improvement and one as inadequate. Grades have continued to improve since we first considered vulnerability as part of our inspections in 2015. In 2016, 22 forces were assessed as good, 16 as requiring improvement and five as inadequate. This year, 12 forces have improved their grade, seven have deteriorated and 24 forces have remained the same. Many forces recognise they can still improve the service they provide to domestic abuse victims; nevertheless, we are pleased with the progress being made.

Despite these improvements, more forces are graded as requiring improvement in this section than elsewhere within our effectiveness inspection.

What we found in 2016

In 2016, we found that an increasing number of officers and staff were recognising whether someone was vulnerable. However, accurate record-keeping of these occurrences was unreliable because forces were using different definitions of vulnerability, and their procedures to identify relevant incidents varied. This meant that one force might identify a person as vulnerable, but not another. Likewise, the proportion of incidents recorded as involving vulnerable people varied considerably between forces. Despite this, we found some forces have made welcome improvements to their understanding of vulnerable groups in their areas. Better information sharing with councils and other organisations had led to a greater understanding of communities potentially at risk of being victimised.

We noted some considerable increases in certain categories of reported crime. In particular, domestic abuse offences had increased by 61 percent between June 2013 and August 2016. They increased a further 18 percent by 30 June 2017. We found some good examples of forces managing this increase in demand for services.

Some forces were increasing joint working to manage the additional caseload. For example, improving MARAC[25] capacity meant more victims could receive support from domestic abuse professionals.

By contrast, we found isolated examples of how the increased workload was overwhelming some forces, leading to undesirable practices. This involved them downgrading the assessment of risk that victims were facing, so that the force could justify a slower response. We brought these irregularities to the immediate attention of the forces concerned and asked them to put a stop to this practice. However busy a force is, if a victim needs urgent help, it should send an officer.

We expressed concern about how domestic abuse cases were handled. The number of arrests of domestic abuse perpetrators has fallen in proportion to the number of crimes committed. Also, about a third of domestic abuse prosecutions were being discontinued in cases where the victim was not willing to support a prosecution. It is not uncommon for domestic abuse victims to be reluctant to give evidence. This may be down to fear of having to re-live their experiences or because of intimidation by their partner. However, we are not convinced that every force understands the problem properly, and is doing all it can to encourage victims to support prosecutions.

We found that forces were working well with other professionals in relation to the response to people with mental health conditions. This was particularly the case when mental health professionals worked alongside police call handlers in control rooms, or when they accompanied officers called to those experiencing a mental health crisis.

How had this changed in 2017

Forces are still using different definitions of vulnerability and the identification of vulnerability remains inconsistent. Despite this, forces have continued to improve their understanding of communities that are likely to be exploited or face victimisation. In particular, forces are discovering more about modern-day crimes, such as human trafficking, and how they affect certain communities.

Control room staff are becoming more skilled at identifying vulnerability when callers first make contact with forces. This includes identifying people who are vulnerable because of mental ill-health. Some force control rooms still do not have automated solutions to identify callers who have previously been victimised. This is a concern, as people who previously have been victimised are often at risk of further

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[25] A multi-agency risk assessment conference (MARAC) is a meeting where information is shared on the highest risk domestic abuse cases between representatives of local police, health, child protection, housing practitioners, independent domestic violence advisors, probation and other specialists from the statutory and voluntary sectors.

intimidation and violence. To address this, many forces are making better use of their intelligence records. When used properly, intelligence databases will indicate whether individuals have been victimised before.

Crime associated with vulnerable people continues to rise. We looked particularly at the impact of a further increase of 18 percent in reported domestic abuse cases since our last inspection. Most forces are managing this rise well, but the backlogs in some force control rooms concerned us. A number of these cases involved vulnerable people.

The number of domestic abuse perpetrators who are arrested continues to fall in many forces. The number of victims who are reluctant to support the prosecution of their abusers remains a concern as well. We found that some forces were not surveying victims of domestic abuse. Without the benefit of this feedback, it is difficult to understand how forces can improve the service they provide to victims and their performance.

Much has been done to support victims of domestic abuse since we published our report, *Everyone's business: Improving the police response to domestic abuse*,[26] in 2014. However, forces must explore all opportunities to understand victims better, improve the service they provide them and take effective action against perpetrators.

The commitment of forces to individuals suffering with mental health problems generally is very positive. When we reviewed case files, we found that mental health victims are receiving a compassionate, understanding service. People in crisis are supported sympathetically. Better joint work means that care pathways are more readily available to them, and they spend far less time waiting in police stations for hospital beds to become available.

Identifying people who are vulnerable and assessing their needs

In 2015, we recommended a consistent approach to defining vulnerability and to collecting data about the identification of vulnerable people to the College of Policing and the NPCC. It is regrettable that, three years later, forces continue to define a vulnerable victim in different ways and record vulnerability inconsistently across the country.

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[26] *Everyone's business: Improving the police response to domestic abuse*, HMIC, 2014. Available at: www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmicfrs/publications/improving-the-police-response-to-domestic-abuse/

Forces use several definitions of vulnerability:

- 12 make reference to a definition used by ACPO[27].

- 11 use a definition provided by the College of Policing[28].

- 5 use the definition from the government's Code of Practice for Victims of Crime[29].

- 15 use their own definition or a combination of the definitions above.

- 13 use a different definition of vulnerability to the one they used in 2016.

However, for people with mental health conditions, most forces refer to a definition developed by the College of Policing.[30]

The proportion of recorded crime involving a vulnerable victim still varies between forces, and five remain unable to provide this data. Without this data, they cannot be certain that they are doing enough for vulnerable victims.

Data forces provided show that, in the 12 months to 30 June 2017, the proportion of recorded crime with a vulnerable victim varies significantly between forces, from 0.1 percent to 42.5 percent. Figure 10, below, shows the variation in the recording of crimes involving vulnerable victims.

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[27] *ACPO Guidance on Safeguarding and Investigating the Abuse of Vulnerable Adults*, NPIA, 2012. Available at: http://library.college.police.uk/docs/acpo/vulnerable-adults-2012.pdf. The National Police Chiefs' Council replaced the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) on 1 April 2015.

[28] See: www.college.police.uk/News/College-news/Pages/police_transformation_fund.aspx

[29] *Code of Practice for Victims of Crime*, Ministry of Justice 2015. Available at: www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/476900/code-of-practice-for-victims-of-crime.PDF

[30] For more information about the College of Policing definition of mental health, see: www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/mental-health/introduction-and-strategic-considerations/#definitions-and-terminology

Figure 10: Percentage of police-recorded crime that identified a vulnerable victim – 12 months to 30 June 2017[31]
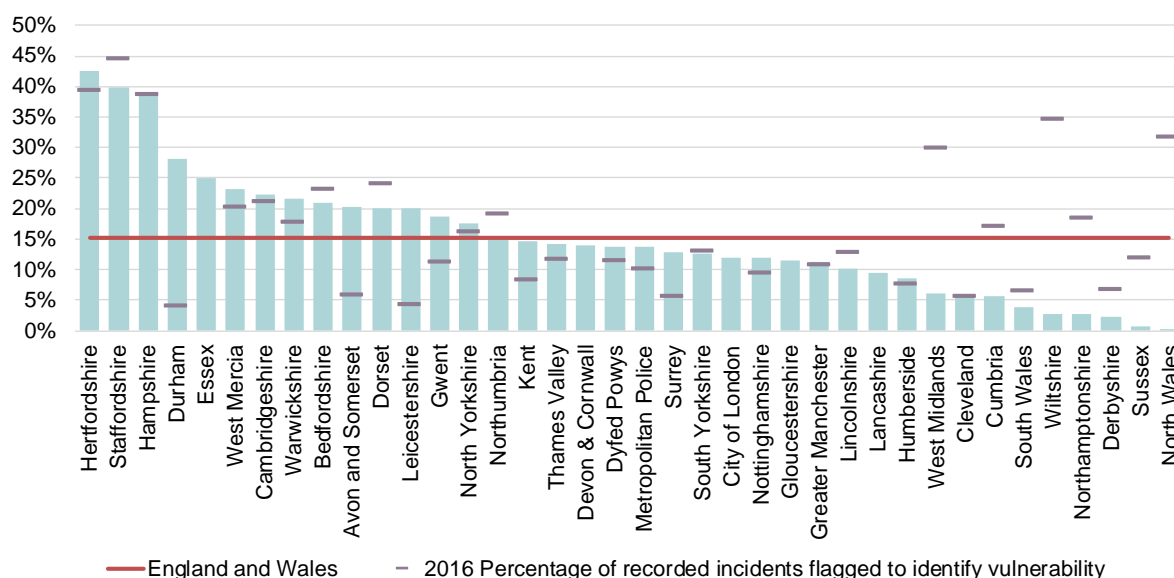
Source: HMICFRS 2017 effectiveness data collection

In part, the figures vary because forces define vulnerability differently. One force may consider a victim vulnerable but not another. As a result, the level of service victims receive may differ considerably from force to force.

The types of vulnerability – good levels of knowledge and a commitment to individuals at risk

Protecting vulnerable people is a priority for police leaders. Officers and staff understand the definition their force uses. They understand the types of vulnerability and understand how to protect vulnerable people.

The clear definition used for mental health cases helps frontline staff to identify vulnerable people. Several forces have issued resources, such as handbooks, to help their staff to understand the range of vulnerabilities relating to mental health. Some of these have been designed with mental health professionals and some of them include information about how to contact other organisations.

More forces are developing their understanding of hidden forms of harm, such as modern day slavery, human trafficking and so-called honour-based violence. These offences involve the exploitation of vulnerable victims. Forces are working with partner organisations, including children's social care services and mental health trusts, to understand where they need to do more work.

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[31] Cheshire, Merseyside, Norfolk, Suffolk and West Yorkshire forces were unable to provide data on recorded crime flagged to identify a vulnerable victim in 2017. City of London, Devon and Cornwall, Essex, Gloucestershire and Lancashire forces were unable to provide data on recorded crime flagged to identify a vulnerable victim in 2016.

Understanding how much police work is related to people with mental health conditions

Mental health is a complex area. It can include people such as dangerous offenders as well as victims who suffer from dementia or who have difficulty interacting. Forces are continuing to develop their understanding of mental health. The number of organisations involved in mental health services makes this complex. We recognise that the true picture of the nature and scale of the problem will take time to develop.

Figure 11, below, shows the percent of incidents forces identify as mental health, and how these rates have altered since 2016.

Figure 11 – Percentage of incidents flagged to identify mental health conditions, in England and Wales – 12 months to 30 June 2017
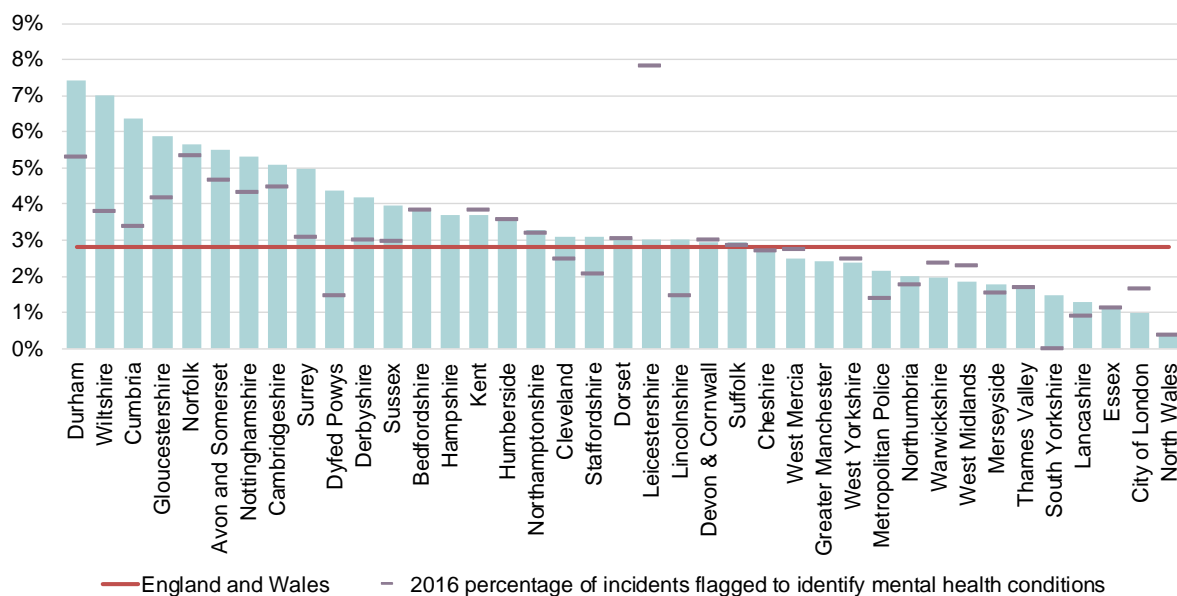
Source: HMICFRS 2017 effectiveness data collection
For further information about this data, please see annex A

The police have a statutory obligation to assist individuals who are in crisis or are a danger to others. However, police involvement in mental health goes beyond that. Many people will contact the police simply because they feel isolated, vulnerable or in despair. The police must make sure these people are not in danger. Victims and perpetrators of crime will also, on occasions, suffer from mental health conditions.

Many forces have worked hard to understand the demand that supporting people with mental health conditions places on their services. Leicestershire Police has enhanced its response to people with mental health problems through the creation of a specialist team of two police officers, two mental health practitioners and two substance misuse workers. Together, these staff identify the most vulnerable and frequent users of services and work with them to provide specific targeted support to address their often complex needs.

Despite this excellent work there are no readily available, consistent and comparable data on this demand that is created for the police service by responding to and supporting those people who have mental health problems.

Responding to vulnerable victims

Call handlers need to be able to recognise if a person is vulnerable. They need also to reassure victims and provide advice on how to stay safe. Incidents must be recorded properly to ensure the correct approach is taken not only for the victim, but also for other people within the household. Response officers need to have detailed information about previous incidents to ensure they are prepared.

Forces are getting better at identifying if a person is vulnerable at the point of first contact. Of the 43 forces we inspected, 42 use flags, tags, or markers which helps call handlers to identify vulnerable people. In the vast majority of forces, officers and staff understand how to recognise vulnerable people and respond to their needs. Identifying mental health as a specific type of vulnerability is a relatively new way of working, but the vast majority of forces can do it. Some call handlers are still adapting to it and there are technical barriers in some control rooms to assigning a specific mental-health tag.

Seventeen forces have partnerships in place to help people with mental health conditions when they first contact the force. These may involve approved mental health professionals (AMHPs[32]), psychiatric nurses, or representatives from the mental health charity Mind, the mental health charity, working in police control rooms. Their expertise can be invaluable in identifying mental health conditions and finding solutions for individuals in crisis. Many of the forces that have mental health professionals working in their control rooms tag more incidents as related to mental health conditions.

