

ORIGINATOR: CHIEF CONSTABLE

PAPER NO: AP24/22

**SUBMITTED TO: ACCOUNTABILITY AND PERFORMANCE PANEL –
24 MAY 2024**

SUBJECT: SUPPORTING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

SUMMARY:

1. This paper supports the related commitment in the Police and Crime Plan, that the Constabulary will ensure the way it works with young people supports effective engagement, safeguards young people, prevents unnecessary criminalisation and reduces reoffending (including its triage work with Suffolk Youth Justice Service).

RECOMMENDATION:

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

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report covers the period November 2023 to April 2024 and provides an update to the areas reported on in a previous paper to the Panel.
- 1.2 Strategic oversight of Children and Young Persons (CYP) is shared across County Policing Command and Crime, Safeguarding and Incident Management and Joint Justice Services. The portfolio holders are as follows: Superintendent County Partnership and Prevention Hub (CPPH) responsible for Children and Young People against the National Child Centred Policing Framework, Detective Superintendent responsible for the Safeguarding Partnership, Detective Superintendent for Child Abuse Investigations and a Chief Inspector responsible for Children in Custody. The Strategic Governance is held by the Assistant Chief Constable providing leadership and oversight. There are delivery boards for both CYP (incorporating custody) and for Child Protection.
- 1.3 This paper supports the related commitment in the Police and Crime Plan, that the Constabulary will ensure the way it works with young people supports effective engagement, safeguards young people, prevents unnecessary criminalisation, and reduces reoffending (including its triage work with Suffolk Youth Justice Service).

2. KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

2.1 The Suffolk Safeguarding Partnership (SSP)

- 2.1.1 The Children's Social Work Act 2017 and Care Act 2014 provide the legal basis for the creation of the Suffolk Safeguarding Partnership. The current arrangements came into effect in September 2019 bringing all ages safeguarding under one governance structure while complying with the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements arising from Working Together 2018. The Police are one of three statutory organisations that form the partnership, along with the Local Authority and Integrated Care Board (Health).
- 2.1.2 The Children Acts of 1989 and 2004 set out specific duties; Section 17 of the Children Act 1989 puts a duty on the Local Authority to provide services to children in need in their area and Section 47 of the same act requires local authorities to undertake enquiries if they believe a child has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm. The Children Act 2004, as amended by the Children and Social Work Act 2017, places duties on key agencies. The Police, the Integrated Care Board and the Local Authority are under a duty to make arrangements to work together and with other partners locally, to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in their area.
- 2.1.3 The principles of the Children Acts 1989 and 2004 state that the welfare of children is paramount. A child centred approach is fundamental to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of every child.

2.2 Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023.

- 2.2.1 New statutory guidance has been introduced replacing that from 2018.

The 2023 guidance sets out the roles and responsibilities of safeguarding partners and makes a distinction between Lead Safeguarding Partners (LSPs) and Delegated Safeguarding Partners (DSPs). LSP's are the executive leads from Health, Local Authorities and Police, each nominating a DSP from their organisation. In Suffolk Constabulary the LSP is the Chief

Constable and the DSP is the Detective Superintendent Crime, Safeguarding & Incident Management.

2.2.2 It is the LSP's role to agree funding to deliver the multi-agency safeguarding arrangements, ensure this is allocated and then spent in line with agreed priorities. There is a requirement for transparency through publication, with the contributions of each safeguarding partner being considered equitable.

2.2.3 This guidance sees the introduction of a partnership chair from one of the DSP's, which is a change from the current independent chair role in Suffolk. The arrangements for this are currently being discussed in Suffolk, with consideration to counties where this approach is already in place. This has a resourcing implication for policing, if this function is undertaken by a police DSP, as the guidance clearly sets out the full expectations of this role:

Functions of Partnership Chair role

- To develop strategic links, support and hold to account all LSPs in fulfilling their safeguarding duties for children.
- Ensure that local arrangements are designed to work collaboratively and effectively by encouraging and supporting the development of partnership working between the LSPs, DSPs, independent scrutiny role and MASA sub-groups.
- Chair the meetings of the DSPs, including any additional meetings convened as a response to specific and exceptional circumstances, with the help of the business manager and independent scrutiny role.
- Offer appropriate challenge to ensure that the partners are accountable, and that the local arrangements operate effectively.

2.2.4 There is a requirement for the LSP and DSP to be named and for this to be published locally, for annual plans to be published in September 2024 and new arrangements in December 2024.

2.2.5 Independent scrutiny remains a clear element within the guidance, with a requirement to ensure there are effective arrangements in place.

2.3 National Child Protection Inspection – Areas for Improvement

2.3.1 Suffolk Constabulary have four areas for improvement from the Child protection inspection that are still being progressed. These relate to the following areas:

- Reviewing Safeguarding multi-agency meetings terms of reference and practices.
- Ensuring the Constabularies workforce knows how to secure digital evidence relating to child abuse offences and knows where to seek specialist support.
- Making better use of the Child abuse image database.
- Improving arrangements and practices for responding to missing children.

2.3.2 The Constabulary monitors the progression of these areas through the Child Protection Delivery Group chaired by a Detective Superintendent, and there is accountability from His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) Co-ordination Group chaired by the Assistant Chief Constable.

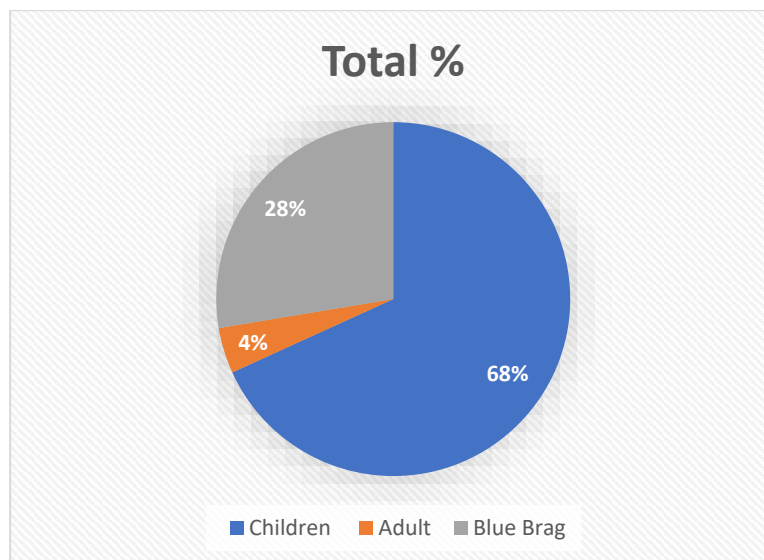
2.3.3 The Constabulary has demonstrated progression in all the identified areas for improvement and is currently collating evidence to support a submission to HMICFRS.

2.4 Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)

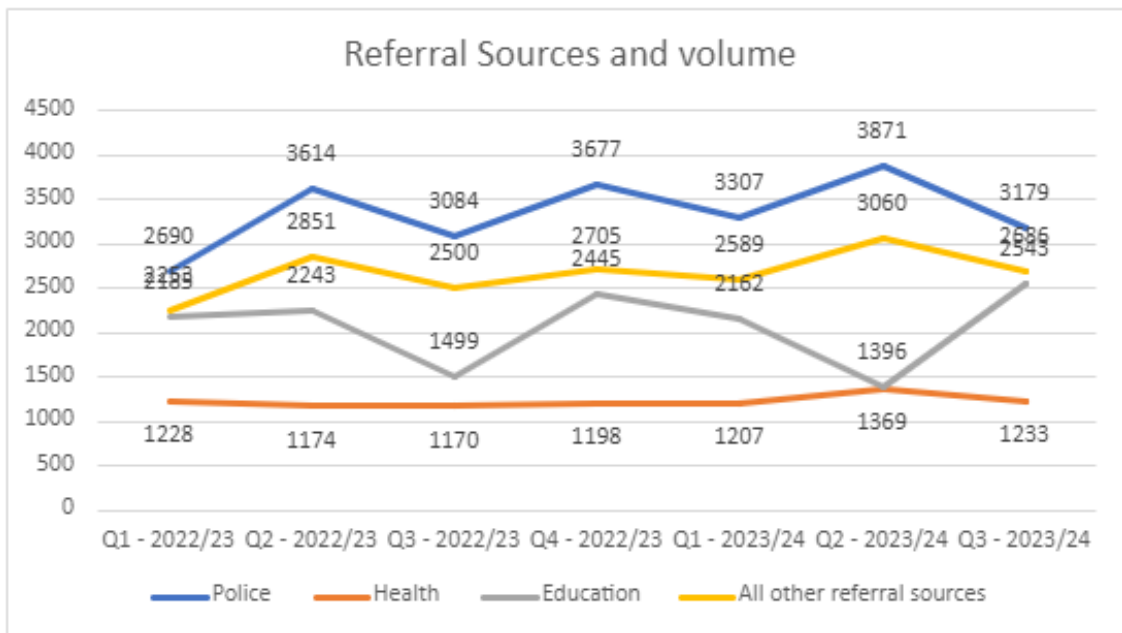
2.4.1 Suffolk Constabulary has a continued daily presence in MASH and working in partnership with members of Suffolk County Council.

2.4.2 MASH Police Statistics (January 2023 – December 2023)

- 14,107 referrals for children shared with Suffolk County Council (SCC)
- 865 referrals for adults shared with SCC
- 5,713 referrals received that did not reach the threshold for sharing (Blue “Brag”).
- Total of 20,685 Athena Investigations reviewed for Safeguarding concerns.
- 9,299 (72.25%) of Police Checks resulted in information being returned for children within MASH episodes
- 2,454 (74.1%) of Police Checks resulted in information being returned for Adults within MASH episodes



2.4.3 Suffolk Constabulary remains the largest referring agency for child safeguarding concerns to the MASH, accounting for over a third of referrals entering the MASH process. This is a reasonably static figure and is expected as police are frequently the first agency in attendance at the point of crisis.



