

The Rt Hon James Cleverly MP
Home Secretary
Home Office
2 Marsham Street
London

Our ref: TP/VS

19 December 2023

Dear Home Secretary

RE: HMICFRS PEEL Inspection of Suffolk Constabulary 2023-25

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this inspection of Suffolk Constabulary. The Constabulary has provided a thorough update, which is attached and will be published on my website and deals with the 'recommendations' and 'Areas for Improvement' as set out by HMICFRS.

The HMICFRS report includes reference to four areas judged as good (including disrupting Serious and Organised Crime on page 36) so overall the report is pleasing. However, the inadequate grading of 'responding to the public' and the two areas graded as 'requiring improvement' were disappointing.

I am pleased that HMICFRS recognises the recent investment through precept and the transformation programme in the CCR. I feel positive that the investment and progress in this area will begin to show dividends for the public. The detailed response from the force shows the progress made.

Key areas of the PEEL inspection will be reported on in reports to my Accountability and Performance Panel throughout the year.

Yours sincerely



Tim Passmore, Police and Crime Commissioner for Suffolk



Response to HMICFRS PEEL Inspection 2023-25

His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) conducted the latest PEEL Inspection of Suffolk Constabulary during Spring 2023. The report was published on 4th October 2023.

The full report can be found at [PEEL 2023–25: An inspection of Suffolk Constabulary - His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services \(justiceinspectorates.gov.uk\)](https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/peel/2023-25-an-inspection-of-suffolk-constabulary-his-majestys-inspectorate-of-constabulary-and-fire-rescue-services/)

HMICFRS is pleased with some aspects of the performance of Suffolk Constabulary in keeping people safe, reducing crime and providing victims with an effective service.

HMICFRS recognised significant efforts from the constabulary to review and improve investigative standards which has led to improvements in its ability to achieve well-supervised, better-quality investigations.

HMICFRS acknowledged that Suffolk Constabulary remains one of the lowest funded forces in the country.

HMICFRS inspectors identified the following as areas where the force needs to improve, as below:-

- Improving how well the force responds to the public answering 999s and 101s
- Ensuring the force has effective processes in place to protect vulnerable people, and;
- Developing robust performance frameworks which mean improvements can be supported by effective processes and a thorough understanding of data.

HMICFRS JUDGEMENTS

HMICFRS assessed Suffolk Constabulary in 10 areas of policing, and made graded judgements in 9 of these 10 as follows¹:

Outstanding	Good	Adequate	Requires improvement	Inadequate
	Preventing crime	Investigating crime	Protecting vulnerable people	Responding to the public
	Recording data about crime	Developing a positive workplace	Managing offenders	
	Police powers and public treatment	Leadership and force management		

¹ The assessment of the other area (disrupting serious and organised crime) had already been graded as good and is identified on page 36 of the PEEL report.

HMICFRS have indicated that it is not possible to make direct comparisons between the grades awarded in this PEEL inspection and those from the previous cycle of PEEL inspections. This is because they have increased their focus on making sure forces are achieving appropriate outcomes for the public, and in some cases they have changed the aspects of policing they inspect.

HMICFRS issued a total of 14 Areas for Improvement (AFIs), 1 Cause for Concern and 1 Innovative Practice under the above grading areas.

CONSTABULARY RESPONSE

Progression of activity to address each AFI and recommendation is being managed through a Bronze coordination group. All AFIs and recommendations are being allocated to department heads and commanders as owners, then assigned to specific area leads to progress. Initial responses have been gathered from leads and progress against each will be monitored through the Bronze group. Updates will periodically be provided to the HMICFRS monitoring portal and will be updated to the OPCC in future Accountability and Performance Panel or other public reports.

Suffolk Constabulary accept all the AFIs and recommendations made in the PEEL report. Being wide ranging in scope it can take time to fully consider and identify plans for addressing the areas for improvement and recommendations highlighted in the report. Therefore, whilst this process is still ongoing, some of the AFIs responded to in the next section may only give an indication of ownership and how this is being monitored at this stage.