Most call-handling systems include prompts or checklists. These help call handlers to identify the level of risk to each victim and the level of response required. We observed call handlers correctly identifying vulnerability, which could have been overlooked had the questioning not been effective.

People who have been victimised before – extra safeguards are in place

Some forces still find it difficult to identify individuals who have had contact with them before. Knowing that someone has been victimised previously can offer insight into the harm they may be facing.

Forces can identify repeat callers by matching locations and/or telephone numbers, but not all forces have systems that find matches automatically. Some forces have

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[32] The role of approved mental health professional (AMHP) in the United Kingdom was created in the 2007 amendment of the Mental Health Act 1983 to replace the role of approved social worker (ASW).

put in place extra measures to identify repeat victims. These include prompts, requiring call handlers to ask about previous incidents, or to complete checks on the caller and address.

Recorded levels of domestic abuse and sexual offences – sustained increases

Between 30 June 2016 and 30 June 2017, the police recorded an 18 percent increase in domestic abuse-related crimes (430,095 to 506,890). This follows a 61 percent increase between 30 June 2013 and 30 June 2016. Other crime types involving vulnerable victims, such as sexual offences, increased by 17 percent between 30 June 2016 and 30 June 2017.

In the 12 months to 30 June 2016, forces flagged 13 percent of recorded offences in England and Wales to identify a vulnerable victim. In the 12 months to 30 June 2017, this increased to 17 percent.

We see this increase as largely positive. Either more vulnerable victims are reporting crimes, or forces are better at identifying vulnerable victims, or both.

Assessing the needs of the victim – how the police should respond to them

Use of the THRIVE risk assessment tool is common now in forces' control rooms. It provides a structured way for staff to assess the threat, harm, risk and investigation opportunities associated with a call, as well as the vulnerability of the victim and the level of engagement required. Forces then can tailor their approach to the individual needs of each victim.

We support this approach. However, in 2016 we found that on occasions, staff in some forces were using the model to effectively ration police services. This involved a small number of forces suppressing demand by re-grading calls. They were changing their original assessment of risk to suggest it was less serious than it really was, and the result was to expose vulnerable victims to unnecessary harm. While we did not find evidence of such troubling cases this year, our file review suggests that risk is still sometimes described as lower than it should be.

In one in five force control rooms call handlers are not recording important information that they obtained through speaking with the caller. As a result, officers attending these incidents do not know all the facts, which inevitably increased the risk of danger. The risks a victim faces may be overlooked or the danger presented by offenders may not be fully considered.

Delays in sending officers – victims exposed to risk

Of greater concern were the instances we raised in the previous section about operational pressures, which meant getting a delayed response to victims in twelve forces. This described incidents to which forces were unable to respond promptly and how those forces acted when they did respond. Many of these incidents involved vulnerable victims; when forces could not respond immediately, they gave little or no thought as to whether the needs of the victim had changed during the delay. We also found a number of worrying examples of appointments that were made to meet victims of domestic abuse many hours or even days later, when in fact they needed police assistance urgently.

There can be risks to victims sitting in the backlog of emergency calls. Sometimes these risks are not immediately apparent. Some of the forces experiencing delays were aware of the level of vulnerability within these backlogs and were actively re-assessing risk at regular intervals whilst working to address the backlog. Others had a very limited understanding of the risk contained within these backlogs and rarely reassessed to ensure officers attended those cases that were most risky.

The scale of the build-up of incidents in these forces varied in volume. In those forces where pressures are most acute, HMICFRS has begun follow-up work to check on progress.

Getting it right when the police arrive

A victim's first face-to-face contact with the police may have been preceded by several incidents to which the police were not called. If their first contact with the police is not positive, too often victims can lose confidence. This may lead to them failing to call the police or report crimes in future. In general, officers we spoke to know how to support vulnerable people and are committed to their wellbeing.

All forces continue to invest in training and professional development for their workforce in this area. For example, all forces have provided mental health training to frontline officers and staff in the last 12 months. The best examples included input from mental health practitioners, which can help address common myths about mental health. Not all forces involve external organisations in mental health training.

The Connect Partnership in North Yorkshire is an example of good practice. The partnership provides training to the local force, drawing on the expertise of several NHS foundation trusts, the College of Policing and the University of York. We encourage all forces to consider how to train their staff in conjunction with external professionals.

Vulnerable victims – new training soon to be available

We are encouraged that the College of Policing has developed a training programme to help frontline officers provide better support to vulnerable victims. This will soon be available as a one-day course, taught face-to-face, and includes teaching a comprehensive set of skills to front-line officers. These include the recognition of vulnerability, the impact of trauma, communication skills and techniques to support vulnerable people.

Three forces have tried out the course; the curriculum is being refined. The training will be provided to over 9,000 officers in seven forces by the end of March 2018, after which it will be available to all forces. These developments are promising and have the potential to standardise the ways in which forces identify vulnerable people and make the service they offer them more consistent.

Body-worn video cameras – essential for evidence gathering but guidance is needed to maximise benefits

Body-worn video cameras provide excellent evidence, as they record events accurately, including people's comments and demeanour. Use of body-worn video evidence has led to successful prosecutions when conventional means of gathering and presenting evidence have failed. In some cases, notably domestic abuse and sexual abuse allegations, it is not uncommon for prosecutions to be discontinued because victims are reluctant to give evidence. Frequently this occurs because they fear having to re-live their experiences when giving evidence, or believe that this will lead to an escalation of abuse. Forces should do more to overcome victims' concerns.

We found many commendable examples of where body-worn video evidence had led to the conviction of violent perpetrators even when the victims were too traumatised to give evidence. These included an investigation by Hertfordshire Constabulary, which led to the conviction of a rapist who had insisted his inebriated victim had consented to sex. The same force also used body-worn video evidence to support the prosecution of a domestic abuse perpetrator whose partner had committed suicide because of the abuse she had experienced.

During this inspection, we identified a continuing concern over the number of cases assigned outcomes with no further action to be taken. Where the victim did not support police action, see the next section on domestic abuse investigations. The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) reported that body worn video footage has enabled the successful prosecution of domestic abuse cases, even when victims have been unable to give evidence.[33]

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[33] *International Women's Day - Bodyworn police cameras helping domestic abuse prosecutions*, CPS, 2018. Available at: www.cps.gov.uk/cps/news/international-womens-day-bodyworn-police-cameras-helping-domestic-abuse-prosecutions

Most forces use body-worn video evidence now, but it is more established in some than others. Our inspection found, not all forces have a clear policy on how and when to use it. For example, it was not always clear whether it is mandatory that it should be switched on when the officer arrives at the scene, or whether this should be left to an officer's professional judgment. Our review of crime files showed also that body-worn video footage could have been used to improve the quality of the investigation in just over 500 of the files reviewed but was not available. This could have been because the officer did not have access to the technology or had not used the equipment to capture any footage.

We have raised this concern before. In our last domestic abuse thematic report,[34] we encouraged the College of Policing, working with the national policing lead on domestic abuse, to remind forces of the expectations about the use of body-worn video cameras at domestic abuse incidents. The College of Policing should complete this work as a matter of urgency.

Domestic abuse offenders – arrest rates are falling

One of the ways to put an end to domestic abuse is to detain the perpetrator. This gives the victim time and space to consider how to manage the situation in which they find themselves. Following an arrest, forces can also start to draw in expertise from other domestic abuse professionals to help support the victim.

We remain concerned that the proportion of arrests in domestic abuse cases is falling. We are also concerned about the variation in arrest rates between forces. We raised this matter in 2016, but forces have not done enough about it.

The variations across forces remain wide. In Lincolnshire, for example, for every 100 domestic abuse crimes, 79 offenders are arrested; in Hampshire, this number falls to 31 offenders (although the force is taking effective steps to improve its performance in this area). Furthermore, the number of arrests for domestic abuse crimes has fallen in 23 forces – despite the substantial increase in the number of domestic abuse-related offences. A worrying trend that we reported in 2016, when 15 forces were in this position, has continued.

It is unacceptable that five forces are still unable to tell us how many domestic abuse arrests they made in the 12 months to 30 June 2017. Force leaders need to understand their use of powers of arrest and determine whether they are being exercised appropriately to protect vulnerable victims and bring perpetrators to justice. Figure 13, below, shows the wide range in arrest rates for domestic abuse in forces; it also shows how these arrest rates are falling in most forces.

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[34] *A progress report on the police response to domestic abuse*, HMICFRS, 2017. Available from: www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmicfrs/publications/a-progress-report-on-the-police-response-to-domestic-abuse/

Figure 13: Domestic abuse arrest rate (per 100 domestic abuse-related offences) in England and Wales – 12 months to 30 June 2017[35]
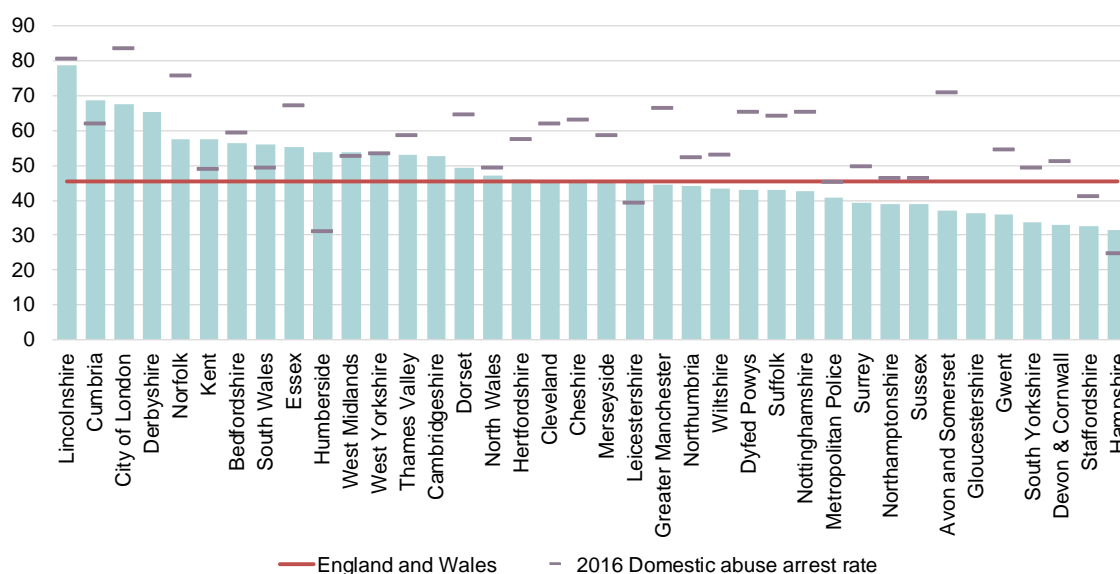
Legend: England and Wales | 2016 Domestic abuse arrest rate

Source: HMICFRS 2017 effectiveness data collection, Home Office domestic abuse crime data

Victim care – assessing their needs

As we found in 2016, generally, forces have good processes in place for officers to identify and assess if a victim is vulnerable at crime scenes. Officers know how to support victims, including what support is available from local agencies. Most forces recognise the importance of taking positive action[36], including the arrest of perpetrators.

For domestic abuse, stalking and harassment cases, most forces use a model of risk identification, assessment and management known as DASH[37]. However, the quality and supervisory oversight of DASH risk assessments varies. Not all forces require officers to fill out DASH forms in all types of domestic abuse cases. We found some DASH forms that officers had submitted with only limited or incomplete information.

Owing to problems with the quality of DASH forms, some forces are carrying out remedial work as part of the secondary risk assessment process or investigation teams are doing so.

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[35] Durham, Lancashire, North Yorkshire, Warwickshire and West Mercia forces were unable to provide data on domestic abuse arrests.

[36] The first priority of the police is to make people safe. At domestic abuse incidents, it is particularly important that officers take positive action to make the victim and any children safe. This may mean arresting a person suspected of an offence, where the power to arrest exists, or taking other positive steps to ensure safety, such as organising refuge accommodation or the fitting of a panic alarm.

[37] DASH is a risk identification, assessment and management model adopted by UK police forces and partner agencies in 2009. The aim of the DASH assessment is to help frontline practitioners identify high-risk cases of domestic abuse, stalking, harassment and so-called honour-based violence.

The evidence is that supervisors are increasingly reviewing initial actions and risk assessments. This is encouraging, but we found problems in some forces. In some areas, supervisors took only a cursory approach. In one force, supervision took place later, in specialist teams. In another force, supervisors only checked DASH forms in high-risk cases. We are concerned that these forces may be missing opportunities to make quick-time assessments of the actions taken at the scene and are not properly re-evaluating the risks that victims are facing.

Domestic abuse investigations – fewer offenders are being prosecuted

We are concerned about the increasing number of cases in which forces conclude there are evidential difficulties, a suspect is identified and the victim does not support police action (known as outcome 16). Victims who feel intimidated, or who are fearful of giving evidence, may not support police action. Because of the domestic abuse that victims have experienced and the likelihood of further abuse, the police will have to provide more support if prosecutions are likely to succeed.

In 40 of every 100 domestic abuse-related crimes in the 12 months to June 2017, the victim did not support any further police action. In many cases, this is despite the victim knowing the identity of the perpetrator. In eight forces more than half of all their domestic abuse cases were concluded in this way. These figures concerned us.

In this context, it would be natural during the course of our inspections to expect to find officers who were unwilling to arrest domestic abuse offenders. In general, the reverse was true, however. Officers are knowledgeable about their powers to arrest offenders and supervisors expect them to make an arrest unless this is obviously unwise in the circumstances.

It is clear that the fall in arrest rates and the use of outcome 16 to conclude cases are not well understood by forces. Until this is researched properly, forces cannot understand whether they are doing their job properly or not, and whether victims are getting the support they need. We will discuss this further in our domestic abuse publication later this year.