2.4.4 Skilled and experienced MASH police decision makers review each record to decide whether it is a safeguarding concern appropriate to share with the Children and Young Peoples Service (CYPS). This initial screening determines around 50% of records sent for review do not meet the threshold for CYPS intervention. This triage process creates capacity for the most concerning cases to be identified and addressed expeditiously. Of those cases referred to CYP MASH

- Linked to existing CAF – 328 (*Child Assessment Framework)
- Mash Episode - 3076
- No Further Action - 2900
- Other - 7648
- Progress to CAF - 40
- Transfer to Children’s Social Care – 76

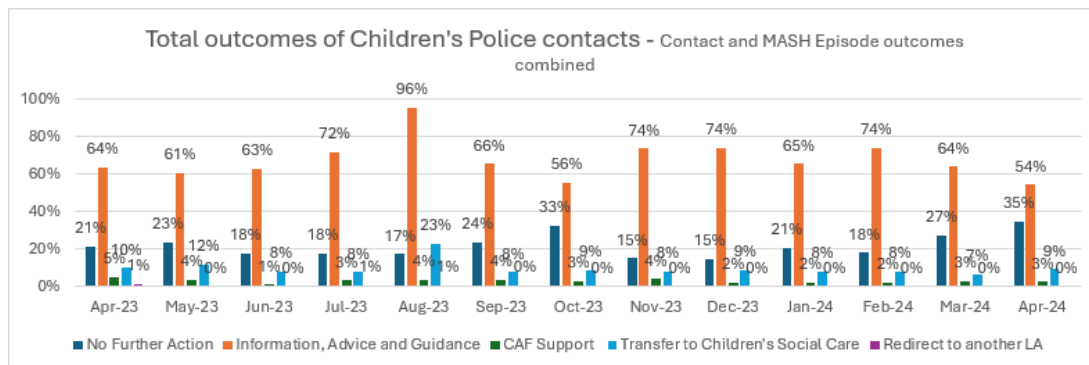
2.4.5 Police are providing research on an average of 884 (911 22/23) children per month and 257 (194 22/23) adults.

2.4.6 It is important to recognise that MASH police provide research and take part in strategy discussions for children with allocated social workers as well as MASH based work plus provide other functions such as research for Claire’s Law (Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme, DVDS) and Sarah’s Law (Child Sex Offender Disclosure Process Scheme) requests and Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC).

2.4.7 In accordance with Section 47 Children’s Act 1989, the Local Authority has a statutory duty to carry out an investigation when they have 'reasonable cause to suspect that a child who lives, or is found, in their area is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm'. This investigation includes an objective assessment of the child’s needs, including the risk of abuse and need for protection as well as examining the family’s ability to meet these needs. To agree that the threshold for this level of intervention is met, a multi-agency strategy threshold discussion is held in MASH. If the threshold for a S.47 investigation is met, this can be conducted by Children and Young Peoples Services (CYPS) as a single agency, or jointly with Police if it is

necessary and proportionate, or a criminal investigation is required. Acknowledging the critical decision making in S.47 cases, these are held face to face in MASH with partners.

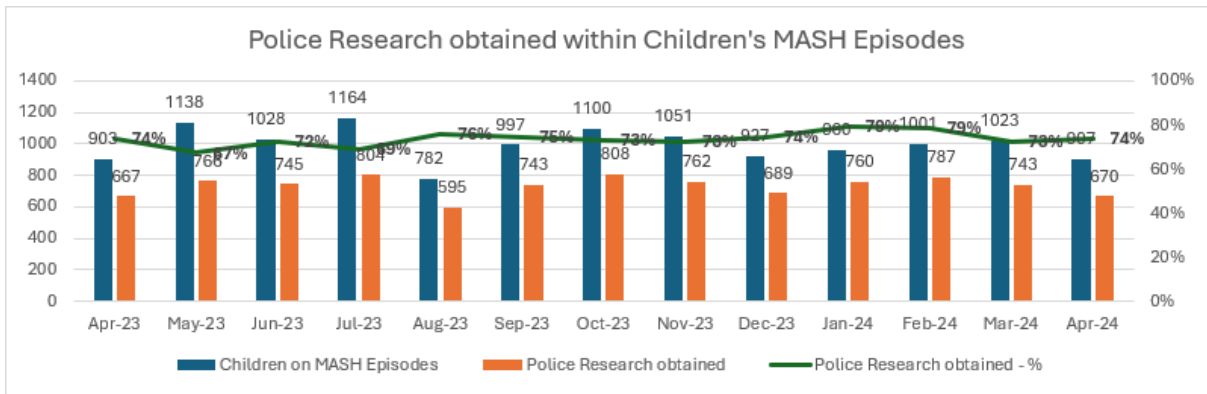
2.4.8 The table below shows the outcome of police referrals made to Children’s Social Care:



2.4.9 In excess of 85.5% of contacts that arrive in the MASH are resolved without the requirement for police investigation. Effective triage by skilled and experienced practitioners across all agencies allows the appropriate level of intervention to be identified. This ensures the most concerning cases requiring scrutiny through joint working of the Police and the Local Authority are promptly passed to specialist Safeguarding Investigation Units. The demand on police officers is therefore made manageable due to the low conversion rate of referrals to Joint Agency S.47 investigations. Following concerns that Suffolk are starting more S.47s than their neighbouring authorities, it became apparent that in a number of cases, a child had suffered harm though not ‘suffering’ or ‘likely to suffer’ significant harm, therefore the threshold in these cases had not been met. The number of S47s has reduced as result of learning.

2.4.10 After the MASH Police Decision Maker training and amended guidance for CYPS referrals that was issued in November 2022, audits have been completed to check compliance. These audits have shown a high rate of compliance from Decision Makers which will have enhanced the safeguarding of these children. HMICFRS were complimentary of the changes that had been made.

2.4.11 Police MASH also conduct significant children’s episode research on behalf of partners. The graph below shows the number of research packages completed by the MASH police research team. This research is requested by MASH partner agencies to aid decision making and can include information retrieved from all police databases, relevant to the safeguarding concern. Following His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) Child Protection inspection, the MASH police research team now conduct a Police National Database (PND) check in every case, which has considerably increased the time it takes to produce the research package.

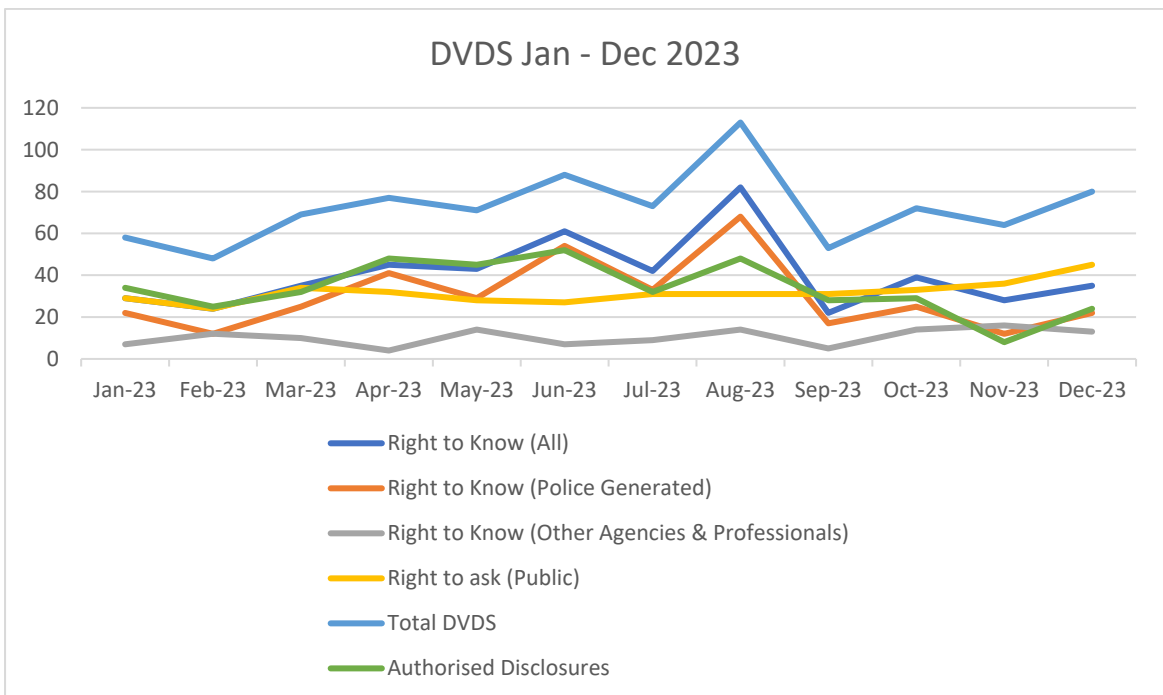


2.5 DVDS & CSODS

2.5.1 Clare’s Law (Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme, DVDS) allows police information about a potential source of risk to be shared with a person potentially at risk. This empowers people to protect and safeguard themselves and their children by making an informed choice about their relationships.