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT AND GOOD/INNOVATIVE PRACTICE

This section takes each PEEL judgement category in turn and outlines HMICFRS statements, around areas for improvement and good/innovative practice.

CRIME DATA INTEGRITY

HMICFRS graded the Constabulary as good at recording crime.

Areas for Improvement

The HMICFRS report stated the following:

The constabulary needs to improve the time it takes to record crimes

In January 2020, we published our Crime Data Integrity report for Suffolk Constabulary, in which we found that just under 3 quarters of crimes were recorded within 24 hours. We said that this was an area for improvement and that the constabulary should immediately make sure that it records more crimes within 24 hours, as the national crime recording standard requires. The constabulary has made little improvement and is still recording about 3 quarters of crimes within 24 hours. For rape crimes in 2020 we found that just under 9 out of 10 were recorded within 24 hours; in 2023 this had dropped to just over 8 out of 10 crimes recorded within 24 hours. Recording crime without delay helps make sure that victims receive the support they require, as well as establishing an effective investigation.

Force Response

This AFI will be owned by the Head of Crime, Safeguarding and Incident Management and is currently being discussed as to assignment and progression. Crime Data Integrity (CDI) is monitored and managed through the CDI Board, which is chaired by the Assistant Chief Constable.

The constabulary needs to improve how it records crime when antisocial behaviour personal is reported

The constabulary is failing to record enough crimes and tackle problems when antisocial behaviour is reported by victims. We examined 50 incidents. Of these, 18 crimes should have been recorded and 12 were actually recorded. Victims of antisocial behaviour are often subjected to abuse for substantial periods of time, and crime is often committed by their neighbours. Failing to record crimes and provide an effective service to tackle antisocial behaviour can mean victims live in fear in their own homes while being subjected to long-term abuse by people living next door or in the local community.

Force Response

This AFI is owned by the Head of County Policing Command and led at Superintendent level.

Suffolk Constabulary accepts this AFI and recognises that improvement is required. However, it is important to note that improvements have already been made in the period from January to August 2023. We have recorded a 9.8 percentage point decrease from 17% missed crimes (measured by the Performance Improvement Unit ASB review) to 7.2% (Crime Data Integrity (CDI) ASB crime audit report).

A number of activities and processes have led to this improvement, including the following:

- ASB Review Team – ongoing audits conducted by officers on recuperative duties, allowing missed crimes to be identified early and resolved, and continual assessment of repeat failures so they can be addressed through training and management. This includes regular engagement with first line managers.
- Continued monitoring by CDI team – latest audit conducted August 2023.
- Ongoing work with CCR because the correct initial classification is recognised as one of the most effective ways to achieve improvement.
- New quarterly ASB performance pack developed and shared with Area Commanders highlighting areas for improvement across ASB – highlighting ‘missed crimes’ as a priority.
- ASB included in supervisor guides and ‘supervisor review’ introduced onto 7-point closure plan and as a performance measure.
- ASB training being delivered at recent community Policing Team (CPT) training days – in advance of CPTs being implemented in December 2023.
- Introduction of ASB module on Single Online Home (SOH) allowing for crime to be identified earlier on in initial classification and ensuring ASB-related crime isn’t being missed – processes currently being developed to ensure reports from SOH and other call receipt methods are managed effectively and consistently.

Next steps will involve continuing to work with the CCR to develop processes around initial classification and SOH reporting. The Performance Improvement Unit will also be preparing to undertake a further ASB review, with the date to be confirmed.

Suffolk’s new front line operating model will launch in December 2023, which will include the introduction of new Community Policing Teams (CPTs). CPTs will enhance the forces neighbourhood policing service and is anticipated to result in stronger ASB compliance and contribution to this AFI, this will be monitored closely over the first 3 months and as part of the longer-term evaluation of the new model.

The constabulary needs to improve how it records equality data

The constabulary’s data for victims of crime shows that age and gender are well recorded, ethnicity is less well recorded and other protected characteristics aren’t well recorded. The constabulary should

be collecting this information to understand the extent to which each protected group is affected by crime, how this differs from those without the protected characteristics, and whether a different approach is needed for these victims.