Figure 14: Rate of evidential difficulties; suspect identified: victim does not support police action outcomes, per 100 domestic abuse-related crimes – 12 months to 30 June 2017[38]
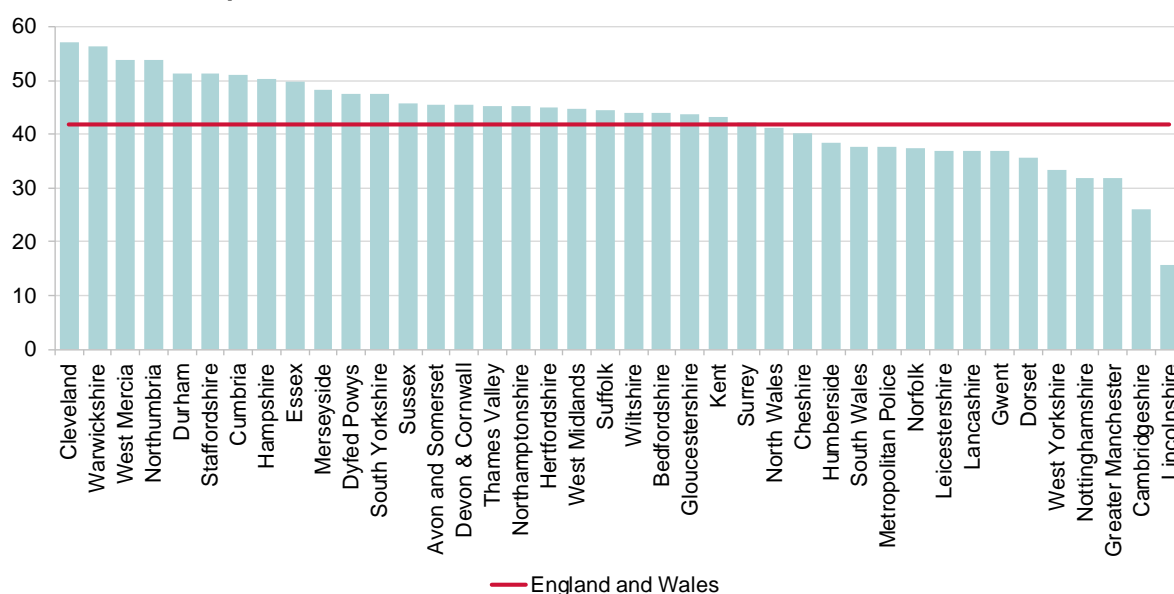
Source: HMICFRS 2017 effectiveness data collection, Home Office domestic abuse crime data
For further information about this data, please see annex A

Use of court orders to keep victims safe

Domestic violence protection notices (DVPNs) and domestic violence protection orders (DVPOs)[39] enable the police and magistrates to protect a victim from further harm by restricting the activities of a perpetrator. The police can issue a DVPN immediately following a domestic abuse incident. A magistrates' court then hears an application for a DVPO within 48 hours.

The use of DVPOs continues to vary a good deal throughout England and Wales. We highlighted this issue in our last domestic abuse thematic report: *A progress report on the police response to domestic abuse.*

Overall, there has been a 16 percent increase in the number of DVPOs granted in the 12 months to 30 June 2017 compared with the 12 months to 30 June 2016 (this is based on data from 32 forces). This is positive. However, 13 forces have seen a decrease in the number of DVPOs applied for and in the number granted; three forces could not tell us the number of DVPOs they had applied for; and five could not tell us the number of DVPOs granted. This suggests that forces are not monitoring the way they police domestic abuse. We are concerned about this.

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[38] City of London Police and North Yorkshire Police were unable to provide data on outcomes for domestic abuse offences.

[39] Domestic violence protection notices (DVPNs) may be issued by an authorised police officer to prevent a suspected perpetrator from returning to a victim's home and/or contacting the victim. Following the issue of the DVPN, the police must apply to magistrates for a domestic violence protection order (DVPO). The DVPO will be granted for a period of up to 28 days.

Working with other organisations to help victims

Standards of investigation

Overall, the quality of investigations into domestic abuse is higher than that of investigations into many other offences. In the files we reviewed that related to domestic abuse cases, the effectiveness of the investigation and quality of victim care was better than in files relating to other case types. Figure 15 shows how the standard of investigations into domestic abuse is better than that of other types of crime.

Figure 15: HMICFRS 43-force crime file review – domestic abuse files compared with all files reviewed

	Files with a domestic abuse element	All files
Total number of case files reviewed	978	2700
Effective investigation	83%	77%
Good victim care	87%	84%
Appropriate or effective supervision	72%	62%

Source: HMICFRS crime file review

Some cases involve a high level of threat, harm or risk to the victim. Specialist public protection unit (PPU) teams normally carry out investigations in these cases. In general, PPU teams carry out these investigations well.

Forces are providing PPU investigators with better support. This includes support to manage workloads and wellbeing. Some forces provide seminars, involving other organisations. One example was the 'Safeguarding the safeguarder' conference,[40] which set out ways to support individuals managing high-risk caseloads.

As we found in 2016, the workloads of specialist investigators sometimes can be too high. Too often investigations are not subject to regular and active supervision. We reviewed files from cases involving vulnerable victims, 34 percent of which contained no evidence of effective or appropriate supervision. For files relating to domestic abuse cases, only 28 percent contained evidence of effective or appropriate supervision.

We found that 15 forces need to improve the way they investigate crimes that involve vulnerable victims. Areas that require improvement include training, supervision and ensuring that investigating officers and staff have the appropriate skills.

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[40] Staff from Durham Constabulary attended a two-day conference on 'Safeguarding the Safeguarder', which partner agencies were also invited to attend.

A continuing investment in specialist investigations

Most forces continue to invest in public protection investigation units. This is despite financial pressures and other demands. During the period 2015/16 to 2016/17, estimated spending on public protection rose by 22 percent. This follows additional investment of 16 percent between 2013/14 and 2014/15. However, there is still a national shortage of detectives.

Some cases involving vulnerable people can be complex. Along with excessive workloads and vacant detective posts, this can damage the quality of investigations. It can also affect the wellbeing of officers and staff within these units.

Professional development for investigators with high-risk caseloads

Forces are looking at ways to improve the quality of investigations involving vulnerable victims. This is encouraging and examples include:

- Joint development days with specialist lawyers, paediatricians and academics;

- Partner organisations providing continuing professional development (CPD) activities for investigators;

- Joint scrutiny of investigative quality by the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), the probation service and other organisations; and

- Reviewing the investigative outcomes of offences such as rape and learning more about the experience of the victim.

Meeting the needs of vulnerable victims requires organisations to work together. We are pleased that forces are continuing to develop the way they work with partner organisations.

A multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH) is a location in which staff from the police, local authority and other safeguarding agencies share data, research and decision making about local children and adults who are vulnerable; the purpose is to ensure children and vulnerable adults who require protection receive a timely and joined-up response.

There are 146 MASHs in England and Wales. Of the 43 forces, 41 have some form of MASH in place. In 37 forces, the MASHs cover the entire force area. The types of organisations that take part in MASHs vary. In 2015 and 2016, HMICFRS identified variations between forces that led to inconsistent safeguarding. This variation continues in 2017, as forces are using several different models. The remits and capacities within individual force areas vary as well. National guidance on what a MASH is expected to do, and the expected outcomes for victims, would help to address these inconsistencies.

The Home Office is leading work to develop a set of principles for effective multi-agency working in this area, which include guidance on information sharing. We are disappointed that publication of these has been delayed.

Forces are developing ways to share information with schools to protect vulnerable children. Operation Encompass involves forces working with local authorities and nominated contacts in schools. At the start of the day, forces notify the relevant school if, in the previous 24 hours, officers were called to a domestic abuse incident where a child was present. This is so that the school can offer additional support to the children. Operation Encompass, or a similar scheme, is running in 33 forces. This is a positive development since our 2016 inspection, when 22 forces reported that they used this, or a similar, scheme.

Multi-agency conferencing – the stresses and strains of an increasing caseload

In 26 forces, there has been an increase in the number of cases discussed at multi-agency risk assessment conferences (MARACs). This is consistent with the increase in reported domestic abuse crimes. However, 17 forces reported a decrease in the number of cases discussed at MARAC. Not all could explain the reasons behind this decrease. This is worrying. However, some forces are considering how to improve the way they work with partners to safeguard victims.

In a small number of forces, we found areas of concern. These included a backlog of referrals awaiting secondary risk assessment. The extent of the risk may remain hidden until referrals have been assessed fully.

A small number of forces are failing to refer all high-risk cases of domestic abuse to a MARAC. Additionally, some MARACs use a triage process to decide which cases to discuss. Although some forces involve partner organisations in the triage process, this was not standard practice. We are concerned that this is another way that forces manage demand that could put victims at risk. This is particularly true where forces are making decisions without the involvement of partner agencies. Forces need to assure themselves that they are not overlooking cases that would benefit from wider discussion at a MARAC.

Within counties and across county/city areas, differences exist in the frequency of MARAC meetings and in referrals processes. These could result in different outcomes for victims. Several forces hold daily MARAC meetings to review safeguarding concerns. Attendees at the meetings agree actions to provide support to victims. We will explore the effectiveness of this approach in the domestic abuse report due for publication later this year.

Mental health – partnerships are strengthening

We spoke with many mental health practitioners and they were overwhelmingly positive about the care that frontline officers offer people with mental health problems.

Many mental health partnership arrangements have existed for years. Guidance known as the *Mental Health Crisis Care Concordat*[41] has helped develop working arrangements. The practitioners we spoke to frequently said that the leadership of the force was important for strong partnership relations.

To assist forces, the College of Policing published guidance in 2016. This has helped clarify mental health policy and procedures. It has also helped forces to formulate their own protocols and procedures with partners. Most forces have a mental health policy that meets the standards set by national guidance.

We found good arrangements in many forces for working with partner organisations. They ease the exchange of information, help organisations to work more efficiently and help to address complex social problems.

Police and mental health practitioners – joint triage

Frequently, when people are in mental health crisis, the police are called. In these cases, officers must determine whether the person needs to be detained for their own safety and wellbeing. Joint working helps forces and mental health practitioners find solutions for people in crisis more quickly.

These are traumatic situations that require difficult judgments. Finding a place in a hospital can take a long time. As an interim measure, and often for their own safety, individuals are sometimes detained in police cells, which can add to their anxiety and distress and is clearly inappropriate. These individuals require medical assistance and appropriate care in a health provider setting. Forces are working more closely now with mental health practitioners to improve this situation. This includes mental health practitioners working with police call handlers or alongside officers responding to mental health incidents. Some forces have both arrangements in place.

The frontline staff we spoke to support these joint working arrangements. We heard of many incidents where staff had provided simple, pragmatic support to individuals. Typically, this involved a psychiatric nurse with access to NHS records finding a relative or other carer who could intervene. Where necessary, the approved mental health professional (AMHP) was also able to arrange prompt clinical help.

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[41] For more information, see: www.crisiscareconcordat.org.uk/about/

Victim feedback – not enough voices are being heard

Feedback from victims of domestic abuse is essential for monitoring the quality of the service that the police provide. National monitoring arrangements should include the views of victims of domestic abuse. We have recommended this before and we continue to recommend that the Home Office ensures it happens.

Since June 2016, the Home Office has required forces to provide data on the number of victims of domestic abuse surveyed as part of the annual data return.[42] However, six forces were not surveying these victims. Also, six forces were excluding victims who did not support police action (outcome 16).

We have asked these 12 forces to obtain feedback from victims of domestic abuse. This is a matter to which we will return in future inspections. Feedback from these victims is important for forces to understand how best to support individuals who are reluctant to support a prosecution.

Managing sex offenders in the community – increasing workloads

We assessed the effectiveness of forces' arrangements to manage registered sex offenders (RSOs). Individuals must register if the courts convict them of certain offences, or in some circumstances when the police consider them to be at risk of offending. Part of the management of RSOs involves the regular assessment of the risks they present to the public.

As in previous years, some forces had backlogs of risk assessments and some staff were managing large caseloads.

Between July 2016 and July 2017, there was a 7 percent increase in the total number of RSOs. In July 2017, there were 3,329 RSOs awaiting assessment, which was an 18 percent increase on the previous year (table below). This level of unassessed, potentially unmanaged, risk concerned us. Heavy workloads within forces are also having a negative effect on routine activity, such as visits to RSOs.

Figure 16: Number of registered sex offenders – as at 1 July 2016 and as at 1 July 2017

	1 July 2017	1 July 2016	Percentage change
Very high risk	1148	1539	-25%
High risk	11013	10924	1%
Medium risk	25006	22859	9%
Low risk	27137	25111	8%
Awaiting assessment	3329	2812	18%
Total	67633	63245	7%

Source: HMICFRS 2017 effectiveness data collection

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[42] Annual data requirement from police forces in England and Wales, available at www.gov.uk/government/publications/annual-data-requirement-from-police-forces-in-england-and-wales

Sex offenders – a role for local officers

Neighbourhood policing teams should play a greater role in the management of sex offenders. This area has improved, and we found forces making information available to neighbourhood policing teams. In some areas, local officers are given the task of monitoring and managing RSOs. Other activities to improve the management of this group of offenders include:

- Routinely informing response/neighbourhood officers when a RSO leaves prison;

- Providing local officers with automated intelligence updates about RSOs;

- Better briefings to local officers and PCSOs;

- Targeted activity to monitor the movement of RSOs and protect the public; and

- Training local officers to manage medium/low-risk offenders.

We did not find these activities occurring in every force. In some forces, we found that neighbourhood officers have little knowledge of the RSOs living in the area they police.

We have assessed that 10 out of the 43 forces need to improve their management of RSOs. The improvements required include the scrutiny of RSO supervision and making sure that frontline staff are aware of the RSOs in their area. Frontline officers need also to play a part in monitoring RSOs and reducing backlogs of risk assessments.

Tackling serious and organised crime

National risk assessment

Serious and organised crime[43] presents a significant threat to national security.[44] The nature and scale of organised crime is changing rapidly. The once familiar image of organised crime being committed by family members or ruthless gangsters who fought over territory and illicit markets is less prominent. New, more complex, offending exists now, which is global in nature. It exploits the vulnerable, it can lead to huge economic losses and its increasingly technical nature makes it easier for criminals to operate with anonymity and impunity. The conventional commodities of these criminals, such as drugs and firearms, are still prioritised by law enforcement organisations. However, contemporary crimes like human trafficking and modern slavery cause misery in local communities, have origins in faraway places and can be driven by criminals who never set foot in the UK.

Law enforcement must remain in step with the changing nature of crime. HM Government's *Serious and Organised Crime Strategy*[45] sets out the role of the National Crime Agency (NCA), regional organised crime units (ROCUs[46]) and forces in addressing this type of offending. Alongside the NCA's responsibility to confront criminals who present the highest risk to the UK and the ROCUs' task to track down offenders across England and Wales, the role of the 43 forces cannot be underestimated. Their understanding of the harm that organised crime can cause in their communities, their response to the threat, and the ways they can deter individuals from becoming involved in offending, are of great importance.

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[43] Serious and organised crime is when serious crime is planned, co-ordinated and conducted by people working together on a continuing basis. Their motivation is often, but not always, financial gain.

[44] *Fact sheet 2: National Security Risk Assessment.* Available at: www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/62484/Factsheet2-National-Security-Risk-Assessment.pdf

[45] *Serious and Organised Crime Strategy*, HM Government, October 2013. Available at: www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/248645/Serious_and_Organised_Crime_Strategy.pdf

[46] Regional organised crime units (ROCUs) give police forces access to a standardised range of 'capabilities' to help them tackle serious and organised crime. These capabilities encompass specialist areas such as undercover policing, surveillance and cyber-crime investigation. The regional provision of these capabilities can reduce or remove the need for forces to maintain specialist capabilities of their own, many of which are expensive to maintain and only required on relatively rare occasions.