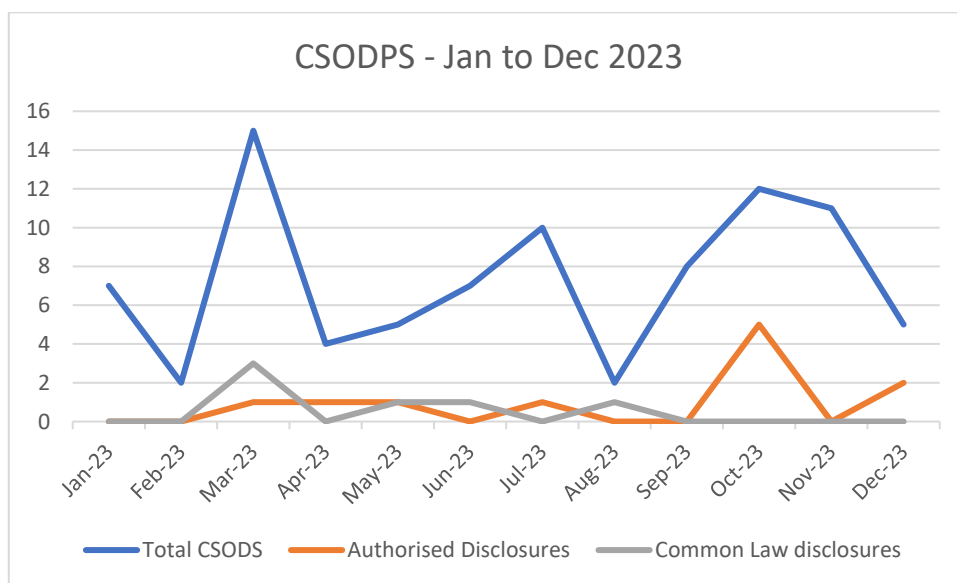
2.5.2 Clear guidance about how to make a ‘Right to Ask’ application is available on the Constabulary website, and we have seen an increase in these self-generated requests from members of the public. ‘Right to Know’ applications made by professionals including police officers and staff have remained static. The MASH Detective Inspector is beginning work with the County Partnership and Prevention Hub (CPPH) Diverse Communities Coordinator to explore additional methods to raise awareness of the scheme with harder to reach communities.

2.5.3 The graph below shows the number of DVDS applications that have been received and processed by MASH police. Not all applications result in a disclosure being made to a person potentially at risk, although safety planning advice is offered by the Domestic Abuse Coordinators in all cases where engagement is possible. The total number of DVDS requested has increased over the last 5 months, particularly in June 2023, averaging at 65 a month across the last 12 months.



2.5.4 Sarah’s Law (Child Sex Offender Disclosure Process Scheme, CSODPS) allows police information about a potential source of risk to be shared with a person whose children could be in contact with a potential source of risk. This empowers parents and care givers to protect and safeguard children by making an informed choice about contact and relationships.

2.5.5 The graph below shows the number of CSODP applications that have been received and processed by MASH police. March saw a particularly high number of applications for an unknown reason, however most of the applications were not suitable for CSODP.



2.5.6 Where an application does not fit the necessary disclosure test for either DVDS or CSODPS, but information held by police is pertinent, disclosure using Common Law is considered ensuring parents and care givers are given every opportunity to make informed decisions about contact children may have with a potential source of risk.

2.6 Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC)

2.6.1 The county’s Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARACs) continue to be attended by CYPS to address child safeguarding concerns within cases discussed. All MARAC referrals are processed through the MASH in order that any crimes being disclosed to both statutory partners and third sector agencies are identified and recorded. There are Two MARAC meetings per month held in South and West Areas and 1 Meeting in the East Area. MARAC meetings are held on Teams for efficiency.

2.6.2 Suffolk MARAC is subject of review by the Improvement Sub-group, reporting to the MARAC Steering Group. Information gathering from other forces who have made changes to their MARAC is currently underway.

2.6.3 The table below shows the number of children experiencing DA in cases heard at MARAC 01/01/23 to 31/12/23 (inclusive).

	Total Cases Discussed	Number of Repeat cases	% Repeats	Number of children in the household
South	400	78	20%	461
North	203	36	20.30%	145
West	421	67	16%	497
Total	1024	181	19%	1103

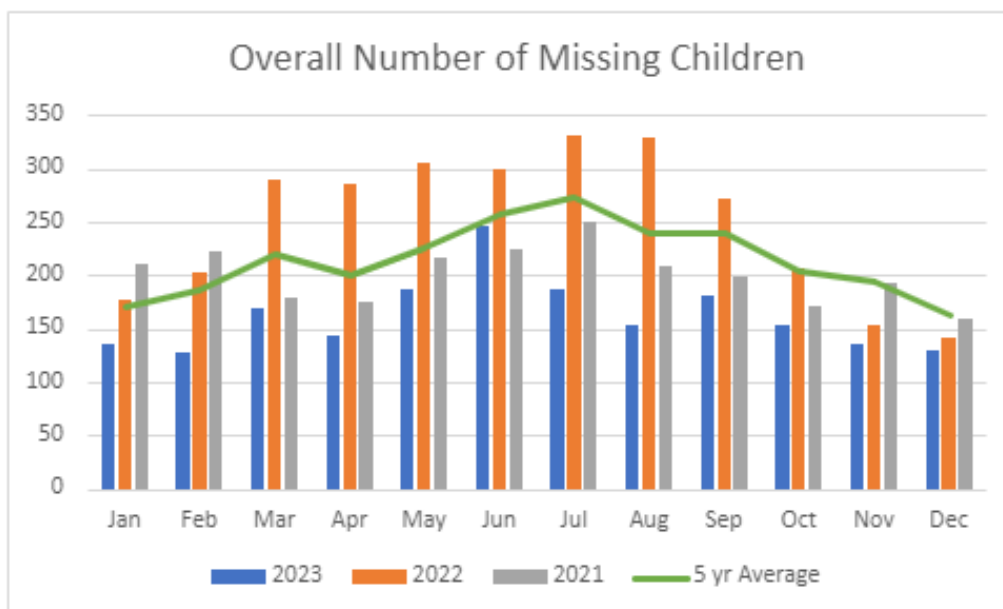
2.7 Missing Children

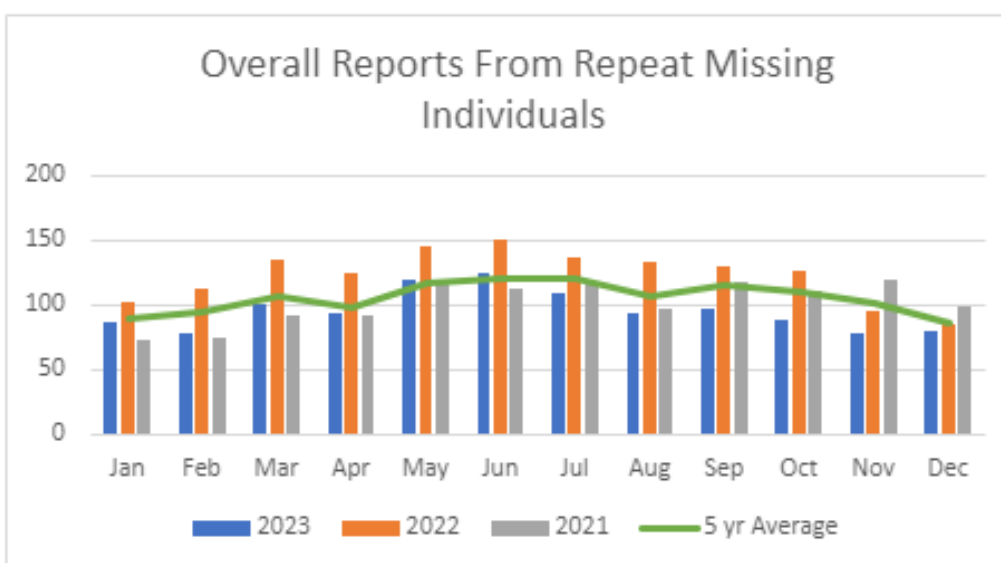
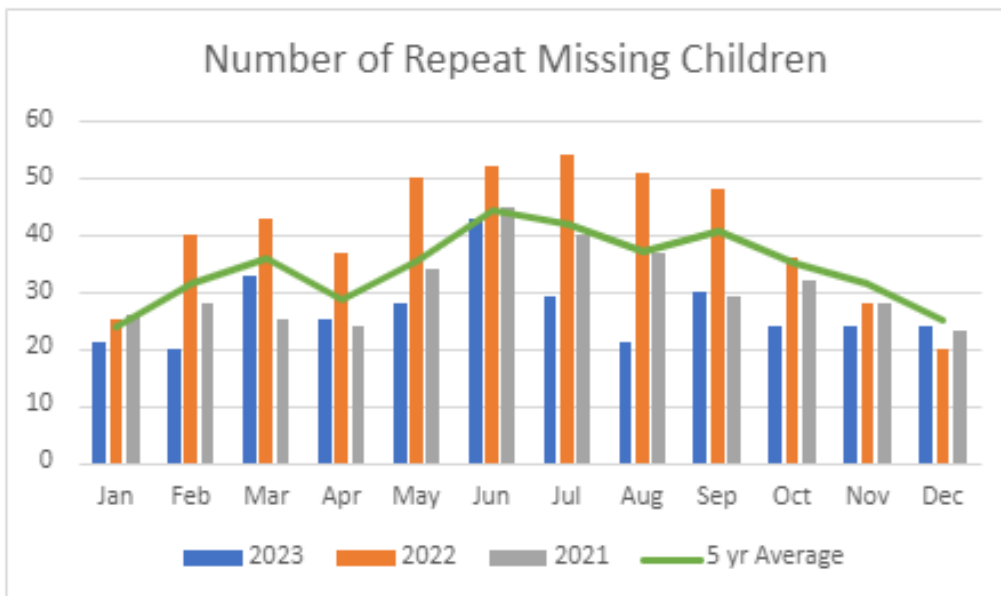
2.7.1 Missing Children continue to be an area of reducing demand for Suffolk Constabulary, particularly those children who reside within a care home setting and/or are vulnerable to exploitation. The monthly Missing Tactical and Tasking Co-Ordination Group (TCG) is jointly chaired by a Children Young Persons Service (CYPS) manager and a Detective Chief Inspector, and meets to ensure a partnership response to those children who are frequently missing. This meeting has been expanded to include health and education which is driving an improvement in service and outcomes. If a child is identified at risk of exploitation, they are referred into the Multi-Agency Criminal Exploitation (MACE) Panel.