Force Response

This AFI will be owned by the Head of Joint Justice Command and led at Detective Chief Inspector level.

This is a complex AFI which is being fed by national as well as local initiatives. Changes to Suffolk Constabulary's crime recording system in order to comply with recent NPCC guidance on recording of protected characteristics is on the Constabulary's development roadmap. Development and delivery dates are to be confirmed, but is not expected until 2024. Work is ongoing to develop understanding of these requirements and will be updated and monitored through the Bronze Coordination Group for HMICFRS recommendations.

RESPONDING TO THE PUBLIC

HMICFRS assessed the Constabulary as inadequate at responding to the public.

Cause for concern

The HMICFRS report stated the following:

The constabulary needs to improve the time it takes to answer emergency and non-emergency calls

There are capacity and capability issues within the CCR while new staff are trained. The constabulary has experienced recruitment difficulties but is hopeful that all vacancies will be filled and new staff trained by the autumn. However, should it meet its recruitment target, the current CCR isn't big enough to accommodate all staff. The constabulary should have been aware of and considered the capacity of the room when plans were first made to recruit more staff. It has been slow to look for alternative arrangements to resolve this issue.

The constabulary needs to improve the time it takes to answer emergency calls for service. In the year ending 31 March 2023, Suffolk Constabulary answered 76.6 percent of its 999 calls within 10 seconds. This was lower than the standard expected of forces in England and Wales of answering 90 percent of 999 calls within 10 seconds. Failing to answer calls quickly enough can mean losing both public confidence and investigative opportunities.

The constabulary non-emergency abandonment rate is high. This was an area for improvement when the constabulary was last inspected. At that time, chief officers had devised a plan to help reduce the high number of people abandoning calls. Through raising the precept, the police and crime commissioner provided funding to improve performance in the CCR. Despite this, during our recent inspection we found that performance had declined. In the year ending 31 March 2023, the constabulary told us that 36.9 percent of calls to its non-emergency 101 facility were abandoned. This abandonment rate is higher than the standard of 5 percent for forces with a switchboard. Last time we reported, the rate was 32 percent. Higher abandonment rates were reported for calls made overnight. This means that the public still isn't able to easily contact the constabulary, which may leave people at risk. The constabulary continues to fail to provide the public with a good enough service. It should have acted with more urgency to reduce its abandonment rate.

In the year ending 31 March 2023, Suffolk received 152 emergency 999 calls per 1,000 population. This was comparable to other forces in England and Wales.

In the year ending 30 September 2022, Suffolk received 317 non-emergency 101 calls per 1,000 population. This is slightly higher than other forces in England and Wales.

We note that the constabulary has recently done some work to try to understand its 101 abandonment rate. It has collated data to find whether those who report online have previously called 101. It also thinks that higher-risk areas may have lower abandonment rates. Further analytical work is required to make sure that the constabulary fully understands its data and to make sure risk is being managed effectively.

The constabulary is aware that it needs to make improvements in the CCR and has a CCR transformation programme in place. It has recognised areas of most concern and embarked on a programme of improvement. Audit processes in the CCR have improved, and the constabulary now completes monthly audits. But unfortunately this hasn't yet led to improvements in performance.

Recommendations

The HMICFRS report stated the following:

Within three months, Suffolk Constabulary should:

- *improve the ability of the constabulary to answer phone calls from the public and have sufficient staff with the appropriate skills and experience working within the command and control room (CCR).*

Within six months, Suffolk Constabulary should:

- *make sure it can answer a greater proportion of emergency calls more quickly to provide a better service for the public; and*
- *make sure it can answer a greater proportion of non-emergency 101 calls so that caller abandonment levels are reduced and kept as low as possible.*

Force Response

These recommendations will be owned by the Head of Crime, Safeguarding and Incident Management and lead by the Superintendent for Incident Management.

Suffolk Constabulary accepts the cause for concern and related recommendations. These have been assigned to the Chief Superintendent for Crime, Safeguarding and Incident Management (CSIM) for progressing.