What we were looking for and what we found

For these reasons, we focused our inspection on:

- the understanding of the threat and risk posed by serious and organised crime, including:

    - how well forces assess the threat and risk from serious and organised crime;

    - how well forces use intelligence to assist in the understanding; and

    - the extent to which forces identify modern day and newer types of offending;

- the forces' response to serious and organised crime, including:

    - how well forces work with other organisations in the fight against organised crime;

    - how well forces disrupt the activity of organised crime groups (OCGs); and

    - how well forces assess the effect of their activity on OCGs;

- the prevention of serious and organised crime, including:

    - how well forces support people who are at risk of offending;

    - how well forces manage offenders; and

    - how effective communications are with the public in preventing offending.

Overall performance – encouraging developments

HMICFRS' 2017 effectiveness inspection was the third consecutive year in which we have inspected serious and organised crime. Of the 16 forces inspected, 11 have been graded as good, four require improvement and one force has been graded as inadequate. Grades have improved in seven of these forces since 2016. The overall number of forces with a good grade is most encouraging. In 2015, 75 percent of forces were graded as good; the percentage has risen to just under 90 percent. Furthermore, Durham Constabulary, Merseyside Police and Derbyshire Constabulary have been graded as outstanding in all three years of our inspection.

These continued improvements are welcome, and police force performance in tackling serious and organised crime remains strong. However, there are still a handful of forces who require improvement and some aspects of policing serious and organised crime which could be done better.

What we found in 2016

The national response to serious and organised crime is based on the government's serious and organised crime strategy. It has four main areas of activity: prosecuting and disrupting criminals (pursue); preventing individuals from engaging in this activity (prevent); making communities more resilient to this offending (protect) and reducing the impact of this type of criminality (prepare). The four elements of the strategy are known as the 4Ps.

In 2016, we reported that too often forces relied solely on the pursuit of criminals and enforcing the law to the detriment of focusing on prevention as well. We felt that a shift in approach was necessary if forces were to be effective in tackling organised crime in its entirety, particularly when they confront modern day threats, such as cyber-enabled crime. We identified a number of factors that would help forces rebalance their effort towards preventing organised crime and protecting communities:

- Neighbourhood officers should be more actively engaged in local communities;

- Programmes to deter people from embarking on criminal lifestyles should be more widespread;

- The offending behaviour of criminals who are involved habitually in serious and organised crime should be better managed; and

- Lead responsible officers (LROs) – officers responsible for disrupting and dismantling OCGs – should be better supported with proper professional development.

A comprehensive understanding of the threats is essential if a force is to combat serious and organised crime effectively. Our previous inspection found that most forces were improving their understanding of serious and organised crime. However we reported that their assessments of risk would benefit further from the inclusion of data from other organisations, notably the NHS, Immigration Enforcement[47] and HM Revenue and Customs.

Our 2016 effectiveness inspection identified a concern about how forces assess and prioritise the intent and capability of OCGs. The use of a nationally standardised procedure, known as OCG mapping (OCGM), was inconsistent. In 2015, we had

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[47] Part of the Home Office, Immigration Enforcement is responsible for preventing abuse, tracking immigration offenders and increasing compliance with immigration law. It works with partners such as the police to regulate migration in line with government policy, while supporting economic growth.

recommended transferring responsibility for OCGM to ROCUs to achieve greater standardisation. In 2016, we observed that little progress had been made with this transition. We asked the NCA to work with forces to overhaul the system.

We reported also that too many forces were trying to fight serious and organised crime in isolation. We considered that forces needed to work more closely with ROCUs. We thought this would lead to a better shared understanding of OCG activity, would make better use of specialist capabilities, and would connect forces with other organisations that can use sanctions to affect OCGs (for example National Trading Standards and HM Revenue and Customs).

How things had changed in 2017

We found some evidence that forces are trying to reprioritise their activity and spend more time on preventing crime, on protecting communities and on disrupting the impact of OCG activities. For example forces are appointing an LRO to OCGs consistently; we found some good examples of programmes to rehabilitate offenders; the role of neighbourhood officers in the management of serious and organised crime in some forces is increasing. However, progress in a number of forces remains regrettably slow.

The assessment of threat and risk in the forces we inspected relies more now on data that external organisations provide. This means that forces appreciate better the range of threats they face and can identify where gaps exist in the intelligence picture. The next step for some forces is to use the knowledge that other organisations provided and encouraged joint interventions against OCGs.

Methods of assessing the threat, in particular the nationally recognised assessment tool known as MoRiLE,[48] are improving ways in which forces prioritise activity against serious and organised crime. Forces apply the mapping process more thoroughly now than they did in previous years, although the improvement in OCGM is yet to evolve fully. A better use of mapping is a welcome development. We are pleased that the NCA has carried out a comprehensive national review of the current mapping approach and made some improvements to the current system. We understand that more significant change will take more time and welcome the further work the NCA is leading which will result in a more fundamental overhaul of the system.

Forces and ROCUs are improving the way that they work together. Forces increasingly recognise ROCUs as an extension of their own capabilities; this represents a positive step towards achieving a consistent and coherent national response to serious and organised crime. However, there are exceptions to this. In

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[48] MoRiLE is the 'management of risk in law enforcement' process developed by the National Police Chiefs' Council. This tool assesses the types of crimes that most threaten communities and highlights where the force does not currently have the capacity or capability to tackle them effectively.

some forces, specialist capabilities, such as surveillance teams, unnecessarily duplicate what exists in ROCUs already. We found also that data and intelligence being held by ROCUs too often are not being made available to forces. This will limit the ability of forces to understand threat, risk and harm. It will also undermine the opportunities for forces to make early interventions to prevent offending from escalating, and to improve the quality of their local serious and organised crime profiles.

Understanding of the threat and risk posed by serious and organised crime

Overall, forces have a good understanding of the threat from serious and organised crime. Over three-quarters of police forces have published strategic threat and risks assessments, which set out the nature and scale of these threats in the force area.

The best examples of serious and organised crime threat assessments include information and data held by external organisations. If the assessments are limited to information held solely by law enforcement organisations, the understanding and response to serious and organised crime will also be constrained. Information held by organisations such as Immigration Enforcement, HM Revenue & Customs and the Department for Work and Pensions will be of clear use to forces in determining how best to tackle OCGs. The degree to which forces gather this information varies.

OCG mapping – inconsistencies found and a new national approach is needed

Our 2016 effectiveness inspection recommended a revision of the OCGM system. We found that forces were using it inconsistently, so that it failed to give a complete and accurate picture of the local, regional or national threat. A secondary concern was that it was poorly suited to assessing the intent and capability of criminals involved in the more contemporary threats of child sexual exploitation, cyber-crime, modern day slavery and human trafficking. As a result, we recommended that the responsibility for mapping be passed to ROCUs. We recommended also that the NCA should review, and if necessary revise, the OCGM process.

ROCUs have agreed for their specialist staff to take responsibility for OCGM and for archiving on behalf of forces. However, at present, only three ROCUs carry out OCGM on behalf of their associated forces. In the meantime some forces are working hard to improve the standard of their mapping. However, plans to transfer this responsibility to ROCUs need to speed up. Currently, the quality and consistency of OCGM are not improving as quickly or as significantly as they might.

The existing mapping methodology was developed to address more conventional criminality, such as firearms dealing and drug supply. It is not sophisticated enough to assess the harm caused by more modern-day types of crime. Changes to the

mapping process are needed to embrace the opportunities that modern technology may present and to provide an accurate, up-to-date picture of serious and organised crime at local, regional and national levels.

The planned transfer of OCGM onto the Police National Database[49] in April 2018 is welcome, as is the use of MoRiLE to help forces assess the intent and capability of OCGs in order to respond to them. An improved mapping process would work well alongside MoRiLE and ensure that the threats particular OCGs and other criminal networks present are identified and addressed promptly. Figure 17, below, shows the variation in the number of OCGs that are mapped in different forces.

Figure 17: Rate of organised crime groups per 1 million population, in England and Wales as at 1 July 2017
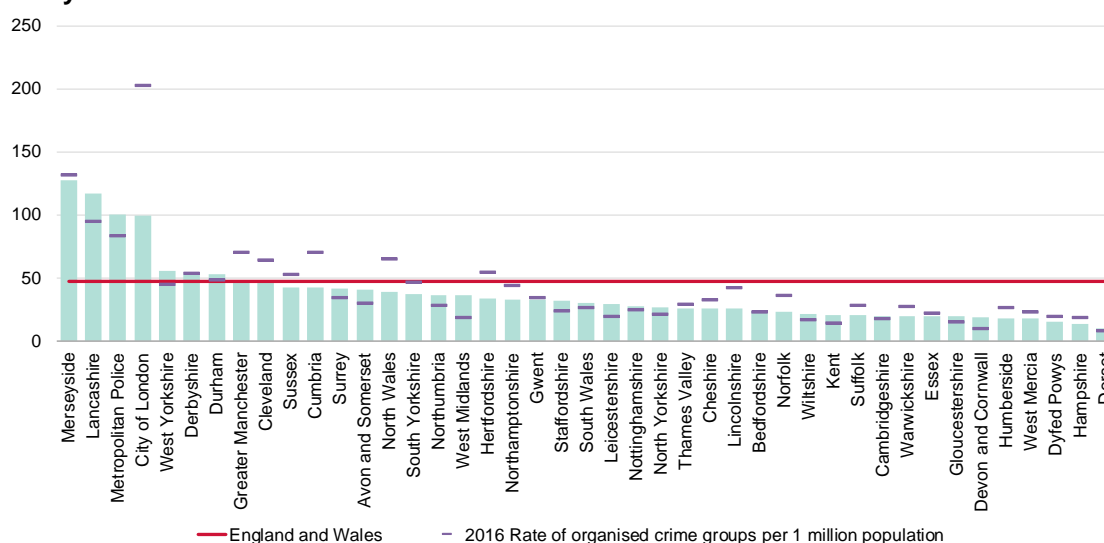
Source: HMICFRS 2017 effectiveness data collection
For further information about this data, please see annex A

Organised crime groups in communities – where joint action has been successful

Local profiles bring together crime data, demographic information and other analysis to produce a detailed picture of the threats linked to serious and organised crime in a particular area. The quality of most of the forces' profiles is good, particularly those that focus on a specific local neighbourhood rather than on an entire force area. Like the serious and organised strategic threat assessments, local profiles will always benefit from information that organisations outside the police service hold.

It is encouraging that in nearly three-quarters of all forces, local profiles are supported by information and analysis coming from local authorities. However there is still room for other organisations to contribute further. For example, intelligence

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[49] The Police National Database is available to all police forces and wider criminal justice agencies throughout the United Kingdom, allowing the police service to share information and intelligence on a national basis. See: www.college.police.uk/What-we-do/Learning/Professional-Training/Information-communication-technology/Pages/PND-Police-National-Database.aspx

held by the police often identifies drug-dealing networks. However, if this intelligence is complemented by information held by drug treatment agencies on vulnerable people using dangerous drugs, and NHS data about overdoses, the force is in a better position to prioritise and deal with the whole problem.

Nottinghamshire Police and Cheshire Constabulary are notable examples of forces that update local profiles regularly using third party information. Tasks to deter and disrupt OCGs are shared with local councils and accountability for serious and organised crime is shared beyond the police service.

ROCUs and individual forces – more scope exists to share information

Another area where we consider that local profiles could improve is the inclusion of information held by ROCUs. We found that local profiles included input from ROCUs in only a quarter of all forces. ROCU intelligence can refine and add to the picture of OCG activity in a particular locality. Where this exchange of information takes place, forces are better placed to address serious and organised crime effectively.

In one region we found an example of ROCU and the force holding different intelligence about an OCG (involved in fraud and human trafficking). When the intelligence was brought together, more effective interventions could be put in place.

Responding to the threat posed by serious and organised crime

The section above explained how forces need to work closely with other organisations if they are to succeed in understanding and addressing serious and organised crime. The same is true if they are to disrupt and dismantle OCGs and other criminal networks effectively.

About two-thirds of forces have established serious and organised crime partnership boards. This number has increased since our effectiveness inspection in 2016. Serious and organised crime partnership boards enable forces and their partner organisations to concentrate jointly on this sort of offending.

The county-lines offending model – how criminals exploit new markets

Typically senior representatives of local councils and housing providers are represented on these boards. They have been particularly effective at managing the impact of OCGs that exploit the county-lines offending model. County-lines gangs are organised drug-dealing networks that expand from cities into towns in surrounding counties in order to exploit new markets. These groups use mobile phone networks to sell drugs, and their activity is often violent. Their criminality involves the exploitation of vulnerable people: drug dealing or work in the sex trade for example.

We found particularly good examples of serious and organised crime partnership boards in Gloucestershire, Bedfordshire and Cheshire. Here, OCGs that were exploiting groups of vulnerable individuals were brought to the attention of the police. This led to joint work to prevent further victimisation and arrest offenders.

Organised crime groups – the type of crime they are involved in

Our inspection revealed that just over half of mapped OCGs are involved in drug dealing as the main area of criminality. In reality OCGs can be identified with multiple crime types. MoRiLE assessments are helping forces to understand the criminal network structure, rather than focusing on a specific commodity.

In our inspections of serious and organised crime it has been encouraging to see that the selection of OCGs that are subject to enforcement has been based on a broader range of crime. All forces have identified child sexual exploitation, modern slavery and organised immigration crime as their priorities. Sustained intelligence gathering in these areas is enabling most forces to improve their understanding of these crimes. Figure 18, below, shows the types of crime that OCGs are involved in.

Figure 18: Percentage of organised crime groups, in England and Wales, as at 1 July 2017 – split by predominant crime type

Drug activity   Organised theft   Economic crime   Specialist money laundering   Other
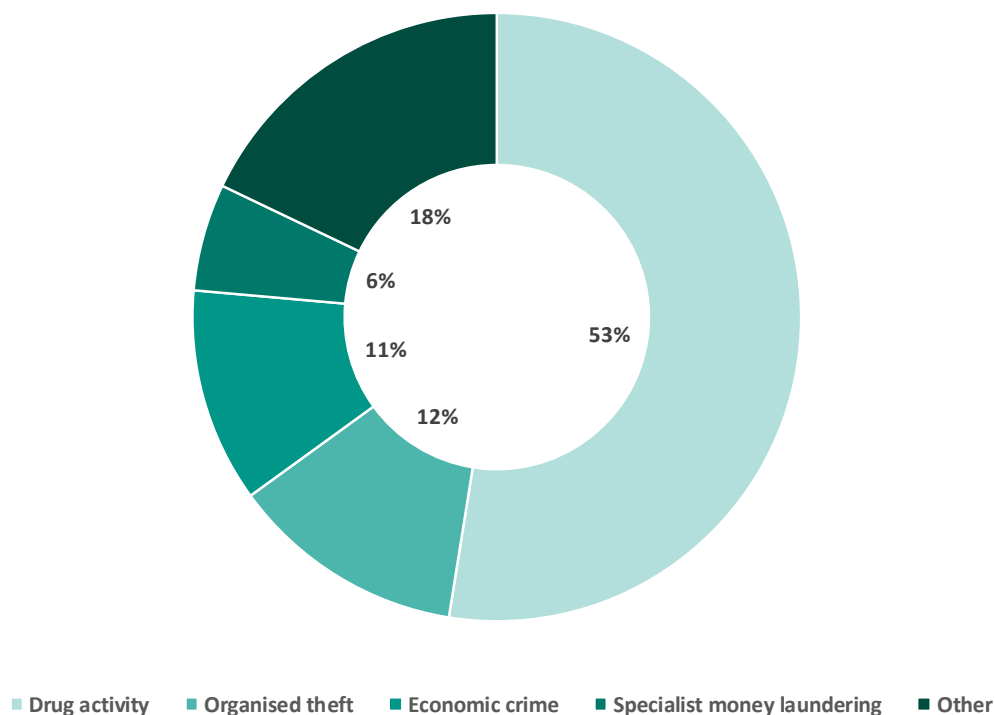
Source: HMICFRS data collection 2017

Interventions against organised crime groups – getting the balance right

In previous inspections, we raised concerns about the tendency of forces to prioritise pursuit activity in support of the national serious and organised crime strategy. We recognise that there are excellent examples of specialist teams successfully prosecuting ruthless criminals. However, repeatedly catching criminals is no guarantee that organised crime will stop. The greatest effect on serious and organised crime occurs when forces take a comprehensive approach: developing intelligence; disrupting crime; and rehabilitating offenders in addition to targeting criminals.