2.7.2 2023 saw a 35% reduction in demand of missing children in comparison to 2022.

2.7.3 The three missing persons advisors based in each area have built key relationships in Children’s Care Home settings and with Children and Young Persons Services. The advisors perform a key role in identifying those children at greatest risk and feeding them into the Multi-Agency Missing Children’s TCG.

2.7.4 The graph below evidences the reduction in missing children.





2.7.5 The Philomena Protocol continues to be championed with partner agencies and the Crime, Safeguarding & Incident Management (CSIM) Chief Superintendent has contacted senior leads within partner agencies to re-invigorate the concept and this has been further complimented by the missing person advisors providing training to residential settings providers. Favourable comments were made on the progress of the Philomena Protocol by the HMICFRS Inspectors during the recent National Child Protection Inspection in July 2023.

2.7.6 Monthly Return Home Interview (RHIs) figures continue to be submitted to the CYPs with a full breakdown of outstanding interviews, including the names of each child and the number of missing episodes. This enhanced level of data scrutiny continues to see a steady decrease in the number of outstanding RHIs. It is apparent that there is a lack of reporting of incidents that are disclosed within the RHI's, and work is being undertaken with partners to establish an agreeable pathway for these to be recorded in a timelier manner and be subject to both CYPs and Police MASH review to garner appropriate support and maximise investigative opportunities.

2.7.7 Monthly audits of missing children are now undertaken to monitor measures as prescribed by the HMIC, namely timely risk assessments, momentum of investigations and use of the Philomena Protocol which all show positive trends.

2.7.8 Missing children is an area that has seen significant progress. Over the course of the past year, positive developments have been made in the Philomena Protocol, the introduction of Fast Action Response Plans for our most frequent repeat missing children, increase use of child abduction warning notices and training to address the quality of investigations, inappropriate reporting and a revised policy which works alongside the existing College of Policing guidelines.

2.8 Child Exploitation

2.8.1 Suffolk Constabulary has a composite Child Exploitation policy to ensure that Children who have been identified as victims of either Sexual and Criminal Exploitation are effectively safeguarded and those who perpetrate these offences are held to account. This policy is overseen by the Detective Inspector Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub, to ensure the content is regularly reviewed in line with best practice. A key element of the policy is the requirement for Criminal Investigation Department (CID) ownership and/or oversight of child criminal exploitation cases and Safeguarding Investigation Unit ownership and/or oversight of Child Sexual Exploitation cases. This has seen an improvement in standards and consistency of investigations into child exploitation. Investigations continue to have regular detective reviews with wider safeguarding considerations and improved partnership working. Work is continuing to promote the application for and use of civil and other orders which provide wider protective measures.

2.8.2 The Detective Superintendent, Demand Reduction, as the lead for safeguarding chairs a Child Protection Delivery Group, which provides oversight of Child exploitation work within the Constabulary as well as wider activity in relation to child protection and safeguarding.

2.8.3 A Partnership Criminal Exploitation Officer, funded through the Suffolk Safeguarding Partnership Board (SSPB), has been intrinsic in delivering additional training around exploitation to police colleagues and partners. This has and continues to improve awareness around risks and indicators for all practitioners to increase information sharing and identify opportunities for early intervention. This role actively supports information sharing in support of the Multi-Agency Criminal Exploitation (MACE) Panel meetings. Funding is now in place to support this role for a further three years.

2.8.4 Suffolk Constabulary works closely with their Safeguarding partners within multi agency risk management meetings to plan safeguarding activity to reduce risk and harm to children. As part of the recommendation for HMICFRS National Child Protection Inspection (NCPI), a review of key partnership-based risk management meetings inclusive of the Multi-Agency Criminal Exploitation (MACE) Panel meeting, Missing Tactical and Tasking Co-Ordination Group (TCG) meeting and Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) process was conducted. The review ensured an increased participation of education and voluntary sector organisations participating and increasing support available for children and parents. Work continues in relation to full review of MARAC. All meetings provide key opportunities for partners to identify emerging risks and provide suitable early intervention.

2.8.5 Suffolk Constabulary continues to support a partnership Criminal Exploitation work programme, which has a police focus upon breaking drug supply chains and supporting partners with prevention and early intervention and safeguarding young people.

2.9 Multi-Agency Criminal Exploitation Panel MACE

2.9.1 MACE panels continue to be held in each policing command area attendees including Police, Children and Young Peoples Services (CYPS), health professionals, education, housing,

Community Safety Partnerships, Child Exploitation Hubs and Youth Justice Services. Referrals into MACE can be made by police and or partners for children and young people from the age of 10-24 where there are concerns they may be at risk of or subject to exploitation. Referrals are discussed and assessed using a Vulnerability Assessment Tracker (VAT) at the pre-MACE meeting and a joint decision is made between CYPS and police as to which referrals are adopted to the MACE panel.

- 2.9.2 MACE panels are held monthly where all adopted children and young people are discussed. Administrative changes have been made to support the attendance of the new Community Policing Team Inspectors following the implementation of Op Model within the County Policing Command. Future plans aim to support and develop the involvement of the new Community Policing Teams within the MACE process.
- 2.9.3 During MACE meetings professionals and approved partners share information they hold regarding the child or young person and actions allocated and agreed by the chair who then holds relevant parties to account at subsequent meetings.
- 2.9.4 MACE panels have access to a small budget that can be allocated at the panels discretion to support disruption and diversion activities adopting the 'Places, Spaces, Faces' approach.

The MACE panel has had the following referrals from July 2023 to December 2023.

MONTH	NEW		Referrals not adopted to		Referrals adopted to	
	Pre MACE Referrals		MACE		MACE	
July	14	West - 2 South - 7 East - 5	5	West - 2 South - 1 East - 2	9	West - 0 South - 6 East - 3
August	17	West - 7 South - 7 East - 3 (*inc 1 pending)	11	West - 4 South - 5 East - 2	5	West - 3 South - 2 East - 0
September	12	West - 3 (*inc 1 pending) South - 4 East - 5	7	West - 1 South - 2 East - 4	4	West - 1 South - 2 East - 1
October	18	West - 8 South - 6 East - 4	11	West - 3 South - 5 East - 3	6	West - 3 South - 2 East - 1
November	10	West - 6 South - 3 East - 1	6	West - 3 South - 2 East - 1	4	West - 3 South - 1 East - 0
December	8	West - 4 South - 4 East - 2	5	West - 2 South - 2 East - 1	5	West - 2 South - 2 East - 1

*Pending – in these instances the referral is held until the next month's meeting as not enough information was received for them to be adopted onto full MACE

Multi-Agency Criminal Exploitation (MACE) example

- 2.9.5 Child A had been adopted to MACE in early 2023 following repeated missing episodes and concerns being raised that they may be being sexually exploited during these episodes.

Following the initial MACE meetings intelligence was developed and shared by partner agencies leading to an adult male being identified as a potential boyfriend for Child A who at that time was 14 years old.

Through the MACE panel Child A's parent were provided a Ring doorbell which would provide information on Child A's movements when leaving the home address. Social workers and officers from the Child Exploitation and Gangs Team (CEGT) regularly engaged with Child A and their parents building and developing relationships and exploring options to address the repeated missing episodes such as reinforcing the need to report Child A as missing and supporting Police use of child abduction warning notices.

The adult 'boyfriend' of Child A was identified and ultimately following extensive work by the CEGT working with Child A and utilising other investigation methods the male was arrested, charged and remanded for child abduction and sexual activity with a child resulting in a successful prosecution and term of imprisonment.

The CEGT and social workers continued to work with Child A supporting them with their education provisions and supporting them in trying to obtain part time employment. Youth Justice Services (YJS) are involved in diversion activity as a result of Child A being involved in low level criminality during missing episodes utilising civil powers where appropriate.

Child A has subsequently been identified as having issues with alcohol dependency and through MACE has been provided support by Turning Point as well as medical support to address medical conditions associated with alcohol dependency.

Child A remains subject to MACE and further specialist education provision is being applied for and medical and addiction support remains on going. Concerns remain however all partner agencies continue to share information and work together to safeguard them and disrupt any potential future exploitation.

2.10 Child Exploitation and Gangs Team (CEGT)

- 2.10.1 The CEGT are continuing to work closely with statutory and voluntary partners focussing on children and young people adopted under the MACE framework vulnerable to gangs or serious youth violence. They manage and conduct investigations identifying potential victims and perpetrators of child exploitation by gangs with a view to safeguarding of those at risk and prosecution of offenders.
- 2.10.2 The team continue to work closely with partners having daily communication with the Child Exploitation (CE) Hub practitioners and managers continuing joint patrols and visits. The Team have worked closely with Ipswich Town Football Club Foundation to support and refer children into a bespoke diversion program funded by the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC), focussing on serious youth violence and gangs. These have been well received by the club and the young people attending, with positive changes reported by partners as a result.
- 2.10.3 The Team has been temporarily working at reduced capacity due to career or lateral progression but have managed to maintain a high level of output and the team was recognised internally by being awarded Team of the Year in the Exceptional Policing Awards 2023. Plans are currently on track to return the team to full capacity in the next reporting period.

Child Exploitation and Gangs Team examples

2.10.4 Child A

During August 2023, due to the positive relationship CEGT had with the parent of a child unrelated to this incident (Parent X), Parent X contacted CEGT officers directly with concerns over videos she had seen on social media. The videos showed a group of juvenile males assaulting and abusing another juvenile male. CEGT identified the victim as Child A as well as identifying some of the suspects.