Suffolk Constabulary is part way through a multi-year transformation and improvement programme in the command and control room (CCR). The programme aims to improve workflow and staffing to ensure that every contact, crime or incident is managed as effectively and efficiently as possible, with the best outcome achieved.

The programme was split into three phases as follows:

- Phase 1: Uplift of call operators and change of shift pattern in the Central Call Answering (CCA) team (switchboard) and training with focus on resolution of 101 calls at first point of contact
- Phase 2: Uplift of call operators and change of shift pattern in the CCR to maximise resources at peak demand times; additional Sergeant supervision and growth of CCR Systems Support Team

- Phase 3: Introduction of Right Care Right Person (RCRP), Domestic Abuse Video Response (DAVR) and establishment of Digital Contact Desk.

As of October 2023, phases 1 and 2 have now been implemented. Shift changes and staff uplift in the CCR were considered a key part to realising performance benefits and it was recognised that, as a result of consultation and recruitment, many of these benefits would not be realised until Summer 2023.

The CCR's new shift pattern is now embedded and is running at optimum strength. Following the implementation of these changes, Suffolk Constabulary has consistently recorded a monthly decline in its 101 abandonment rate since June 2023 (for calls into Control Room Operators) – falling 15.5 percentage points in this 5-month period to 24% in October. The force's 999 service level (the percentage of calls answered within 10 seconds) has also seen monthly improvements, increasing by 17.5 percentage points since June 2023 to 89% in October 2023. This is just below the standard expected from forces in England and Wales to answer 90% of 999 calls within 10 seconds.

To maintain performance and ensure resilience, audits are used continually to monitor policies such as THRIVE. Training has been enhanced and a wellbeing plan has been created alongside the introduction of Wellbeing Champions. Recruitment continues and there is a planned induction of 15-20 additional CCR staff in March 2024 to maintain staffing levels.

Work is ongoing to further the service delivery in the CCR with the implementation of RCRP, DAVR and the Digital Contact Desk. The first phase of RCRP went live at the start of October 2023, with further phases expected to be implemented during the first half of 2024. DAVR has been piloted and evaluated, with recruitment for the permanent team in process and recruitment has commenced on Digital Desk posts, planned for implementation in March 2024. Phase 3 of the CCR transformation programme will be monitored for performance and evaluated throughout its implementation.

INVESTIGATING CRIME

HMICFRS assessed the Constabulary as adequate at investigating crime.

Areas for Improvement

The HMICRS report stated the following:

Suffolk Constabulary doesn't consistently achieve appropriate outcomes for victims

The constabulary isn't always achieving acceptable outcomes for victims of crime. It has low numbers of crimes that are solved following investigations. It needs to understand the issue and work to achieve better outcomes for victims.

The constabulary's charge rate for victim-based crime has declined and is far too low. In the year ending 31 December 2022, 6.6 percent of victim-based crimes were assigned a 'charged/summonsed' (outcome 1) by Suffolk Constabulary. This was a decrease from 15.6 percent in the year ending 31 March 2015.

In the year ending 31 December 2022, Suffolk Constabulary recorded 43,522 victim-based crimes. Of these recorded offences, 10.4 percent were assigned an 'offences brought to justice' outcome. This was within the normal range compared to other forces in England and Wales. More specifically, 6.6 percent were assigned a 'charge/summonsed' outcome.

In the year ending 31 December 2022, the proportion of victim-based crimes assigned outcome 15: 'Evidential difficulties: suspect identified; victim supports further action' by Suffolk Constabulary, was

16.3 percent. This is a decrease from the previous year, when it was 19.7 percent, but is higher than expected compared with other forces in England and Wales.

We found the constabulary carried out audits and scrutinised disposal outcomes. However, more needs to be done to make sure that leaders can be confident they understand what drives some outcomes, whether the outcomes are appropriate and what improvements might be needed to give victims the justice they deserve.

Force Response

This AFI will be owned by the Head of Crime, Safeguarding and Incident Management and lead by the Superintendent lead for Crime.