It is important that forces allocate resources to all four strands of the prevent, prepare and protect elements of the strategy, not just to pursue. Some forces are extending their activity to protect communities, work with offenders and engage in programmes to help vulnerable people turn away from crime. However, we have asked four of the forces we inspected to improve their performance in this area.

Urban street gangs and organised crime groups – overlapping activity

The overlap between the activities of OCGs and urban street gangs (USGs[50]) is significant, and many gangs evolve into OCGs. Gangs tend to be less organised and more concerned with perpetuating a threat of violence or harm across a particular area related to the gang's main activities. The main differences between USGs and OCGs relate to the level of criminality, group organisation, planning and control. However, connections exist often between gangs and organised crime. For example, USG members may engage in street drug dealing on behalf of OCGs and often aspire to become OCGs in their own right.[51]

Forces increasingly understand the links between OCGs and USGs and how they both exploit vulnerable people. Most forces are now reporting threats from county-lines gangs and the NCA is leading and co-ordinating on behalf of forces and ROCUs to help prioritise enforcement activity.

Some forces are making good progress in areas where OCG and USG offending comes together. A good example of this is the comprehensive analysis that the Metropolitan Police Service has undertaken into London-based OCGs and USGs linked to county-lines investigations. In particular, this showed how USG affiliations in four London boroughs were linked to 15 major investigations in other parts of the country. It exposed how these groups coerced offenders into committing crime to

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[50] Urban street gangs and many other gangs evolve into organised crime groups (OCGs). Gangs tend to be less organised than OCGs and more concerned with perpetuating a threat of violence or harm across a particular geographical area related to the gang's main activities (Serious and Organised Crime Act 2015).

[51] The Serious Crime Act 2015. Available at:
www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2015/9/notes/division/3/3/1/3

support their criminal enterprises. Furthermore, much of this crime was being committed in parts of the country where the main offenders were not likely to be apprehended.

County-lines offending – raising awareness

We also recognise how the forces, ROCUs and external organisations have worked together to share this understanding and promote awareness through media channels. A number of national conferences have given officers an opportunity to explain their experiences of county-lines offending and exchange ideas about the methods most likely to succeed in curbing offending behaviour.

Case studies have also been used to increase awareness of this type of offending in communities that criminals are likely to target. Careful public messaging – through TV and radio broadcasts, the use of social media, and as part of local crime prevention campaigns – has been used effectively to raise public awareness. These campaigns have included TV documentaries featuring former gang members who explain how crime affected their lives and who urge young people to turn their backs on violence.

County-lines offending – gang activity must be rigorously assessed

Forces are not required to map USGs. However, forces will not fully understand the nature and scale of their offending until these gangs are assessed in a rigorous and consistent way. If the picture is not fully formed, a force's ability to put a stop to USG or OCG offending is likely to be limited.

For example, in county-line groups in particular, peripheral offenders are likely to be arrested while the main offenders continue their criminal lifestyles with impunity. Of even more concern is the fact that the victims who are being exploited are less likely to find the necessary support and protection from the police. Without a comprehensive understanding of USG activity, efforts to address their offending will be ineffective.

We found examples of forces investigating homicides that were linked to the wider activity of OCGs. While we are not suggesting that these offences were preventable, opportunities to share intelligence and reduce the impact of the OCGs had been overlooked.

Neighbourhood policing – more local officers are getting to grips with organised crime

Local policing teams play an important role in identifying and collecting intelligence about existing and developing OCGs and USGs. Most forces are now involving local policing teams in the fight against organised crime. We have long advocated that this should be a 'whole force' approach. The increasing involvement of local policing teams is encouraging, particularly as this was less evident when we first inspected serious and organised crime. This year, local officers played an important role in serious and organised crime in 14 of the 16 forces we inspected.

In particular, we note that the obstacles that previously prevented the sharing of intelligence and briefing of local officers are being overcome now. Some forces have gone further and have assigned experienced detectives to local policing teams to co-ordinate this activity. We found a good example of this in the Metropolitan Police Service, where local officers are working effectively to prevent vulnerable women from being exploited for sex. This involves measures to prevent premises being used as brothels, working with charities to safeguard the women and taking action against those who pimp the service of sex workers to clients.

The role of lead responsible officers – confronting criminals and protecting communities

To succeed in disrupting and investigating serious and organised crime, forces must understand the threat clearly, use OCG mapping accurately, and prioritise activity against them. The role of the LRO is pivotal to striking an effective balance between targeting criminals, safeguarding victims and protecting communities. To do this effectively, LROs take a long-term approach and draw support from other organisations to consider how best to limit the impact of OCGs.

In the course of the inspection, we found that many of the LROs have a good knowledge of the 4P principles set out in the government's serious and organised crime strategy. However, a more detailed examination of LROs raised substantial concerns about the support they receive to discharge their responsibilities effectively.

A survey of over 200 LROs identified that over 80 percent of them have assumed LRO responsibilities alongside supervisory roles in local policing teams. Of those LROs, the overwhelming majority stated that competing demands significantly affect their ability to fulfil the role. We found also that over a quarter of LROs have not received any specific development and that too many assumptions are made that they are competent in this role. Most of them had been selected as LROs because they were supervisors rather than because they had an ability to perform effectively in the role.

Exceptions to this were found in the Metropolitan Police Service, which has developed the role of organised crime advisor (OCA). It selects OCAs on the basis of their broad and in-depth knowledge of tackling serious and organised crime. Their

main responsibility is to support LROs in determining the best tactics to address OCGs. OCAs form part of the new policing model in areas of London where two or more boroughs are being merged into a single policing command. We found that they are having a real impact on the fight against organised crime.

We found positive developments on the use of LROs also in Staffordshire Police, Cheshire Constabulary and Bedfordshire Police. These forces assign LROs to local geographical areas specifically to build relationships with partner organisations and develop 4P plans for OCGs. This means that consistent external support is available to target criminals, safeguard victims and protect communities.

Measuring the effect of serious and organised crime – an improving picture

Measuring the effect of activity against OCGs is important. Knowing that the contribution of the police and other organisations is making a difference will help determine the best use of resources and prioritise the most effective interventions. In many forces, activity to disrupt OCGs takes place daily and many investigations result in lengthy custodial sentences for perpetrators. When interventions are most effective, OCGs can be completely dismantled and rendered inoperable.

Forces have improved the ways in which they measure the impact of their activity to target OCGs. Of the 16 forces inspected in 2017, 10 were recording this information and sharing it with ROCUs. However, the national guidance on the method for measuring disruption concerned us. This concentrates on the pursuit element of the 4P plans; it does not include the longer-term measurement of activity to protect communities or work with individuals to prevent them reoffending. Figure 19, below, shows the number of occasions that forces have recorded activity to disrupt the activity of OCGs.

Figure 19: Disruptions per 100 (active and archived) organised crime groups, in England and Wales – 12 months to 30 June 2017
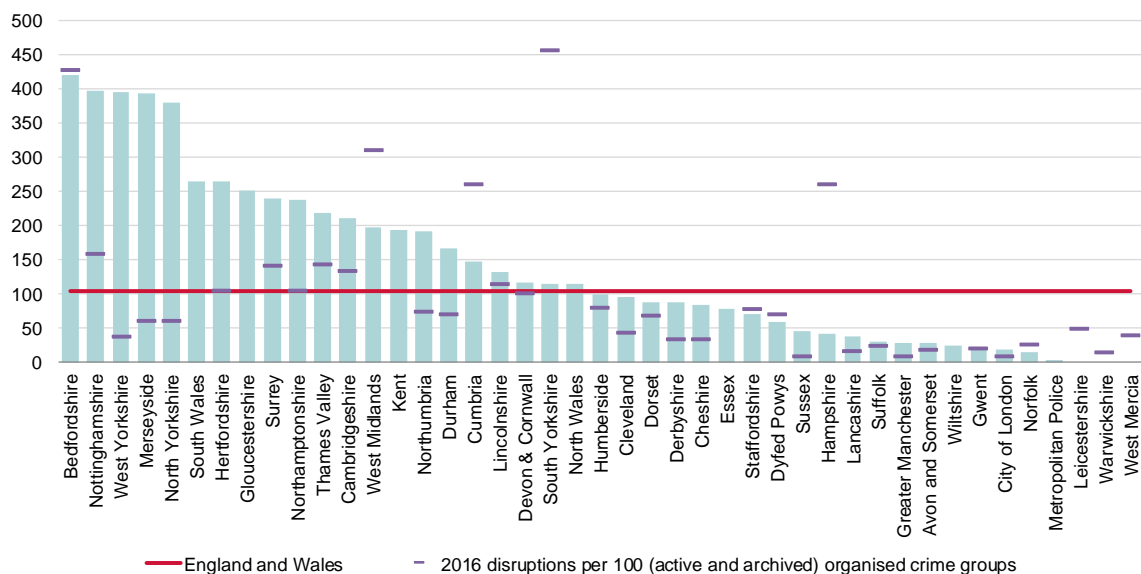
Source: HMICFRS 2017 effectiveness data collection

Measuring the effect of serious and organised crime – a consistent framework is needed

The method of measuring disruptions does not form an integral part of OCGM; it is completed on a separate spreadsheet which has to be linked. Many forces reported that this is a bureaucratic and subjective procedure that adds little value to the measurement of effective intervention against OCGs.

Given the lack of a practical solution to evaluate the effect of disruptions, our previous concerns about the ability of forces to measure long-term impact on OCGs still need to be addressed. Most forces still have a relatively poor understanding of the long-term impact of their activity on serious and organised crime.

Staffordshire Police is making innovative use of community surveys to seek out local views on whether its activity to address organised crime has been effective. Feedback on questionnaires is being analysed before and after police interventions. This is a creative way of securing a better insight into whether local people recognise and appreciate the force's efforts to eradicate certain types of offending.

However, in general, our inspection revealed an inconsistent approach to recording, measuring and assessing the value of activity aimed at tackling serious and organised crime. When this does take place, forces use a variety of methods and databases. This limits opportunities to share best practice, understand how improvements can be made and explore new ways of working on a continuing basis.

We recognise that it is difficult to accurately define a causal link between the resources forces allocate to organised crime, the tactics they use and the results they achieve. However, developing a consistent framework to assess the impact of tactics (including activity in support of prevent, protect and prepare) is important. It will help develop a body of knowledge about those interventions that are likely to work against different types of offending. This is especially important as the nature of organised crime is changing. Techniques to disrupt and dismantle OCGs are also evolving. Forces and ROCUs should be in a position to evaluate the contribution and effectiveness of these techniques in a fast-changing area of law enforcement.

We are pleased to see that the NPCC lead for serious and organised crime is defining and developing a performance framework to measure results. This should form a better understanding of the impact on OCG activity, enable a better evaluation of tactical interventions, help with the prioritisation of activity, and lead to cost-effective outcomes. The framework will be an area of interest in future inspections.

Regional organised crime units

There are nine regional organised crime units (ROCUs) in England and Wales. These form an important part of the national policing network. Their significance is emphasised in the national serious and organised crime strategy. They provide a consistent approach to disrupting organised crime. The nine ROCUs in England and Wales provide most of the specialist capabilities for tackling serious and organised crime, such as complex cyber-crime investigation, the use of intelligence assets and specialist surveillance.

All forces in a particular region provide officers and staff on secondment to ROCUs. In this way, the ROCU becomes an extension of a single force's capabilities. ROCUs provide a specialist capability when the nature, scale, complexity of an investigation is likely to be beyond the capacity of a single force. The specialist nature of a ROCU's remit also makes the training, accreditation and professional development of staff easier.

In general, forces are making regular requests to ROCUs for support. Collaborative working between the ROCUs (including the Metropolitan Police Service which retains its own specialist capabilities) is constructive. We found many examples of force and ROCU representatives coming together to determine how best to address particular OCGs and allocate resources to interventions.

Specialist policing capabilities – inefficient practices

Despite all this positive work, some anomalies still need addressing. In our inspection of ROCUs in 2017, we found that in several regions forces were replicating the specialist capabilities that ROCUs provide.

As well as putting pressure on force budgets, this duplication of services is likely to cause confusion about respective force and ROCU responsibilities. At the time of our visit, the force was not using its own specialist surveillance capabilities for any current investigations. Maintaining a surveillance capability is expensive and resource intensive. In these circumstances, it is difficult to see how this duplication represents an efficient and effective approach to organised crime.

In 2015, we recommended all forces to produce an action plan setting out how they will: maximise their use of ROCU capabilities; minimise duplication; and introduce an effective means of prioritising activity across their region. We recognise that in response to this, nominated senior officers are reviewing whether it is cost effective for functions to co-exist in both forces and ROCUs. We are told that this review is now complete. This is an area where we seek further reassurances that expensive resources are not being duplicated.

Intelligence sharing – organisations coming together to fight crime

Forces are making better use of intelligence held by external organisations to develop knowledge and disrupt the activity of OCGs. The Government Agency Intelligence Network (GAIN) facilitates the sharing of information to support law enforcement. Participating organisations include the police, national law enforcement agencies and other bodies, such as Trading Standards and the Environment Agency. HMICFRS previously reported that many forces were under-using this facility. The GAIN network has overhauled its method of working recently, and our 2017 inspection found that seven of the 16 forces we inspected are making good use of its facilities. Figure 20, below, shows the number of occasions on which forces have made use of GAIN.