CEGT arranged for Parent X to provide the police with the videos and then liaised with other police units (response and CID). The videos showed Child A apparently within an address being physically beaten by others by being punched and kicked to the head and body, being held in a bath and showered with cold water, being hit with what appeared to be something similar to a rolling pin and then having a sex toy forced into his mouth. Child A was clearly distressed and crying whilst those inflicting the assaults laughed. This appeared to be some form of possible gang initiation. The videos had been taken a day or two before.

CEGT already had Child A on their cohort so already had a working relationship with Child A's mother as well as building a relationship with Child A, who initially was not very receptive to police. CEGT provided all initial evidence to the appropriate policing units and ensured an LOI (Location of Interest) was placed on Child A's address.

Child A would not speak with police but CEGT made contact with their mother and gathered as much detail as possible. CEGT were aware due to their involvement with the family prior to this incident, that Child A had recently been closed to Social Care. CEGT contacted Social Care and were able to have the same Social Worker reinstated meaning we were able to continue with joined up multi-agency work. CEGT then regularly liaised with Child A's mother over the coming days and made arrangements with Social Care, the families housing provider and a local housing provider in an area of London. It was arranged for the whole family to move to a hotel in London. Child A was struggling greatly with their mental health and experiencing regular nightmares due to what had happened.

All suspects were arrested and the case is currently with CPS for a charging decision. CEGT have kept in touch with Child A's mother. The family have now been housed permanently in London and Child A has found employment, has greatly improved mental health and is no longer in daily fear of the suspects.

2.10.5 Child B

Child B was arrested in September 2023 after being found by police in possession of an amount of drugs and with a machete hidden down their trousers. They also assaulted the police officer arresting them by punching them. Due to this type of offending and the concerns of possible exploitation and gang involvement, CEGT became aware and visited Child B and their parent. Discussions were had about signs of exploitation etc and advice was given to both Child B and their parent.

Regular patrols were carried out within the area of Child B's arrest and the team interacted with Child B each time they saw them in the community which helped build a positive working relationship and kept in touch with their parent. CEGT used this positive relationship and approached the family when helping to devise the ITFC Divert Programme. Child B and their parent agreed to take part in the scheme. A member of CEGT attended each session over the ten week period, spending time with all participants including Child B, and assisting with

education around knife crime, gang culture and exploitation as well as promoting positive choices in the future.

Child B was the only participant to attend all of the sessions. They were fully engaged with the programme and on the final week, their parent and a teacher from their school attended and updated CEGT on their very noticeable improvements seen regarding Child B's behaviour and attitude in general.

Since their arrest in September 2023, Child B has not come to police attention at all and has not been seen in the community with anyone of any concern. Due to his engagement and behaviour on the Divert Programme, Child B was also offered a place on the ITFC Post 16 Education Programme. Their parent has been very appreciative to CEGT and their efforts in diverting Child B from possibly choosing the wrong path.

2.11 Child Sexual Abuse and Online Investigation

2.11.1 Since the COVID pandemic in 2020, there continues to be a year-on-year rise in sexual predators exploiting children online. This is a rise felt nationally with the Internet Watch Foundation announcing that 2022 was a record-breaking year for them. There has been an increase in the number of primary school children exposed to online abuse due to the availability of technology, with parents often unaware of the dangers they face. Overall demand in Suffolk rose by 11.3% in 2022.

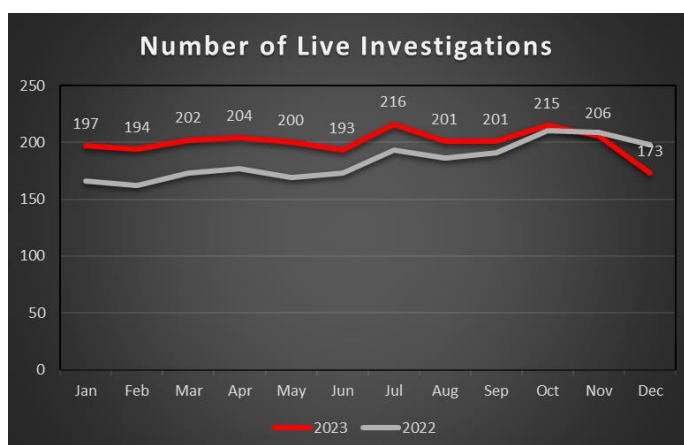
2.11.2 2023 consistently rose until around October of that year. It has transpired that this sharp decrease was not due to a drop in referrals, but because of a back log within the National Crime Agency (NCA) of disseminating referrals to all UK forces. A 'bottle neck' effect was due to issues in the NCA regarding retention of personnel, recruitment, and the necessity to train new team members, which ultimately caused a decrease in the processing times.

2.11.3 In the first three months of 2024, we are seeing the number of referrals climb as the back log is being drip fed on top of the natural increase, we are experiencing each year.

2.11.4 2023 saw an increase of 8.8% in live investigations in comparison to 2022. On average, each Officer has a workload of around 43 live investigations. Despite the Constabulary having a relatively small team in comparison to larger forces there has been a healthy number of suspects charged and convicted during 2023 and the first quarter of 2024.

2.11.5 Volume of investigations during this reporting period:

Note the decrease in investigations from October 2023 based on the NCA backlog explained above.



	2023	2022
Jun	193	173
Jul	216	193
Aug	201	186
Sep	201	191
Oct	215	210
Nov	206	209
Dec	173	198

2.11.6 Suspects arrested during this period;

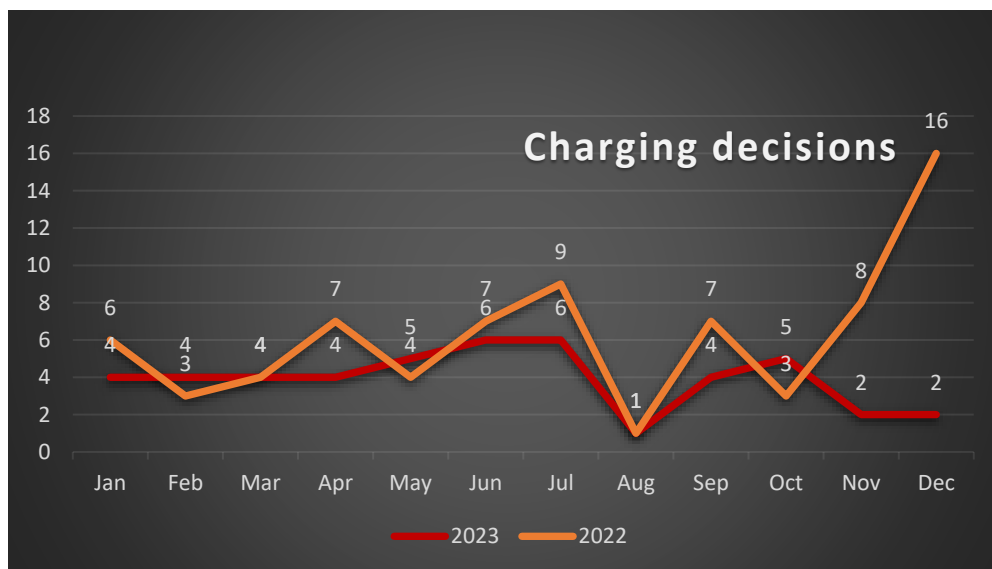


	2023	2022
Jun	2	1
Jul	6	2
Aug	5	6
Sept	6	4
Oct	5	2
Nov	3	5
Dec	4	2

2.11.7 Despite the sharp increase in live investigations, Suffolk Constabulary, in comparison to our most similar Force groups is in a very strong position with only a small number of investigations where the risk is unknown. Referrals from partner agencies are recorded on the system as soon as they are received, then the Internet Child Abuse Investigation Team (ICAIT) Detective Sergeant risk assesses them before seeking information from partner agencies in the MASH. If early checks indicate the suspect has immediate access to children, the team consult with staff from children’s services to ensure they are fully prepared before attending the address so that safeguarding can be planned. The team are reactive to unknown risk by

executing timely enforcement which is evident in the consistent number of suspects arrested, interviewed, and charged.

2.11.8 CPS charging decisions during this period;



	2023	2022
Jun	6	7
Jul	6	9
Aug	1	1
Sep	4	7
Oct	5	3
Nov	2	8
Dec	2	16

2.11.9 ICAIT was subject of a full review in 2021 with a recommended uplift of 4 additional members of staff to be implemented to assist with the increase in demand. Staff have now been recruited into these posts which has provided greater consistency in the evidential packages produced, as there is now a member of staff dedicated to the research and intelligence development function. This has also reduced the time it takes to produce these packages as the team are no longer reliant on other departments to assist. The team are working towards providing grading for all Indecent Images of Children (IIOC) investigations in the County, preventing untrained Officers from viewing IIOC and the subsequent welfare issues this can cause.

2.11.10 The ICAIT uplift has also contributed to the Constabulary better utilising the Child Abuse Image Database (CAID). A new process has been adopted whereby uploading of images to CAID forms part of the supervisor’s finalisation checks meaning the investigation cannot be closed until the supervisor ratifies that the upload has been completed. This new process has significantly increased the Constabulary’s contribution to CAID.

2.11.11 Two Officers have recently been trained in CAID facial mapping which will place greater emphasis on victim ID in investigations. The school uniform database is also now being routinely used.

2.11.12 In January 2023 a new CYACOMG Forensics digital triage tool was introduced which has significantly decreased the number of computer and hardware submissions as it identifies

indecent images of children (IIOC) in just three minutes. This enhanced capability has reduced the median length of investigations.

2.11.13 Digital media investigators (DMI's) continue to support ICAIT Officers by regularly attending scenes where either high-risk offender are likely to hold devices, or any scenes where there is advanced technical set up which requires support. DMI's have equipment which can locate hidden devices which has resulted in some great successes at recent enforcement.