Addressing positive outcome rates is an ongoing and significant piece of work for the Constabulary as a whole. Whilst this has been looked at in a number of ways across different areas of the Constabulary, work over 2023 has been ongoing to refocus and develop a greater understanding of how to deliver improved outcome rates. This includes the re-invigoration of a cross-command investigation standards working group chaired the Detective Superintendent for Crime and attended by Chief Inspectors. This has so far identified key three workstreams for initial focus:

- Statement quality – being addressed through the creation of new training being delivered by the Suffolk and Norfolk Joint Justice Command
- Suspect identification – being addressed through the development of a toolkit by the Crime, Investigations and Incident Management (CSIM) Command to support inexperienced officers in identifying suspects and investigative opportunities for all victim-based investigations
- Identification of top evidential failings in outcome 15 investigations to create focus for further work.

In addition to this a Domestic Abuse (DA) positive outcome working group is being set up under the DA Delivery Board to focus specifically on this area and this is being supported by the investigation standards working group.

Part of the Constabulary's Stripes course – a course for sergeants developed in Suffolk in line with the College of Policing's first-line leaders' development programme – is being rewritten and added to in order to focus on evidential opportunities, VCOP (Victim Code of Practice) and evidential tests to improve investigation standards amongst supervisors. In addition to this, further content for investigative standards continues to be developed for the Constabulary's online learning system, which includes 'how to' guides.

Moving forwards, Suffolk will be working to develop and embed Op Soteria National Operating Model (NOM) for Rape and Serious Sexual Offences (RASSO) investigations. Outputs from the statement quality and suspect identification toolkit workstreams will be delivered. Work is ongoing to ensure consistent, joined up and achievable opportunities are identified across CSIM and CPC (County Policing Command) to ensure that the AFI is addressed across all areas of Suffolk policing. This includes local policing priorities across commands to be agreed, which focus on positive outcomes, particularly for DA and outcome 15 (where a suspect has been identified but further evidential difficulties prevent further action which could lead to a positive outcome). In January 2024, a missed opportunities audit will be conducted to better understand the challenge around achieving positive outcomes.

The constabulary should make sure that a victim contract is completed where appropriate

We found that 40 of 50 victim contracts were completed in the cases reviewed by us. This means that some victims weren't provided with timely information about the investigation and prosecution. Police

officers and staff should positively involve victims at key decision points in the investigation, update the victim about the decisions and where applicable, explain them to them.

Force Response

This AFI will be owned by the Heads of County Policing Command and Crime, Safeguarding and Incident Management, and delivered jointly by Chief Superintendent and Superintendent leads.

Compliance with the Victim Code of Practice (VCOP) is a priority focus at force performance monthly meetings, local policing board, command (CPC and CSIM) performance and local team performance management meetings. There is increasing focus on the better use of Power BI dashboard for VCOP compliance to be used by Inspectors and supervisors across teams to enable them to accurately focus on weaker areas and to monitor progress. At this point in time, we are seeing improved compliance, however, this will be continually monitored in line with future developments in this area. This AFI will be further progressed through the development of a joined up strategic plan to ensure VCOP quality and compliance. It is anticipated that advanced drafts of the 'Victims code and service delivery' strategic plan will be ready for consultation and review at the start of February 2024.

PROTECTING VULNERABLE PEOPLE

HMICFRS assessed the Constabulary as requires improvement at protecting vulnerable people.

Areas for improvement

The HMICFRS report stated the following:

The constabulary should make sure that there are processes in place to monitor protective orders and make sure that breaches are prioritised to safeguard the victim

The constabulary has focused on making sure officers have a good understanding of protective orders. It has brought in subject matter experts to provide training. As a result, it has seen improvements in the use of protective orders. However, the constabulary doesn't monitor breaches of protective orders. This may reduce the impact of orders or fail to prevent reoffending.

Force Response

This AFI will be owned by the Head of Crime, Safeguarding and Incident Management, and delivered by the Safeguarding Detective Chief Inspector.

All current Stalking Protection Orders (SPOs) retained by Suffolk Constabulary have been mapped and the associated orders obtained for dissemination. A draft SPO management document has been created in preparation for onward management. Since the PEEL Inspection, a formalised benchmarking exercise has been completed asking each force three questions to understand how SPOs are managed and monitored in other forces to identify best practice and promote knowledge sharing.