Figure 20: Government agency intelligence network (GAIN) referrals per 100 (active and archived) organised crime groups, in England and Wales – 12 months to 30 June 2017
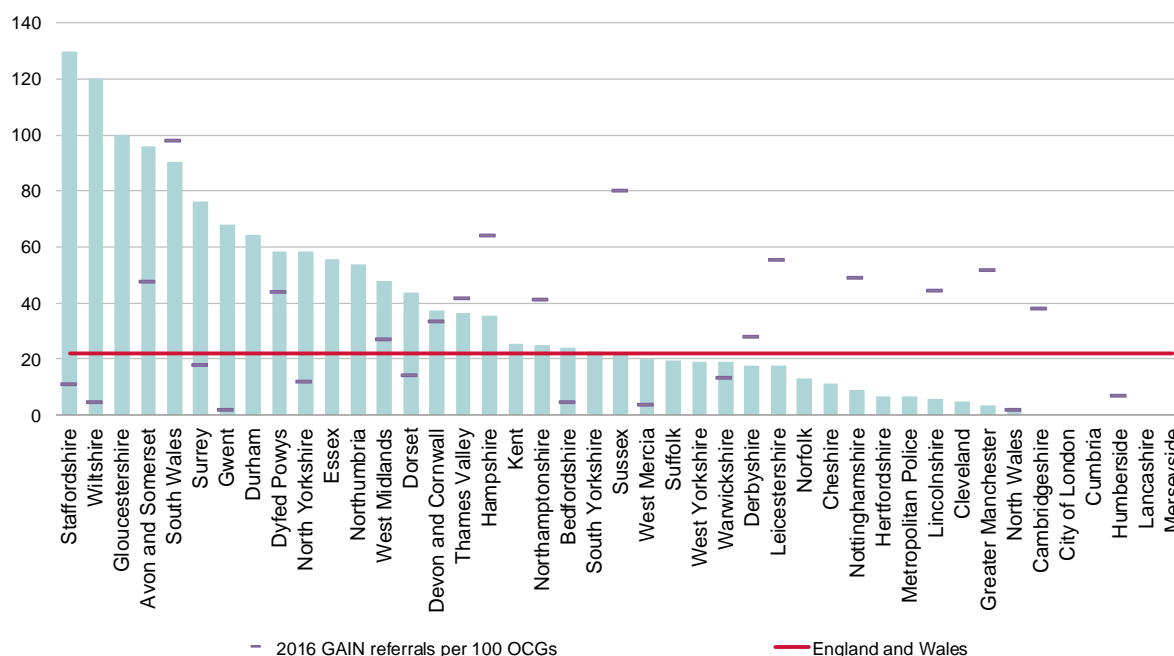
Source: HMICFRS 2017 effectiveness data collection

Preventing serious and organised crime

Joint working to prevent offending

Prevention is an important part of the government's serious and organised crime strategy. In common with all prevention strategies, it is important both to intervene early to help people turn away from crime and to put measures in place to help prevent habitual criminals from reoffending.

The tendency of forces to prioritise the pursuit element of the government's strategy, as opposed to a balanced approach across the 4Ps, means that many forces tend to overlook prevention. There are many recognised indicators that suggest when individuals are likely to embark on criminal lifestyles. They might have families or

associates who are notorious for offending. They might be absent from school, become involved in substance misuse or come to notice for gang-related activity. Working with other organisations to identify problems and intervene early is the best way to prevent individuals being drawn into organised crime.

We came across evidence of forces working with others organisations as part of support programmes. These included facilities for people to hand in guns and knives or report offenders to Crimestoppers UK[52]. However these programmes lack governance and rarely form part of a coherent prevention strategy. A small number of forces remain almost entirely reactive in their approach to tackling serious and organised crime. These forces do too little to work with offenders known to be committing crime or divert those at risk of being drawn into criminal lifestyles. This is despite the fact that we have urged these forces before to improve their performance to reduce organised crime.

Exceptions to this exist where forces have drawn up explicit prevention programmes to work alongside law-enforcement tactics. These included Gloucestershire Constabulary's Great Expectations and the Aston project, aimed at young people on the periphery of crime, and Operation Trident, in the Metropolitan Police Service, which has an established community outreach programme.

Court orders – another way to prevent organised crime

Forces are becoming increasingly aware of the potential for vulnerable individuals to be exploited as part of organised crime. It is, therefore, important they make good use of court orders to limit the harm habitual offenders cause and protect victims. These are known as ancillary orders and can have a lasting impact on an offender, which extends beyond prison sentences. They include: deprivation and restitution orders that prevent access to the proceeds of crime; financial reporting orders that can place restrictions on banking transactions; and gang injunctions, which place a range of requirements on the behaviour and activities of a person involved in gang-related violence.

We found that LROs generally have a good understanding of ancillary orders. They focus on a broad range of orders that are relevant to the OCGs they are managing. More than 100 gang injunctions were in force at the time of our 2017 inspection; this number has remained the same since 2016.

We found West Midlands Police making particularly good use of gang injunctions. The force works closely with other organisations when presenting evidence to support applications for injunctions. In particular, it uses them innovatively to restrict

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[52] Crimestoppers UK is an independent crime-fighting charitable organisation which receives information about crime from callers who wish to remain anonymous.

the lifestyles of prominent gang members serving prison sentences. This is in response to intelligence indicating that these individuals still have the ability to offend, or provoke violence between inmates, and harm communities while in prison.

The Metropolitan Police Service makes effective use of ancillary orders. A specialist unit is responsible for the application, monitoring and management of serious crime prevention orders (SCPOs) and other preventative orders. This model brings consistency to their use and the orders are having a positive effect on reducing and disrupting offending.

Lifetime offender management

Forces should take a long-term approach to managing offenders. Working with partner organisations, such as prisons and probation, is the best way to prevent individuals from committing serious and organised crime before, during and after conviction. This recognises the fact that certain individuals are unlikely to cease their involvement in this type of crime. This is particularly the case if they are not closely managed, monitored or diverted away from organised crime. This is known as lifetime offender management.

All forces have established offender management programmes, which can be adapted to provide lifetime services. This is another area where ancillary orders, in particular SCPOs targeted at high-priority offenders, can be useful in disrupting the impact of OCGs.

However, in general, forces have a poor understanding of the concept of lifetime offender management and it is ineffective in some ROCUs. Offender management is too often considered only when forces are actively targeting OCGs, and continuity of offender management in the period after prosecution, conviction and sentence is insufficient. We also found inconsistencies in how the lifetime offender management service is provided. In some areas, specialist units in the ROCUs provide it; LROs or other officers within the force assume these responsibilities in other areas.

Specialist capabilities

Fulfilling their national policing responsibilities

Police forces, as well as being responsible for preventing and investigating crime within force boundaries, also have national responsibilities. Some types of crime or other threats, by their nature, are not confined to or easily contained within individual force boundaries. These are known as national threats and are defined by *The Strategic Policing Requirement (SPR)*[53] as: terrorism, cyber-crime, public order, civil emergencies, child sexual abuse and serious and organised crime.

It is important that forces:

- understand how likely it is that they will need to respond to these threats;

- identify the skills and capabilities they will need; and

- establish exercising and training programmes to keep up their capability.

What we are looking for

We focused our inspection on:

- Forces' understanding of these threats, including:

    - how well forces assess these threats; and

    - how well forces prioritise these threats as part of their overall responsibilities.

- How forces build their capacity and capability to address these threats, including:

    - how forces develop the skills and experience to address these threats;

    - how well forces work together to build their capability and capacity to manage these threats; and

    - how well forces work with other organisations to respond to these threats.

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[53] The SPR is issued annually by the Home Secretary. It sets out the latest national threats and appropriate national policing capabilities required to counter them. National threats require a co-ordinated or aggregated response from police forces, national agencies or other partners. *The Strategic Policing Requirement*, Home Office, March 2015. Available from: www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/417116/The_Strategic_Policing_Requirement.pdf

- How forces test their capabilities in response to national threats, including:

  - how forces make use of training exercises to assess their ability to respond to national threats; and

  - how effectively forces involve other emergency services and external organisations in developing their readiness to respond to national threats.

What we found

We found that forces have a good understanding of the national threats and how they might affect their communities. Some forces, including Wiltshire Police, Warwickshire Police, West Mercia Police and Gloucestershire Constabulary, are making use of the MoRiLE risk assessment tool to make detailed assessments of how national threats affect their areas.

In some forces, including Humberside Police, the Metropolitan Police Service, West Yorkshire Police and Avon and Somerset Constabulary, the national threats form part of the annual planning cycle when the force reviews all its priorities. We found this to be an effective way to spot risks and prioritise national responsibilities alongside local policing objectives.

In all forces, a chief officer, or a number of chief officers, are responsible for developing programmes to build the capacity and capabilities to respond to the threats. When risk assessments or experiences from operational events or training exercises show a shortfall in force capabilities, the best-performing forces quickly address it. South Yorkshire Police, for example, is increasing the number of officers trained to deal with civil disorder.

Joint responses to national threats

Forces work constructively with other organisations to develop a joint response to national threats. In many places, this is the role of a local resilience forum (LRF), a statutory body, which brings together emergency services and other organisations, such as local councils, that are responsible for crisis management and disaster recovery.

Greater Manchester Police has taken joint working arrangements further. The force has established a joint communication centre, which includes senior representatives from the ambulance service, the fire and rescue service, the police and other organisations in the event of a major incident. Known as the strategic co-ordination centre (SCC), it helps to ensure an integrated response in times of crisis. The force's arrangements to manage major incidents were tested thoroughly during the terrorist attack at the Manchester Arena in May 2017.

Testing responses to national threats

All forces have programmes in place to test their response to national threats. Most of these involve training exercises and include several forces in a region as well as other emergency services and external organisations.

As part of these exercises, we saw some good examples in South Wales and Kent of the forces finding ways to improve their response to major incidents. These included a debrief of the Champions League football final at the Principality Stadium in Cardiff. We also found that Kent Police carried out a thorough debrief of its exercise to test its response to a terrorist attack in the Channel Tunnel.

Firearms capability

We first inspected how well forces were prepared to manage firearms attacks in our 2016 effectiveness inspection. Subsequent terrorist attacks in the UK and Europe have meant that the police service maintains a firm focus on armed capability in England and Wales.

It is not just terrorist attacks that put operational demands on armed officers. The threat can include the activity of organised crime groups or armed street gangs and all other crime involving guns.

The *Code of Practice on Police use of Firearms and Less Lethal Weapons*[54] makes forces responsible for implementing national standards of armed policing. The code says each force must designate a chief officer to oversee these standards. This means the chief officer must set out the firearms threat in an armed policing strategic threat and risk assessment (APSTRA). The chief officer must also set out clear rationales for the number of armed officers (armed capacity) and the level to which they are trained (armed capability).

What we were looking for

We focused our inspection on:

- forces' understanding of threats and risks in their communities;

- the role of chief officers in overseeing national standards; and

- how forces are developing their armed capability and capacity in response to the threats.

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[54] *Code of Practice on Police use of Firearms and Less Lethal Weapons*, Home Office, 2003.

What we found

Most forces have a good understanding of the potential harm facing the public. APSTRAs conform to the requirements of the code of practice and the College of Policing guidance[55] and are reviewed regularly.

In some forces, there are areas where the APSTRA could be improved and individual forces are taking steps to do so:

- We expect APSTRAs to consider sites and venues such as crowded places that are attractive targets for terrorists. This helps to identify ARV patrol areas.

- It is important to collect data on how quickly ARVs attend armed incidents. This helps a force to know whether it has enough armed officers to meet operational demands.

- They should also include information held by NABIS.[56] This can shed light on where firearms were used by criminals and can also be useful in guiding ARV patrols.

Boosting armed capacity

Some forces receive extra Home Office funding as part of a national programme to boost armed capacity in England and Wales. All forces have fulfilled their commitment to the programme and have increased the availability of ARVs significantly; they achieved this by the target date (April 2017).

Some forces have achieved this by accelerating the recruitment of ARV officers. Other forces are still running recruitment programmes and they have taken interim measures to make more ARVs available. These include adjusting shift patterns and paying overtime to increase the number of armed officers.

In some forces, there can be little doubt that the ability to respond to terrorist attacks within minutes and the bravery of the officers involved has saved lives.

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[55] College of Policing Authorised Professional Practice on armed policing, available at: www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/armed-policing/?s

[56] The National Ballistics Intelligence Service (NABIS) provides fast-time forensic intelligence as well as tactical and strategic intelligence to tackle all aspects of firearms related criminality within the UK. NABIS works with the police forces of England, Wales and Scotland as well as partner law enforcement agencies such as Police Scotland, British Transport Police, the Ministry of Defence Police, MI5, the National Crime Agency, UK Border Force and the Police Service of Northern Ireland. For more information see: www.nabis.police.uk/

Definitions and interpretations

In this report, the following words, phrases and expressions in the left-hand column have the meanings assigned to them in the right-hand column. Sometimes, the definition will be followed by a fuller explanation of the matter in question, with references to sources and other material which may be of assistance to the reader.