2.11.14 Online offending amongst youth's has also seen a sharp increase with self-produced sexual imagery regularly shared. Due to this increase the Constabulary has produced a detailed standard operating procedure (SOP) for Youth Produced Sexual Imagery which provides the workforce with clear guidance around how to investigate these types of offences and safeguarding considerations for all children affected.

2.12 Schools Liaison and CYP Engagement

2.12.2 During the initial reporting period Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) Schools Liaison Officers (SLO's) and Children and Young Persons (CYP) PC's, continued to deliver inputs in educational settings. However, following the introduction of the new Operating Model on 4 Dec 23 the restructure saw the PCSO SLO roles absorbed back within the newly formed Community Policing Teams (CPT's) and a reduction in CYP PC's from 3 to 2.

2.12.3 The Operating Model introduced the County Partnership & Prevention Hub (CPPH) to replace the existing Neighbourhood Partnership Team. The CPPH retained the CYP portfolio and delivery of YJS and the CYP in schools. Delivery of local schools' engagement passed to the CPT's, and significant upskilling was provided across all portfolios that were to pass across to CPT delivery.

2.12.4 The role of the CPPH CYP PC has been adapted to allow a more tactical approach. They provide support to the frontline teams by preparing and providing resources and guidance on mandatory content for delivery. They will coordinate engagements such as Crucial Crew and support delivery of local initiatives and national campaigns.

2.12.5 All officers and supervisors on the CPT received an entire day uplift in training against the CYP portfolio which included schools and CYP engagement. The teams were introduced to the RAG ratings process for schools and provided with advice and guidance on how to record visits and monitor their local delivery to achieve best practice around frequency of visits.

2.12.6 All school engagement is recorded using the Engagement App and data captured includes the number of students engaged with, their age, demographic and also the topics discussed or delivered.

2.12.7 The CPPH are able to provide feedback to CPT's around the qualitative data from engagements. Whilst there appears to be a consistent approach across the areas for primary and secondary education intervention, we have recommended that fewer visits capturing a wider audience would be of greater impact than multiple ad hoc visits with a lower capture.

2.12.8 The CYP PCs continue to support local and national police operations such Hate Crime Awareness Week, Prevent awareness, County Lines Intensification Week, Safer Internet Day, Sexual Abuse, Op Sceptre (Knife Crime) and Crucial Crew.

2.12.9 The aim of student engagement through our inputs is to educate, raise awareness to focussed issues, inform on consequences of behaviour and to deter from offending, and whilst we are not currently undertaking and specific or bespoke crime prevention initiatives with young people Crucial Crew gives us the opportunity to conduct intensive prevention activity with a

wide audience. We continue to provide commitment to Crucial Crew and this year will see out CPT officers and PCSO's working alongside the CPPH CYP PC's to deliver on focussed topics.

2.12.10 The educational packages delivered by the School Liaison Officers and CYP Officers are developed by the CYP officers in conjunction with Suffolk County Council to ensure they align to Personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) and Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education (RSHE) syllabus, they have also started to align the packages with NCA guidance specifically in relation to Internet Safety.

2.12.11 Education Delivery in the period Nov 23 – Apr 24 (Op Model launch 4 Dec 23)

Primary School		
	Inputs	No. of young people
Exploitation	0	0
County Lines	3	99
Healthy Relationships	5	498
Knife Crime	2	80
Internet Safety	36	1847
Other Approved input	35	1579
Other engagement	254	24566
Totals	335	28669

Secondary School		
	Inputs	No. of young people
Exploitation	1	170
County Lines	19	1735
Healthy Relationships	3	387
Knife Crime	13	531
Internet Safety	10	1407
Other Approved input	10	1195
Other engagement	153	36516
Totals	209	41941

Raedwald Trust		
	Inputs	No. of young people
Exploitation	0	0
County Lines	0	0
Healthy Relationships	0	0
Knife Crime	0	0
Internet Safety	0	0
Other Approved input	0	0
Other engagement	5	346
Totals	5	346

16 +

	Input	No. of young people
Consent	0	0
County Lines	0	0
Digital Footprint	1	100
Domestic Abuse	0	0
Drugs	1	80
Exploitation	0	0
Hate Crime	0	0
Knife Crime	0	0
Sexting & Revenge Porn	1	100
Other engagement	34	4564
Totals	37	4844

*Other includes, but not limited to, mini-police sessions, recruitment fairs & spiking inputs

2.12.12 The CPPH have been working in a reduced capacity during the recruitment process of the 2 new CYP PC's. However, we are now starting to see an encouraging upturn in the numbers of visits conducted within the CPT's e.g., during March there were **196 school engagements** across Primary, Secondary and Further Education reaching over **29,663 students** through educational inputs, raising awareness of County Lines and antisocial behaviour (ASB) or through ad hoc engagements and drop ins. It is clear that the new model creates opportunity for local officers to engage with their local schools and create more effective connections.

2.13 Suffolk Youth Justice Service and Suffolk Constabulary Partnership

2.13.2 Suffolk Police are an integral partner of Suffolk Youth Justice Service (SYJS), preventing young people from being unnecessarily criminalised with a focus on reducing the number of first-time entrants (FTE) into the criminal justice system.

2.13.3 A new policing strategic delivery plan has been created to oversee delivery around Children and Young People, in preventing offending, preventing reoffending, and supporting children in and on the edge of the Youth Justice System. Focusing on child-centred policing with a priority to ensure that young people are not unnecessarily criminalised, and that every opportunity is taken to divert them away from offending.

YJS Assessment of Children

2.13.4 As of 2023, all children have an assessment completed by the Youth Justice Service prior to decisions being made regarding outcomes. The assessment process captures information available from others working with the family, and the child themselves. Throughout this process contact is also made with the victim by Youth Justice Police Officers to ascertain their views.

2.13.5 This process allows for well informed decisions to be made. A view of historic, current, and future risks to others and themselves is captured within the assessment which helps decision makers consider the wider impact of where the child's current behaviour sits. This has worked to reduce the number of children who receive Youth Cautions and Youth Conditional Cautions.

2.13.6 Through their interactions with the child and their professional network, practitioners can identify what work needs to be completed with the child to support desistance. Such information can be utilised to decide on Outcome 22 decisions, allowing for the Police's

Dedicated Decisions Makers (DDMs) to be satisfied that the matter will be sufficiently addressed.

2.13.7 By understanding the child and their network and work already in place, we can more confidently ensure the right outcome for the child and the victim.

Police Electronic Notification to YOT (PENY) Best Practice

2.13.8 To improve the quality of notifications to Suffolk Youth Justice Service countywide communications were delivered regarding best practice, standards and requirements regarding PENYs. This was reinforced by direct briefings and discussions by Youth Justice Police Officers to all Community policing Teams and response investigation Teams. Ongoing scrutiny and feedback is provided by Youth Justice Service Officers (YJS PCs) to individual referrals and staff signpost to best practice outlined on the YJS website, the quality of the PENY submissions and any missed opportunities for early intervention or diversion are identified as a course of the feedback. This improves the quality of information available to decision making panels to help provide additional scrutiny in decision making.

Multi-Agency Out of Court Disposal Panel

2.13.9 The Multi-Agency Out of Court Disposal (OoCD) Panel commenced in July 2023. This is chaired by the Operations Manager with OoCD lead. Initially this commenced with membership of YJS, Police and Safeguarding. In November 2023 both Substance Misuse Practitioners and Primary Mental Health Workers joined the panel.

2.13.10 The purpose of the Joint Decision-Making Panel is to decide on appropriate outcomes. The panel has 3 key functions:

- Understanding the individual circumstances of the child
- Understanding of the impact on the victim and any ongoing safety concerns.
- Ensuring children are not unnecessary criminalised.

2.13.11 The Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act (2012) (LASPO) removed the escalatory approach to a child's offending and allows decisions to be made that suit the specific circumstances at the time of disposal. Therefore, there is no presumption that a previous outcome or intervention will automatically bar a child from being considered an OoCD.

2.13.12 Each panel member brings their unique professional expertise to the discussion. This lends itself to a much more informative and consultative approach and will ensure the needs of the child, victim and community are met. Through utilising this information, it is possible to ensure that children are sufficiently diverted away from further involvement with the Justice System and that the correct intervention is delivered at the correct time to assist in negating re offending.

Community Resolutions

2.13.13 To improve the use of Outcome 22 and reduce the unnecessary use of Community Resolutions (CRs), all decision making for CRs was removed from frontline police and passed to Suffolk Youth Justice Service. This enhances the disposal methods available to YJS through a decriminalisation route and reduces the risk of misuse for first time or repeat offending within police decision making. Regular compliance scrutiny is undertaken and where process is not adhered to, the decision is reviewed, and appropriate feedback / training provided.

2.13.14 A new triage process for CR is currently being reviewed and established pre OoCD panel, negating low level cases being taken to panel.

Diversion

2.13.14 Working closely with Suffolk Youth Justice Service and OoCD Panel Chair creative and flexible outcomes are encouraged when it comes to bespoke diversion that is meaningful, effective and meets requirement for Home Office disposal option, and has achieved our objectives without criminalising the YP. This addresses the offence committed as well as identifying any other impact factors that require longer term engagement. This has included the use of One Cop Stop (OCS) school packages by YJS PC's, as part of diversion where appropriate employing a collaborative approach.

Turnaround

2.13.15 The Turnaround programme is a targeted early intervention programme. The service is now fully operational. The primary referral route for Turnaround will be via the Out of Court disposal panel and attached to first Youth Caution, Outcome 8 and Outcome 22 decisions. There are however other outcomes/criteria which this can be attached to divert children at an early opportunity including those who have been through the custody process and are released under investigation or on police bail. The added ability to work with children who are subject to community resolutions is particularly useful in reducing first time entrants by building the resilience of this outcome. Children who come to the attention of the Police for matters such as ASB or who are acquitted by the Court can also be referred to the programme.