A process to monitor the subject of the SPO, utilising the findings of the benchmarking exercises is in design phases with an anticipated go live date of January 2024. The Domestic Abuse Coordinators (DACs) are briefed in the requirement to provide an enhanced service to those whom the order has been made to protect. The governance of SPO management is anticipated to be through a tracker

viewed at Tasking and Coordinating meetings, with metrics to measure the effectiveness of the management likely to include quantity of visits, breaches and victim interactions.

Going forward, plans to progress this AFI include the sign off and implementation of the management plan. Formalisation of an evaluation mechanism and publication of internal communications regarding new processes to manage SPOs.

The constabulary needs to make sure that it has secondary review processes for all appropriate domestic abuse incidents. It should develop a performance framework that shows risk levels, and that harm reduction activity is in place for all cases

Previously the domestic abuse team, located within the multi-agency safeguarding hub, carried out the secondary risk assessments to make sure the correct grading of domestic abuse cases: high, medium or standard, was given. This process was to make sure victims were referred to the right partners, such as social services, and safeguarding actions were in line with the risk levels identified. In October 2022, the constabulary introduced a new process. This removed secondary specialist risk assessment from the domestic abuse team. The constabulary introduced a new domestic abuse research document for attending officers and a secondary risk process by sergeants for medium and high-risk cases. There is currently no secondary risk assessment in place for standard risk.

Both frontline officers and supervisors have been given training in relation to the new process, including the use of domestic abuse risk assessment and completion and review of the new research document. During our inspection we identified that officer compliance with this process was inconsistent. This can lead to delays in vulnerable adults and children being signposted or referred to the relevant partners at the first opportunity. The new process lacked audit and scrutiny processes to make sure the risk to vulnerable people and children was being managed appropriately.

Force Response

This AFI will be owned by the Head of Crime, Safeguarding and Incident Management and lead by the Safeguarding Detective Chief Inspector.

Domestic Abuse Coordinators have been introduced to ensure the effective safeguarding of domestic abuse victims in Suffolk. The DACs provide advice and support to officers investigating domestic abuse and work in partnership with the statutory partners and support services to ensure appropriate referrals are made. They are also responsible for delivering the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (DVDS) and safety planning, and providing quality assurance to Domestic Abuse Risk Assessments (DARA) completed by frontline officers. A 12-month review of the Domestic Abuse Coordinator (DAC) unit has been commissioned to be undertaken in the first quarter of 2024 to evaluate the effectiveness of DACs.

To support frontline officers in developing Domestic Abuse Research Documents (DARDs), Suffolk Constabulary has also commissioned a module on force systems to generate the documents, which is expected to be implemented in the fourth quarter of 2024.

Analysis has also been commissioned to demonstrate the ratios of High, Medium and Standard ratings since the inception of DARA in comparison to the previously used DASH model, in order to understand the impact and effectiveness of the new system. This analysis will help to inform an evaluation into the outcomes of implementing DARA in Suffolk.

To facilitate the implementation of these new processes with frontline officers, the supervisor section of the 8-point investigation plan (8PP) has been amended to ensure supervisors make sure DARA and DARDs are completed to a satisfactory standard.

Next steps for progressing this AFI will involve running DAC 'surgeries' to aid DARD completion. In addition, audits are to be undertaken to review supervisor compliance with secondary risk assessments and signing off DARAs and DARDs.

MANAGING OFFENDERS AND SUSPECTS

HMICFRS assessed the Constabulary as requires improvement at managing offenders and suspects.

Areas for Improvement

The HMICFRS report stated the following:

The constabulary should prioritise the use of warrants and arrest as enforcement methods that provide greater opportunities for victim safeguarding and the prevention of further offending

We found the constabulary used consent searches and voluntary attendance when warrants and arrest powers would have been more appropriate in the internet child abuse investigation team. We found cases where suspects were invited for voluntary interview when children were present in the house and safeguarding should have been considered. When officers proactively use arrest and bail, this allows the constabulary to impose police bail conditions as safeguarding measures to protect the public. Relying on consent to search and voluntary attendance can result in evidential opportunities or safeguarding opportunities being missed. The constabulary needs to assure itself that it is securing the relevant devices and capturing all the evidence of an offence.