Action Fraud	UK's national fraud and cyber-crime reporting centre, providing a central point of contact for information about fraud and cyber-crime; for more information see: www.actionfraud.police.uk
anti-social behaviour	behaviour by a person which causes or is likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress to one or more persons not of the same household as the perpetrator of that behaviour (section 52(8), Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004)
Approved Mental Health Professional (AMHP)	person warranted, or authorised, to make certain legal decisions and applications under the Mental Health Act 1983 (as amended in 2007)
Armed Policing Strategic Threat and Risk Assessment (APSTRA)	evaluation of the threats and risks that communities face from armed criminality and terrorism
Association of Chief Police Officers Criminal Records Office (ACRO)	national police unit, founded in 2006 to facilitate the exchange of criminal records and biometric information with European and other signatory nations; for more information see: www.acro.police.uk/
Authorised Professional Practice (APP)	official source of police policy and procedures, approved by the College of Policing to which police officers and staff are expected to have regard in carrying out their responsibilities; for more information, see the College of Policing's website: www.app.college.police.uk/about-app/
body-worn video technology	digital video cameras which can be attached to the clothing of police personnel and used to record the scenes of crime, and what victims, witnesses and offenders said; this footage can form part of the evidence for prosecutions
Code of Practice for Victims of Crime	statutory code of practice issued by the Secretary of State for Justice under section 32 of the Domestic Violence, Crime and

Victims Act 2004; establishes minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime; its stated objective is to ensure the criminal justice system puts victims first, making the system more responsive to them and easier for them to navigate; it also aims to ensure that victims of crime are treated well and receive appropriate support to help them cope and recover, and to protect them from becoming victims again; the code specifies the services which must be provided to victims of crime in England and Wales, and sets a minimum for the standard of those services; higher entitlements are set for victims of the most serious crime, persistently targeted victims and vulnerable or intimidated victims; the public sector bodies which are obliged to provide services to victims of crime are specified in the code, and include police forces and police and crime commissioners; the Victims' Commissioner has a statutory duty to keep the code under regular review

Code of Practice on the Police Use of Firearms and Less Lethal Weapons	code listing responsibilities of the police service to implement national standards for the command, training, management and deployment of armed officers
College of Policing	professional body for policing in England and Wales established in 2012 to provide those working in policy with the skills and knowledge necessary to prevent crime, protect the public and secure public trust; has three complementary functions: knowledge (ensuring that, over time, policing practice and standards are based on knowledge rather than custom and convention), education (supporting the development of individual members, setting educational requirements and facilitating academic accreditation of members' expertise) and standards; its powers to set standards are conferred by the Police Act 1996, as amended by the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014; examples of standards set by it include authorised professional practice and peer review
Commissioner for Victims and Witnesses	statutory office-holder appointed by the Secretary of State for Justice under section 48 of the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004; the commissioner is required (by section 49 of that Act) to promote the interests of victims and witnesses, encourage good practice in the treatment of victims and witnesses, and keep under review the victims' code; the commissioner is also required to give advice to ministers on matters relating to victims and witnesses, and to prepare and

	publish an annual report on the carrying out of his or her functions
county-lines offending	offending by gangs or organised drug-dealing networks expanding from cities into towns in surrounding counties
digital investigations	investigations of crime that involve digital evidence downloaded from smartphones, tablets and other digital devices
domestic abuse, stalking and harassment (DASH) risk assessments	assessment based on a series of structured questions designed to help frontline officers identify high-risk cases of domestic abuse, stalking, harassment and so-called honour-based violence; designed by the charity SafeLives; for more information see: www.safelives.org.uk/
domestic violence protection notice (DVPN)	initial notice issued by the police under sections 24 to 33, Crime and Security Act 2010 following an incident of domestic abuse, which is designed to provide emergency protection to an individual believed to be the victim of domestic abuse and allow referral to support services without interference from the perpetrator; contains prohibitions that effectively bar the suspected perpetrator from returning to the victim's home or otherwise contacting the victim; must be authorised by a police superintendent; may be issued to an adult if the police superintendent has reasonable grounds for believing that the adult has been violent towards, or has threatened violence towards an associated person, and the DVPN is necessary to protect that person from violence or a threat of violence by the intended recipient of the DVPN; 'associated person' in this context in relation to a perpetrator of violence means a spouse or former spouse, a civil partner or former civil partner, a cohabitant or former cohabitant, someone who lives or has lived in the same household, a relative, a fiancée or former fiancée, a person with whom the perpetrator has or has had an intimate personal relationship of significant duration, a co-parent or a person sharing parental responsibilities with the perpetrator (section 62, Family Law Act 1996)
domestic violence protection order (DVPO)	order issued by a magistrate, under the Crime and Security Act 2010 after a DVPN which bans a suspected domestic abuse perpetrator from molesting or otherwise intimidating a victim
force management statement (FMS)	self-assessment that chief constables (and London equivalents) prepare and give to HMICFRS each year; the

chief constable's statement and explanation of:

(a) the demand the force expects to face in the next four years;

(b) how the force will change and improve the condition, capacity, capability, serviceability, performance and security of supply of its workforce and other assets to cope with that demand;

(c) how the force will improve its efficiency to make sure the gap between future demand and future capability is as small as it can reasonably be; and

(d) the money the force expects to have to do all this.

golden hour	period just after a crime has been committed, when the potential for the recovery of forensic and other important evidence is greatest
Government Agency Intelligence Network (GAIN)	joint working facilities, involving representatives of law enforcement and other inter-departmental bodies, involved in the sharing of information, to support law enforcement
hidden harm	exploitation or victimisation of vulnerable members of the community, typically involving such offences as human trafficking and modern slavery
house-to-house enquiries	canvassing for witnesses at, or near, the scene of a crime
integrated offender management (IOM)	management of the most persistent and problematic offenders by police and partner agencies working together
lead responsible officers (LROs)	police officers appointed to manage interventions against OCGs, including safeguarding victims, protecting communities and disrupting criminal activity
lifetime offender management	IOM programmes for offenders involved in serious and organised crime as part of their lifestyles
management of risk in law enforcement (MoRiLE) assessment tool	method to assess the types of crimes that most threaten communities; highlights where the force lacks the capacity or capability to tackle them effectively

Mental Health Crisis Care Concordat	guidelines developed by mental health professionals to help the police service, mental health trusts and other organisations work together effectively and support people with mental health conditions
Mind	mental health charity in England and Wales that offers information and advice to people with mental health problems, and lobbies government and local authorities on their behalf; works also to raise public awareness and understanding of issues relating to mental health
multi-agency risk assessment conference (MARAC)	locally-held meeting of statutory and voluntary agency representatives to share information about high-risk victims of domestic abuse; any agency can refer an adult or child whom they believe to be at high risk of harm; the aim of the conference is to produce a co-ordinated action place to increase that adult or child's safety, health and well-being; agencies that attend vary, but are likely to include the police, probation, children's health and housing services; over 250 currently in operation across England and Wales
multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH)	entity in which public sector organisations with common or aligned responsibilities in relation to the safety of vulnerable people work; comprises staff from organisations such as the police and local authority social services, who work alongside one another, sharing information and co-ordinating activities to help protect the most vulnerable children and adults from harm, neglect and abuse
National Ballistics Intelligence Services (NABIS)	forensic science centre providing fast-time forensic intelligence as well as tactical and strategic intelligence to tackle all aspects of firearms-related criminality within the UK; for more information, see: www.nabis.police.uk/
National Crime Agency (NCA)	non-ministerial government department established under the Crime and Courts Act 2013 as an operational crime-fighting agency with responsibility for leading national efforts to tackle serious and organised crime; its remit includes strengthening national borders, fighting fraud and cyber-crime and protecting

children and young people from sexual abuse and exploitation; replaced the Serious Organised Crime Agency (SOCA)

National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC)	organisation which brings together 43 operationally independent and locally accountable chief constables and their chief officer teams to co-ordinate national operational policing; works closely with the College of Policing, which is responsible for developing professional standards, to develop national approaches on issues such as finance, technology and human resources; replaced the Association of Chief Police Officers on 1 April 2015
Operation Encompass	police and education early intervention safeguarding partnership, which supports children and young people exposed to domestic abuse; facilitates the reporting to schools, before the start of the next school day, of occasions when a child or young person has been involved in, or exposed to, a domestic abuse incident
Organised Crime Group (OCG)	criminals working together and involved in planning, co-ordinating and committing serious crime on a continuing basis
Organised Crime Group Mapping (OCGM)	standardised method of assessing the risks that OCGs present to communities and prioritising activity against them
outcome 16	Home Office classification, indicating that a criminal investigation has been concluded if there are evidential difficulties and, although the suspect has been identified, the victim does not support police action
PEEL	HMICFRS' police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy assessment; an annual programme of all-force inspections that reports on how well each force in England and Wales cuts crime (effectiveness), provides value for money (efficiency), and provides a service that is legitimate in the eyes of the public (legitimacy)
phone investigations	method of investigating a crime when the likelihood of arresting an offender is remote, which typically involves an investigator recording details of the victim and making enquiries without sending an officer to the place where the crime was committed
Police Federation	national staff association established in 1919 which represents the interests of police constables, sergeants and inspectors (including chief inspectors) in England and Wales in all matters

	affecting their welfare and efficiency (except for in relation to promotion or discipline); in fulfilling its purpose, it must (a) protect the public interest, (b) maintain high standards of conduct and (c) maintain high standards of transparency (section 59, Police Act 1996)
Police National Computer (PNC)	IT system used extensively by law enforcement organisations across the United Kingdom that consists of several databases available 24 hours a day, giving access to information of national and local significance; contains information about names, vehicles, property and drivers; used since 1974
Police National Database (PND)	national IT system that allows the police service to share access to and search local force information on a national basis; designed to provide forces with immediate access to up-to-date information drawn from local crime, custody, intelligence, child abuse and domestic abuse systems
problem profiles	research and analysis providing forces with greater understanding of established and emerging crime or incident series, priority locations or other identified high-risk issues; should be based on a range of information sources, including information from partner organisations, and should contain recommendations for making decisions and options for action
problem solving	strategy for forces that involves them systematically identifying and analysing crime and disorder problems, developing specific interventions to address them and evaluating whether the response has succeeded
Professionalising Investigation Programme (PIP)	programme that gives staff the training, skills and accreditation to conduct the highest quality investigations: PIP level 1 – priority and volume crime investigations; PIP level 2 – serious and complex investigations; PIP level 3 – major investigations; and PIP level 4 – strategic management of highly complex investigations
Public Protection Unit (PPU)	specialist unit in a police force which deals with the protection of vulnerable people
Regional Organised Crime Unit (ROCU)	operational police unit endowed with regional jurisdiction and specialist capabilities to disrupt and dismantle organised crime units; officers and police staff normally are seconded to ROCUs from forces within the region

registered sex offender (RSO)	offender, convicted or cautioned of sexual offences, who is required to register under the Sex Offenders Act 1997 as amended by the Sexual Offences Act 2003
Scanning, Analysis, Response and Assessment (SARA)	problem-solving model that involves scanning, analysis, response, and assessment used by a number of forces to identify matters of concern to local communities, and find solutions to them
serious crime prevention order (SCPO)	court order issued in accordance with the Serious Crime Act 2007 to protect the public by preventing, restricting or disrupting a person's involvement in serious crime
serious and organised crime (SOC)	serious offences (defined by the Serious and Organised Crime Act 2015) that are planned, co-ordinated and conducted by people working together on a continuing basis and whose motivation is often, but not always, financial gain
Strategic Policing Requirement (SPR)	requirement published in July 2012 (and updated in March 2015) which sets out the Home Secretary's view of the national threats for which the police must prepare
THRIVE	threat, harm, risk, investigation, vulnerability and engagement assessment used by call handlers to help assess the appropriate initial police response to a call for service
Urban Street Gang (USG)	criminal network, defined by the Serious and Organised Crime Act 2015, which is less organised than an OCG and more concerned with perpetuating a threat of violence or harm across a particular geographical area
victims' code	code of practice for victims of crime
volume crime	offences committed frequently and in such a volume that they have a significant impact on the community and on the ability of the local police to investigate them; may involve criminal damage and theft from cars as well as more serious cases, such as robbery, burglary and domestic abuse
vulnerable person	person in need of special care, support or protection because of their age, disability or risk of abuse and neglect

Annex A – About the data

The information presented in this report comes from a range of sources, including data published by the Home Office, the Office for National Statistics, inspection fieldwork and data collected directly from all 43 geographic police forces in England and Wales.

Where HMICFRS collected data directly from police forces, we took reasonable steps to agree the design of the data collection with forces and with other interested parties such as the Home Office. We gave forces several opportunities to quality assure and validate the data they provided us, to ensure the accuracy of the evidence presented. For instance:

- Data that forces submitted were checked and queried with those forces where data were notably different from other forces or were internally inconsistent.

- All forces were asked to check the final data used in the report and correct any errors identified.

The source of the data is presented with each figure in the report, and is set out in more detail within this annex. The source of Force in numbers data is also set out below.

Methodology

Data in the report

British Transport Police was outside the scope of inspection. Any aggregated totals for England and Wales exclude British Transport Police data, so will differ from those published by the Home Office.

Population

For all uses of population as a denominator in our calculations, unless otherwise noted, we use Office for National Statistics (ONS) mid-2016 population estimates. These were the most recent data available at the time of the inspection.

For the specific case of City of London Police, we include both resident and transient population within our calculations. This is to account for the unique nature and demographics of this force's responsibility.

Survey of police staff

HMICFRS surveyed the police workforce across forces in England and Wales, to understand their views on workloads, redeployment and the suitability of assigned tasks. This survey was a non-statistical, voluntary sample which means that results

may not be representative of the workforce population. The number of responses varied between 16 and 1,678 across forces. Therefore, we treated results with caution and used them for identifying themes that could be explored further during fieldwork rather than to assess individual force performance.

Ipsos MORI survey of public attitudes towards policing

HMICFRS commissioned Ipsos MORI to survey attitudes towards policing between 21 July and 15 August 2017. Respondents were drawn from an online panel and results were weighted by age, gender and work status to match the population profile of the force area. The sampling method used is not a statistical random sample and the sample size was small, varying between 300 and 321 individuals in each force area. Therefore, any results provided are only an indication of satisfaction rather than an absolute.

The findings of this survey are available on our website: www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmicfrs/data/peel-assessments

Review of crime files

HMICFRS reviewed 2,700[57] police case files across crime types for:

- theft from person;

- rape (including attempts);

- stalking;

- harassment;

- common assault;

- grievous bodily harm (wounding); and

- actual bodily harm.

Our file review was designed to provide a broad overview of the identification of vulnerability, the effectiveness of investigations and to understand how victims are treated through police processes. We randomly selected files from crimes recorded between 1 January 2017 and 31 March 2017 and assessed them against several criteria. Due to the small sample size of cases selected per force, we did not use results from the file review as the sole basis for assessing individual force performance, but alongside other evidence gathered.

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[57] 60 case files were reviewed in each force, with the exception of the Metropolitan Police Service, West Midlands Police and West Yorkshire Police where 90 case files were reviewed.

Force in numbers

A dash in this graphic indicates that a force was not able to supply HMICFRS with data or the data supplied by the forces were not comparable.

Calls for assistance (including those for domestic abuse)

These data were collected directly from all 43 geographic police forces in England and Wales. In 2017, the data requested from forces contained a breakdown of occurrences where the police were called to an incident.

Recorded crime and crime outcomes

These data are obtained from Home Office police-recorded crime and outcomes data tables for the 12 months to 30 June 2017 and are taken from the October 2017 Home Office data release, which is available from:
www.gov.uk/government/statistics/police-recorded-crime-open-data-tables

Total police-recorded crime includes all crime, except fraud offences, recorded by all police forces in England and Wales. Home Office publications on the overall volumes and rates of recorded crime and outcomes include British Transport Police, which is outside the scope of this HMICFRS inspection. Therefore, England and Wales rates in this report will differ from those published by the Home Office.

Data referring to police-recorded crime should be treated with care, as recent increases may be attributed to the renewed focus on the quality and compliance of crime recording since HMICFRS' national inspection of crime data in 2014.

Suffolk Constabulary was unable to submit 2017 outcomes data to the Home Office due to data quality issues, relating to the changing of its crime recording system to Athena. Therefore Suffolk Constabulary has been excluded from the England and Wales figure.

Other notable points to consider when interpreting outcomes data are listed below.

- Crime outcome proportions show the percentage of crimes recorded in the 12 months to 30 June 2017 that have been assigned each outcome. This means that each crime is tracked or linked to its outcome. Therefore these data are subject to change, as more crimes are assigned outcomes over time.

- Under the new framework, 37 police forces in England and Wales provide outcomes data through the Home Office data hub (HODH) on a monthly basis. All other forces provide these data via a manual return also occurring on a monthly basis.