Outcome 22 Awareness Training

2.13.16 To support the use of Outcome 22 within frontline policing, all Response Investigation Teams (RIT) and Community Policing Teams (CPT) have been provided an awareness input during 2023, supported by the YJS OoCD Chair. This input was enhanced for CPT officers who take primacy in youth offending under the new County Policing Command Model introduced in December 2023. This included youth produced sexual imagery, Outcome 21, decriminalisation of children and trauma informed approaches.

Referrals to youth Justice service data and outcomes

*The table of data will be revised from April onwards and will include the orange sections as shown in the South example

PENYs to YJS East	Oct 23 – March 24 2023
Youth Condition Caution	2
Youth Caution	4
Diversion Crime/ Outcome 22	19
Community Resolution	23
No Further Action	44
Charge	4
Sent back to OIC – PENY standards	41

PENYs to YJS South	Oct 23- March 2024
Youth Condition Caution	4
Youth Caution	12
Diversion Crime/ Outcome 22	41
Community Resolution	39
CR Non-Compliance	
No Further Action	15
Outcome 21	
Outcome 20	
Charge	26
Number of PENY's screened	
Sent back to OIC – PENY standards	55
Turnaround referrals Submitted	
Turnaround Referrals Accepted	

PENYs to YJS West	Dec23- March 24
Youth Condition Caution	3
Youth Caution	6
Diversion Crime/ Outcome 22	2
Community Resolution	59
No Further Action	4
Charge	7
Sent back to OIC – PENY standards	5

***West are missing records due to previous post holder admin issues and handover to PC Smith October and November 2023 are missing.**

Example of Restorative Justice work carried out by YJS PCSO

Referral sent for two children who had caused significant damage trying to break into a 16th century church, which had caused serious concern in the community.

When the police spoke to the two children involved, they said, “Well, we heard it was a haunted church.” They’d travelled a long way to get to the church and found it was locked when they arrived. The children said, “We really wanted to get inside, so we started breaking at the door trying to get in, thinking it would just break.” When the children were told how much the damage would cost, they were devastated.

The YJS PCSO took the boys to the church to meet with the church warden and a member of the community. The children explained that they thought it was haunted and wanted to get inside. The church warden explained the damage they’d caused and the fear it had caused in the community. This resulted in both parties being able to understand each side to the story, and the boys were invited back to be part of the provision that keeps the church safe over Halloween. For the children, the opportunity to go back and support the church and correct some of the harm done was the best thing in the world, because lots of people flood the church during Halloween due to its haunted reputation.

Planned Activity

2.13.17 As well as these steps which have already been taken there is still ongoing work in the planning stages to further reduce young persons being unnecessarily criminalised.

Legal representatives and Appropriate Adults

- 2.13.18 Being placed in Police custody can understandably be a difficult event for some children, in particular those who have not been in Police custody before. They can be guided by what they are being advised by solicitors, appropriate adults as well as potentially what they may have been told by peers, their family members or what they have been exposed to in the Media. This can have an influence on their responses in interview and lead to 'no comment' interviews which have historically resulted in children being charged to Court. There may also be potential barriers which may prevent young people from being diverted.
- 2.13.19 In support of Youth Justice Service work regarding Solicitors and Appropriate Adults, Suffolk Police are looking to support young persons and legal representatives further through appropriate independent guidance when young persons are in custody. We are currently working to support engagement at early stages to avoid unnecessary criminalisation through misunderstandings of the criminal justice process for young people and confidence in systems. The aim will be to ensure that appropriate advice is given to children throughout the legal process and ensure that the range of outcomes available to them is increased where appropriate.

O OCD at Court

- 2.13.20 Suffolk Constabulary and Suffolk Youth Justice Service have jointly identified issues and potential solutions regarding the adjournment of cases at court for referral back to YJS. Working group meetings have been established held Crown Prosecution Service to discuss barriers to this process and complications based on national measurements of success (i.e case success rates) and implications under PACE. Police/YJS/ CPS. This group will work to progress and support decriminalisation and early admissions.

Unnecessary Criminalisation of Children in Care

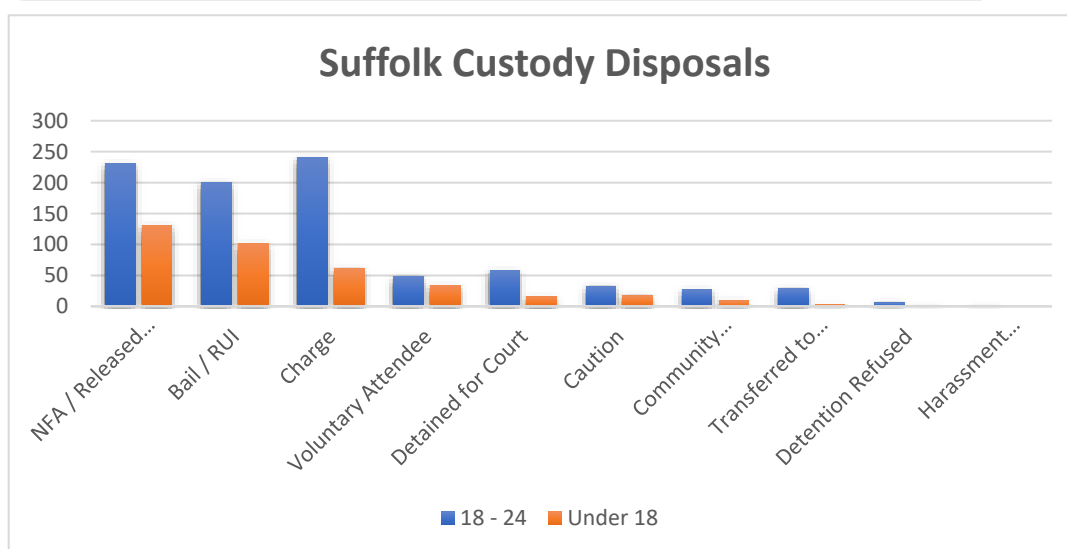
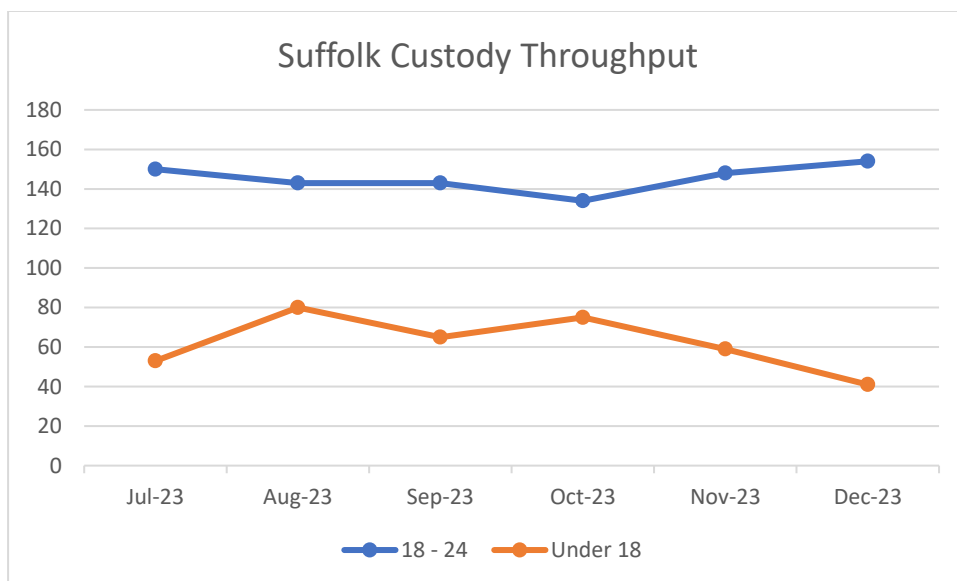
- 2.13.21 A protocol has been created by Suffolk County Council and partners including police and SYJS to reduce unnecessary criminalisation of Suffolk's children in care and care leavers. Initial draft has been created and under review before being agreed and signed off by all partners.

The protocol outlines how partners put in place arrangements for delivery of service to reduce the and mitigate the criminalisation of Suffolk young people who have experienced care. The implementation of this protocol will contribute to improvement outcomes.

2.14 Young People in Custody

- 2.14.9 There are in the region of 27,000 persons arrested across Norfolk and Suffolk in an average 12-month period. Of which, 1245 were aged under 24.
- 2.14.10 It is widely accepted that custody should not be a place for juveniles, however, when dealing with matters on a case by case basis if the legislative criteria for arrest necessities have been met, and other options have been either tried and failed, or considered and negated, then custody can be considered for juveniles.
- 2.14.11 The data below shows all Suffolk arrests for persons detained at all of the Police Investigation Centre's in Norfolk and Suffolk. The throughput data is relatively unremarkable, and relatively consistent. It must be noted however that nationally, Norfolk and Suffolk have the lowest number of juvenile throughput compared to any other force.

2.14.12 Suffolk custody throughput:



Age	Jul-23	Aug-23	Sep-23	Oct-23	Nov-23	Dec-23	Total
Under 18	53	80	65	75	59	41	373
(% against all Suffolk arrests)	5.7%	9.0%	7.6%	8.4%	7.2%	4.5%	7.1%
18 – 24	150	143	143	134	148	154	872
(% against all Suffolk arrests)	16.1%	16.2%	16.6%	15.1%	18.1%	16.9%	16.5%
Total	203	223	208	209	207	195	1245
(% against all Suffolk arrests)	21.8%	25.2%	24.2%	23.5%	25.4%	21.4%	23.5%
Total Suffolk arrest overall:	931	884	859	888	816	911	5289

Custody throughput is monitored through a number of processes within Suffolk Constabulary, including the Children and Young Persons Delivery Group, which specifically considers children and young people.