The constabulary told us that one reason for the use of voluntary attendance/searches is the delay in obtaining a warrant by the court. Senior officers told us that they were unaware of difficulties obtaining warrants, therefore no discussions had been held on a strategic level locally with the courts to try to resolve this.

Force Response

This AFI will be owned by the Head of Crime, Safeguarding and Incident Management and lead by the Superintendent lead for Crime.

The Internet Child Abuse Investigation Team (ICAIT) policy is for an arrest to be the starting point for all investigations unless sufficient risk assessment and rationale provide for a more appropriate course of action. It can be confirmed that warrants are available if required and there are no wider concerns in relation to this. Under the new Bail Act (October 2022) the use of arrest has continued to increase month-on-month alongside a drop in demand. Regional benchmarking is being completed to identify any further improvements to support risk management and safeguarding. In addition to this, a reduction in Digital Forensic Unit (DFU) device download times has supported the use of arrest and bail within timescales to ensure an outcome can be secured.

Moving forwards, progressing this AFI will be supported by a review of benchmarking responses from regional forces and ICAIT process documents will be updated to reflect arrests being the starting point of any investigations. This will be continually monitored through analysis of arrest and bail data.

The internet child abuse investigation team should make sure that any backlog of work is subject to an intelligence refresh process. This should be conducted at a frequency that is sufficient to determine if there has been any change in risk level during the intervening period prior to enforcement action

As part of our case file review, we didn't find any evidence that confirmed that intelligence checks had been refreshed by the internet child abuse investigation team when there was a delay in enforcement activity. This is required in order to establish whether there is an increase or decrease in risk to the suspect, victim or any other person at risk. It will also highlight the need for more timely enforcement action.

Force Response

This AFI will be owned by the Head of Crime, Safeguarding and Incident Management and lead by the Superintendent lead for Crime.

Following recruitment and training, as of August 2023 the Internet Child Abuse Investigation Team (ICAIT) now has an Intelligence Development Officer (IDO) fully embedded within the team and a process for intelligence reviews on all packages is now in place. From October 2023, ICAIT Supervisor reviews now include refreshed intelligence checks. To monitor compliance of this going forwards, the completion of intelligence reviews and timescales are to be included in ICAIT KPIs. ICAIT process documents are to be updated with the inclusion of the IDO review process and completion times. It is anticipated that once the new process is documents and shared that this ADI will be proposed for closure.

The constabulary should develop a consistent performance framework that helps it to understand the context of its backlogs in active risk management system (ARMS) risk assessments, risk management plans and supervisory reviews. This means understanding a breakdown of risk and how far outside nationally set timescales the work is

The constabulary's performance reporting and data collection within its management of sexual offenders and violent offenders department needs improvement. The constabulary is unable to easily identify or supply details of backlogs of work in management of sexual offenders and violent offenders. As each individual officer self-regulates their work, a manager who needs information about the backlogs has to search manually through systems. We found evidence of managers doing this in only one of three teams.

Monthly meetings are held with senior leaders to discuss general overview of performance, and data is provided at bi-monthly performance meetings. Despite this, there has been no attempt to tackle the overdue work, particularly the high-risk cases.

The constabulary told us that in January 2023 there were 70 overdue visits to registered sex offenders. The oldest high-risk case was five months overdue. During this five-month period, the constabulary didn't carry out any other checks to make sure the registered sex offender was complying with their conditions. This could be rectified by adopting a better process to monitor these areas.

Force Response

This AFI will be owned by the Head of Crime, Safeguarding and Incident Management and lead by the Superintendent lead for Safeguarding.