- Leicestershire, Staffordshire and West Yorkshire forces participated in the Ministry of Justice's out of court disposals pilot. This means they no longer issued simple cautions or cannabis/khat warnings and they restrict their use of

penalty notices for disorder as disposal options for adult offenders, as part of the pilot. These three pilot forces continued to operate in accordance with the pilot conditions since the pilot ended in November 2015. Other forces subsequently also limited their use of some out of court disposals. Therefore, the outcomes data should be viewed with this in mind.

- Direct comparisons should not be made between general crime outcomes and domestic abuse-related outcomes. Domestic abuse-related outcomes are based on the number of outcomes for domestic-abuse related offences recorded in the 12 months to 30 June 2017, irrespective of when the crime was recorded. Therefore, the domestic abuse-related crimes and outcomes recorded in the reporting year are not tracked, whereas the general outcomes are tracked.

- For a full commentary and explanation of outcome types please see Crime Outcomes in England and Wales: year ending March 2017, Home Office, July 2017. Available from: www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/633048/crime-outcomes-hosb0917.pdf

Anti-social behaviour

These data are obtained from Office for National Statistics data tables (year ending 31 March 2017), available from: www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/datasets/policeforceareadatatables

All police forces record incidents of anti-social behaviour (ASB) reported to them in accordance with the provisions of the National Standard for Incident Recording (NSIR). Forces record incidents under NSIR in accordance with the same victim-focused approach that applies for recorded crime, although these data are not subject to the same quality assurance as the main recorded crime collection. Incident counts should be interpreted as incidents recorded by the police, rather than reflecting the true level of victimisation. Other agencies also deal with ASB incidents (for example, local authorities and social landlords), but incidents reported to these agencies will not generally be included in police data.

When viewing this data the reader should be aware that Warwickshire Police had a problem with its incident recording. For a small percentage of all incidents reported during 2015-16 the force could not identify whether these were ASB or other types of incident. These incidents have been distributed pro rata for Warwickshire, so that two percent of ASB incidents in the reporting year for 2015-16 is estimated.

Domestic abuse

Data relating to domestic abuse-related offences is obtained through the Home Office for the 12 months to 30 June 2017. These are more recent data than those previously published by Office for National Statistics. The Home Office collects these data regularly and requires all forces to record accurately and flag domestic abuse crimes. Domestic abuse flags should be applied in accordance with the Home Office Counting Rules[58] to ensure consistency across forces, and within published data sets.

Data relating to domestic abuse arrests and outcomes were collected directly from all 43 geographic police forces in England and Wales.

Further information about the domestic abuse statistics and recent releases is available from:
www.ons.gov.uk/releases/domesticabuseinenglandandwalesyearendingmarch2017

When viewing this data the reader should be aware that North Yorkshire Police was unable to give the Home Office comparable data on domestic abuse-flagged crimes. The force extracted data for HMICFRS on the powers and outcomes used to deal with these offences by using an enhanced search. This search examined additional factors (such as the victim / suspect relationship) and included a keyword search to identify additional domestic abuse crimes which may not have been flagged. The force used a simpler search, which identified domestic abuse crimes by flagging alone, to extract data it supplied to the Home Office. As North Yorkshire Police's data on domestic abuse are not comparable with other forces, we have excluded the data.

Organised crime groups (OCGs)

These data were collected directly from all 43 geographic police forces in England and Wales. City of London Police is excluded from the England and Wales rate as its OCG data are not comparable with other forces due to size and its wider national remit.

As at 1 July 2017 City of London Police had recorded 46 OCGs. However, during the inspection we found that only six OCGs were within the force's geographical area and the remaining 40 were part of the National Fraud Intelligence Bureau's remit.

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[58] Home Office Counting Rules are rules in accordance with which crime data – required to be submitted to the Home Secretary under sections 44 and 45 of the Police Act 1996 – must be collected. They set down how the police service in England and Wales must record crime, how crimes must be classified according to crime type and categories, whether and when to record crime, how many crimes to record in respect of a single incident and the regime for the re-classification of crimes as no-crimes.

Other notable data throughout the report

Estimated expenditure on neighbourhood policing in England and Wales – 2016/17

These data were obtained from data collected by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA). The data define policing functions using the Police Objective Analysis (POA) categories.

It should be noted that these data are estimates for the 2016/17 financial year which was the latest available data at the time of inspection.

HMICFRS has defined neighbourhood policing, for our Effectiveness 2017 inspection, as category 1a under the Level two headings. This includes non-emergency response, neighbourhood policing and planned response teams.

Percentage of tweets by crime category, for police forces and Twitter users in England and Wales from 2 April to 2 July 2017

From 2 April 2017 to 2 July 2017, CASM Consulting assembled a series of tools designed to allow HMICFRS to explore concerns being raised on Twitter and Facebook and how police presence on these platforms affects public concerns. We selected ten broad types of crime based on existing classifications and the data found on Twitter:

- violence;

- sex and vulnerability;

- fraud and online crime;

- public space;

- theft;

- arson;

- road related;

- terrorism;

- organised crime; and

- hate crime

We analysed 20,091 tweets from police forces and 1,306,421 tweets from users.

Rate of anti-social behaviour powers per 1 million population, by force, in the 12 months to 30 June 2017

These data were collected directly from all 43 geographic police forces in England and Wales. HMICFRS collected data on anti-social behaviour powers, including:

- criminal behaviour orders;

- community protection notices;

- civil injunctions; and

- dispersal orders.

Together these powers form the anti-social behaviour (ASB) powers considered in this report.

The Crime and Policing Act 2014 introduced ASB powers which can be applied by both local authorities and the police. The ASB powers data provided in this report covers police data. Therefore, results should be treated with caution as they may not include instances where local authorities exercised these powers.

When viewing this data the reader should be aware of the following:

- Bedfordshire Police, Greater Manchester Police and the Metropolitan Police Service were unable to provide data on anti-social behaviour powers as the data are not held centrally within each force.

- Greater Manchester Police was unable to provide any 2016 ASB use of powers data. Greater Manchester Police intends for its new integrated operational policing system to incorporate recording of ASB powers.

- Suffolk Constabulary was only able to provide data for the southern area of the force in 2017. Therefore its data are excluded.

The forces highlighted above are not included in the figure or in the calculation of the England and Wales rate.

Gloucestershire, Hertfordshire, Humberside and Merseyside forces were only able to provide partial 2017 ASB use of powers data.

Gloucestershire Constabulary and Hertfordshire Constabulary were unable to obtain data regarding the number of civil injunctions as their local authorities lead the application of these.

Humberside Police was unable to provide data on community protection notices and civil injunction notices as its local authorities lead the application of these. The force does not collect data on criminal behaviour orders and dispersal orders.

Merseyside Police was unable to provide data on dispersal orders as these orders are attached to individual crime files.

Number of records of persons wanted for offences on the Police National Computer (PNC), per 10,000 population, in England and Wales – in July 2017 and August 2016

These data were obtained from PNC and are the wanted records circulated for offences. This is a live database so data extracted are a snapshot in time and therefore subject to change.

Percentage of incidents flagged to identify mental health conditions in England and Wales – in the 12 months to 30 June 2017

The number of incidents identified with a mental health problem in a force is dependent on the force's definition of mental health and its ability to flag this accurately.

Domestic abuse arrest rate (per 100 domestic abuse-related offences) in England and Wales – in the 12 months to 30 June 2017

Please see 'Domestic abuse' above.

The arrest rate is calculated using a common time period for arrests and offences. It is important to note that each arrest is not necessarily directly linked to its specific domestic abuse offence recorded in the 12 months to 30 June 2017 in this calculation. It is also possible to have more than one arrest per offence. In addition, the reader should note the increase in police-recorded crime which affected the majority of forces over the last year. This may mean arrest rates are higher than the figures suggest. Despite this, the calculation still indicates whether the force prioritises arrests for domestic abuse offenders over other potential forms of action. HMICFRS evaluated the arrest rate alongside other measures (such as use of voluntary attendance or body-worn video cameras) during our inspection process to understand how each force deals with domestic abuse overall.

When viewing this data the reader should be aware of the following:

- Durham, Lancashire, Warwickshire and West Mercia forces were unable to provide domestic abuse arrest data. North Yorkshire Police was unable to provide comparable domestic abuse crime and arrest data, so a rate could not be calculated. Therefore, these forces are not included in the figure.

- Cambridgeshire, Derbyshire, Durham and Gloucestershire forces were unable to provide 2016 domestic abuse arrest data. Therefore, these forces do not have 2016 data included in the figure.

When viewing domestic abuse arrest data for 2016, the reader should be aware of the following:

- Cambridgeshire Constabulary was unable to provide 2016 domestic abuse arrest data due to a recording problem that meant it could only obtain accurate data from a manual audit of its custody records.

- Lancashire Constabulary had difficulty in identifying all domestic abuse-flagged arrests. This affected 23 days in the 12 months to 30 June 2016. The force investigated this and confirmed that the impact on the 2016 data provided to HMICFRS would be marginal and that these are the most reliable data it can provide.

Rate of organised crime groups per 1 million population in England and Wales – as at 1 July 2017

Please see 'Organised crime groups' above.

Organised crime group data from City of London Police are not comparable with other forces. Therefore, its data are not included in the figure.

For data relating to 2016, the number of OCGs in Warwickshire Police and West Mercia Police force areas is a combined total of OCGs for the two force areas. The OCGs per 1 million population rate is based upon their areas' combined population. For the 2017 data Warwickshire Police and West Mercia Police force split their OCGs into two separate force areas.

Annex B – Individual force judgments from 2017 inspection

	Crime prevention	Investigation	Vulnerability	Serious and organised crime	Overall
Avon & Somerset	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good
Bedfordshire	Requires Improvement	Requires Improvement	Requires Improvement	Good	Requires Improvement
Cambridgeshire	Good	Requires Improvement	Requires Improvement	Good	Requires Improvement
Cheshire	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good
City of London	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good
Cleveland	Good	Good	Requires Improvement	Good	Good
Cumbria	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good
Derbyshire	Good	Good	Good	Outstanding	Good
Devon & Cornwall	Good	Requires Improvement	Requires Improvement	Good	Requires Improvement
Dorset	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good
Durham	Outstanding	Good	Good	Outstanding	Outstanding
Dyfed-Powys	Good	Good	Requires Improvement	Good	Good
Essex	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good
Gloucestershire	Requires Improvement	Requires Improvement	Good	Requires Improvement	Requires Improvement
Greater Manchester	Good	Requires Improvement	Requires Improvement	Outstanding	Requires Improvement
Gwent	Good	Good	Requires Improvement	Requires Improvement	Requires Improvement

Hampshire	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good
Hertfordshire	Good	Good	Requires Improvement	Good	Good
Humberside	Good	Requires Improvement	Requires Improvement	Good	Requires Improvement
Kent	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good
Lancashire	Good	Good	Requires Improvement	Good	Good
Leicestershire	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good
Lincolnshire	Good	Good	Requires Improvement	Good	Good
Merseyside	Good	Good	Good	Outstanding	Good
Metropolitan	Good	Requires Improvement	Requires Improvement	Good	Requires Improvement
Norfolk	Outstanding	Good	Good	Good	Good
North Wales	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good
North Yorkshire	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good
Northamptonshire	Requires Improvement	Requires Improvement	Requires Improvement	Requires Improvement	Requires Improvement
Northumbria	Good	Good	Requires Improvement	Good	Good
Nottinghamshire	Good	Good	Requires Improvement	Good	Good
South Wales	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good
South Yorkshire	Good	Good	Requires Improvement	Good	Good
Staffordshire	Good	Good	Requires Improvement	Good	Good
Suffolk	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good
Surrey	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good

Sussex	Requires Improvement	Good	Good	Good	Good
Thames Valley	Good	Requires Improvement	Good	Good	Good
Warwickshire	Requires Improvement	Good	Requires Improvement	Requires Improvement	Requires Improvement
West Mercia	Requires Improvement	Good	Requires Improvement	Inadequate	Requires Improvement
West Midlands	Good	Good	Inadequate	Good	Requires Improvement
West Yorkshire	Good	Requires Improvement	Good	Good	Good
Wiltshire	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good

For further information, please see:

www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmicfrs/peel-assessments/peel-2017/

Annex C – About this inspection

In 2013, the Home Secretary announced that Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) would introduce an annual inspection of all forces' effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy, known informally as the PEEL programme. This report sets out findings of the third assessment of police effectiveness. It is based on inspections carried out in summer and autumn 2017, and follows the publication of assessments of police efficiency (November 2017),[59] police legitimacy (December 2017),[60] and police leadership (February 2018).[61]

Following consultation with the public, forces, Government and other interested parties, we have assessed forces' effectiveness by examining how well they perform in five principal areas:

1. preventing crime and anti-social behaviour;

2. investigating crime and managing offenders;

3. protecting those who are vulnerable, and supporting victims;

4. tackling serious and organised crime; and

5. fulfilling their national policing responsibilities.

Methodology

In 2015 and 2016, we graded every police force on four of the five areas above (the national policing responsibilities has never been graded). One of four grades was assigned to each area of the inspection: outstanding, good, requires improvement or inadequate. However, inspection should be proportionate and make sure that resources are effectively focused on those areas where the public is most at risk. Because of this, in 2017 we changed our approach and not every area of the inspection was inspected in every force. While we collected data about all forces and conducted various audits and dip-samples of police practice, each particular area was only inspected if we felt there was a necessity to do so.

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[59] *PEEL: Police efficiency 2017*, HMICFRS, November 2017. Available from: www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmicfrs/publications/peel-police-efficiency-2017/

[60] *PEEL: Police legitimacy 2017*, HMICFRS, December 2017. Available from: www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmicfrs/publications/peel-police-legitimacy-2017/

[61] *PEEL: Police leadership 2017*, HMICFRS, February 2018. Available from: www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmicfrs/publications/peel-police-leadership-2017/

The force's performance in previous years and the findings of our inspection work helped determine whether a particular area of the inspection was examined or not. If, historically, a force had performed well in a certain area (it was judged as good or outstanding), the area was not re-inspected generally. In these cases, the good or outstanding grade was carried forward from our 2016 inspection and consolidated as the grade for 2017. We refer to this as a risk-based inspection.

The areas of 'protecting those who are vulnerable, and supporting victims', and 'fulfilling national responsibilities', were not selected on the basis of risk. These areas were examined in all 43 forces. 'Protecting those who are vulnerable and supporting victims' was inspected everywhere because this is where forces have performed least well over the last three years. 'Fulfilling national policing responsibilities' formed part of the inspection in every force as we continue to deepen our understanding of this important component of operational policing. Of particular interest is the preparedness of the police service to respond to firearms attacks. As our inspection of national policing responsibilities evolves, this element of the inspection will not be subject to a formal judgment.

In addition to awarding grades to each area of the inspection, we also graded each force on their overall effectiveness. Each force therefore has an overall judgment of outstanding, good, requires improvement or inadequate.

For further information about PEEL see HMICFRS' website:

www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmicfrs/peel-assessments/how-we-inspect/2017-peel-assessment/#effectiveness

htwww.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmicfrs/peel-assessments/how-we-inspect/2017-peel-assessment/#risk-based