2.14.13 Remands

Each juvenile remanded into custody after being charged for new offences is reviewed as part of the Safeguarding Children in Police Custody panel, which is attended by partners from Social Services and Youth Justice Services. Legislation requires juveniles who have been

charged for offences and had bail refused to be moved into the care of the Local Authority; unless the custody officer justifies continued detention in custody; for example; the local authority cannot provide the accommodation required, or moving the child would interrupt a period of rest prior to attendance at court.

Additionally, juvenile remands are now being scrutinised by independent custody visitors through the ISSP which has expanded its focus beyond strip searches to look at the justifications for requests for appropriate secure / non-secure accommodation for juveniles remanded in police custody.

Suffolk have a limited number of PACE carers, although during the latter part of 2023 a small number of additional carers were recruited and appropriately trained. As such, in the second half of 2023 (July to December) 4 juveniles were successfully transferred out of custody to appropriate carers. This is 16% of juvenile remands in Suffolk although an additional 20% of remanded juveniles were not moved due to short time before court.

2.14.14 The following disposal methods can be attributed to young person's attending custody;

Disposal Type	18 - 24	Under 18	Grand Total
NFA / Released without Charge	231	130	361
Bail / RUI	200	102	302
Charge	240	61	301
Voluntary Attendee	48	34	82
Detained for Court	58	16	74
Cautions	32	17	49
Community Resolution	27	9	36
Transferred to other authority	29	3	32
Detention Refused	6	1	7
Harassment Information	1		1
Grand Total	872	373	1245

2.14.15 Mental Health

5 detainees aged under 24 had a formal Mental Health Act assessment between July and December 2023. 2 were under the age of 18, and 3 were aged 18-24. Of the 5 assessed under the Mental Health Act whilst in custody; 3 were recommended for detention under the Mental Health Act.

Mental Health	Under 18	18 - 24	Total
Number of MHA assessments	2	3	5

Each detained person, regardless of age, who is assessed under the Mental Health Act whilst in custody and recommended for detention under either s.2 or s.3 of the Act, is reviewed as part of the joint escalation process, which requires initial oversight from the custody officer, the Inspector [ordinarily the Custody Bronze Inspector], the Duty Superintendent/Chief Superintendent and ratification from the Force Executive; and continuous liaison with Social

Services [AMHP's] and Norfolk and Suffolk Foundation Trust [NSFT] to expedite the release of the detained person.

Norfolk and Suffolk, more than any other force nationwide often experience long periods of detention of detained persons requiring admission to Mental Health facilities under the Mental Health Act due to complications with bed allocation and availability within the NSFT.

2.14.16 Mental Health Liaison and Diversion (L&D)

Every detained person attending custody has an opportunity to engage with Liaison and Diversion (L&D), provided by the NHS. The role is to provide support and guidance with a view to reducing re-offending rates. Originally intended to support individuals with mental health problems, the service has extended to offer support options for drug/alcohol abuse, employment concerns, gambling addictions, financial problems, and anger management. This service offers a great opportunity for all detainees to look for a better future post custody. Every juvenile that comes into custody [during working hours of L&D] will be seen by the service. Norfolk and Suffolk Constabularies have been working closely with L&D this year, and are piloting the use of 'Nudge Theory', a multi-pronged approach to installing suggestive signage in pertinent places following the route of an arrested person; highlighting the benefits of L&D to encourage more detained persons to voluntarily take up the offer of support both in, and outside of custody to try and address the area of concern leading to criminality and to break the cycle of offending. Phase 1 of the project is set to go live in September 2023, with independent research from the UEA who will be undertaking a randomised control study, to determine whether the signage promoting L&D in the Police Investigation Centres (PIC's) has resulted in an uptake for service offers.

Whilst we await the final report from UEA, the initial findings from the data show that there is an uptake by around 8% in engagement. As such, we have increased the signage around the PICs, now in all police cells, the holding areas and individual holding cells.

Liaison and Diversion operate from 08:00 – 17:00 in all 6 PICs, beyond this there is a twilight service which runs until 00:00 each day which is commissioned separately to work across all PICs remotely for females and juveniles.

2.14.17 Legal Advice for Juveniles

Every person arrested and detained in custody has the right to free and independent legal advice, which is an open, and ongoing choice whilst detained. Like many other forces nationwide, Norfolk and Suffolk have adopted 'opt out' service for legal advice for juveniles (under 18) in custody, meaning for all juveniles in custody a solicitor will be assigned to them, unless they provide significant justification for not wanting legal advice. This process has been in place in many other forces and recognised as best practice, leading to better outcomes.

2.14.18 Custody Development

All cells for the use of children and young people are now identified by green doors which highlights to staff the individuals detained may have additional needs. These cells are going to be subject to redecoration, this will include sudoku on the wall, target for throwing a ball at and an area which can be used for writing or drawing.

Suffolk and Norfolk Constabularies are leading the way in custody innovation for child specific provisions.

All children and young people are processed in the discreet booking in area thereby reducing the prospect of trauma informed policing.

All exercise yards are currently devoid of diversionary activities, an ongoing process of change is underway to transform these areas with hopscotch, crosswords, targets and a goal.

2.14.19 In cell Technology

All cells used by children and young people have been fitted with in-cell technology. Once penetration testing has been completed (expected summer 2024) consultation with partners, medical reviews and reviews of detention will be possible remotely.

A suite of informative and preventative videos will be played with a view to reduce reoffending and inform detainees of their key rights and entitlements.

2.15 Cadet Scheme

2.15.9 There are currently 158 Cadets with 20 on the waiting list. There are 38 active leaders, broken down to 11 Police Support Volunteers (PSVs), 3 Specials, 5 Police staff and 19 police officers.

2.15.10 There are eight cadet units across the county. Three of the units were run as joint units with the Fire Service, however the Fire Service withdrew their support at the end of 2023. This has placed increased demand upon police leaders, but all units have remained running.

2.15.11 The recruitment of new leaders has continued with an increased focus on using former cadets and police staff volunteers. This has in part negated the impact of changes in the CPC Operating Model, which has led to the withdrawal of Community Engagement Officers (CEOs) and the withdrawal of the Fire Service. A review of the cadet scheme in Suffolk has been undertaken, this review looks at sustainability, consistency, and resourcing and to ensure a fair access to the scheme across the county with the viability of investment versus demand on front line policing. The review makes a number of recommendations around the leadership model, recording cadet activities as engagements and improving the quality of our weekly lessons/activities. Progression against recommendations of the review will be monitored via the Citizens in Policing board. A force wide curriculum has already compiled and a programme of awards for cadets will start in September 2024.

2.15.12 Key Headlines:

- The National Safeguarding Standards are still being followed by Suffolk and a national audit has scored Suffolk as 'good';
- The second annual protected training day for all leaders will take place in May, to ensure consistency in safeguarding training and Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for all leaders;
- The National Volunteer Police Cadets (NVPC) are still reviewing mandatory monthly PND checks for all leaders but as yet no formal outcome has been determined
- A pathway for referrals from the Youth Justice Service into Cadets has been agreed to support identifying vulnerable children and young people who may benefit from the scheme;
- Referrals received from the Suffolk Refuges Support to offer appropriate placements to young refugees and asylum seekers.

2.15.13 Recruitment of leaders remains a focus and currently an incentive and recruitment campaign has been launched, led by the Citizens in Policing's new recruitment and engagement officer.

2.15.14 Risks to the Cadet scheme remain the same as previously, being the lack of consistent volunteer leaders (being addressed by the current review). The possibility of mandatory Police National Database (PND) checks on all leaders will impact on vetting resources as well as the goodwill of volunteer leaders.

2.15.15 Numerous community engagement events were supported by our Cadets over this period, though lesser than summer months, these have included supporting high profile football operations, Remembrance Day events, supporting National Policing operational like Op Spectre and County Lines week, underage sales operations with trading standards, community projects in local residential homes and provided support to local crime prevention activities.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 The National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC) Children and Young Persons Strategy is currently being renewed with the draft out for consultation. It is recommended that once this is launched Suffolk reviews their CYP strategy to ensure that it still aligns so that key thematic areas for delivery are recognised, it drives consistency and learning across borders, and draws on regional support and learning.

3.2 Non-Crime diversion is not a statutory function of the Youth Justice Service and is currently provided in addition to its core responsibilities. Due to financial constraints police are currently the only agency referring into this provision and consideration should be given regarding the long-term viability and availability of non-crime provision with the Youth Justice Service, and alternative services and funding should it no longer be sustainable. This work is key to support national priorities regarding the decriminalisation and diversion of children.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The current funding arrangement for the Youth Justice Service PCSOs was renewed in March 2024 for another year. There are currently 2.0 FTE, which are funded jointly by Suffolk County Council and Suffolk Constabulary. SYJS have given early indication that they intend to review this arrangement in Autumn 2024

4.2 The current financial contribution made by the constabulary to the Youth Justice Service is expected to continue increasing each year in line with inflation, which will be above historical average at the next point of review (23/24). This contribution is a statutory requirement.

5. OTHER IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

5.1 None at this time

6. CHIEF OFFICER CONCLUSION

6.1 The Constabulary can demonstrate strong governance and partnership arrangements where children and young people are concerned. There are clear plans around how to make further improvements to service and performance and these are commented on in this report.

6.2 There are growing demands in most areas of policing where child issues are concerned and there remains a strong commitment to avoidance of criminalising young people where appropriate. Both of these elements are evidenced in this report as are the approaches to ensure the Constabulary response is proportionate.

6.3 The previous HMICFRS inspection around child protection should be considered in conjunction with this report to provide wider understanding of areas of strength and those that require

strengthening. These have been communicated separately and work is continuing to make progress against the highlighted areas that are not documented.