This specifics of this AFI are being addressed through monthly supervisor meetings where the following areas are reviewed:

- Outstanding ARMS (Active Risk Management System) assessments (broken down to police and probation-led)
- Outstanding RMPs (Risk Management Plans)
- Top 5 concerning offenders

- MAPPA (Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements) level 2 and 3 offenders (Registered Sex Offenders (RSOs) only)
- Sexual offenses committed by managed RSOs
- Outstanding visits
- Staff workloads

In addition to this, a randomly selected record is reviewed on a quarterly basis. Supervisors, the Public Protection Unit (PPU) manager, and Detective Chief Inspector attend this meeting with plans for the PPU manager to observe as part of the review/scrutiny. This is recorded for audit purposes.

There are currently staffing challenges in one of the PPU teams which is been mitigated by the secondment of a Detective Sergeant into the team to provide additional supervisory capability.

Police officers are also now embedded within the PPU to improve investigative capabilities.

As a result of these reviews, a two-week action period is planned to utilised staff from one team and proactive team support to reduce outstanding visits and assessments in challenging areas.

BUILDING, SUPPORTING AND PROTECTING THE WORKFORCE

HMICFRS assessed the Constabulary as adequate at building and developing its workforce.

Areas for Improvement

The HMICFRS report stated the following:

The constabulary could do more to demonstrate that it is using the data and learning available to inform action, producing clear, focused and evidence-based strategies and action plans and making sure progress is frequently monitored

We found that there was generally effective governance and data sharing in relation to areas such as well-being, for example, the people board and the comprehensive data pack submitted to their meeting. However, the constabulary hasn't demonstrated how it is using the information to identify patterns and trends and to make decisions to create improvements in these areas. The constabulary could do more to demonstrate that it is using the information to learn and to inform actions. It would benefit from more focused strategies and action plans in this area. These could be in relation to the progression of underrepresented groups, and both an inclusivity and a retention plan for new recruits. Action plans should be clear, focused and evidence-based. Progress on actions should be frequently reviewed and updated.

Force Response

This AFI will be owned by the Head of People Directorate and lead by the lead for HR Strategy and Planning.

As part of a review of its structure the People Directorate has introduced a Workforce Planning and People Analytics Team. The department has recruited to the management posts within this team as part of phase 2 of the restructure but capacity and capability will be enhanced in phase 3 where the team will recruit an additional analyst and a professional workforce planning advisor. Once this revised structure is in place, the Constabulary will be in a position to offer enhanced tactical workforce planning support and introduce Strategic Workforce Planning products. From a People Analytics perspective, the teams will firstly be working to automate much of their manual reporting in order to create capacity to offer greater analytical insight. This is already being demonstrated in the introduction of the People Opinion Survey.

The People Directorate anticipates that data will be automated by the end of January 2024 and that the new structure will be in place in February/March, dependent on recruitment timescales.

The constabulary should quickly implement the findings of its review of occupational health unit services, in order that the benefits offered both to the workforce and the organisation can be accelerated

For the purposes of monitoring and reporting progress against this AFI, it has been split into two parts as per the detail in the PEEL report. These are identified as part A and B in the below detail and response sections.

Part A: There is some support available to those in specialist roles. For example, the multi-agency safeguarding hubs team receives clinical supervision. The safeguarding investigation unit receives psychological screening surveys, which are mandated and assessed by occupational health services. And there is mandatory counselling for those working in the internet child abuse investigation team and management of sexual offenders and violent offenders. However, there needs to be consistent support for all those working in roles that pose a high risk to their well-being. The constabulary has identified all those in specialist roles and it is developing a specialist roles policy in order to provide additional support to those people. Its prompt implementation will make sure the benefits to both the workforce and the organisation are obtained quickly.

Part B: The constabulary is currently carrying out a review of its occupational health service. It is a joint service between Suffolk and Norfolk. Officers told us that they have experienced delays in access to the service, but force data is showing that timeliness has improved. The constabulary told us that for January to March 2023, there was a wait of approximately 12 days between referral and appointment. We were made aware of recruitment and retention issues in relation to professional and clinical staff. The prompt adoption of the findings of the review that is underway is expected to provide the needed improvements, to benefit both the workforce and the organisation.

Force Response

This AFI will be owned by the Head of People Directorate and lead by the lead for Health and Safety.

Part A: Through its Occupational Health team, Suffolk Constabulary implements the Psychological Screening programme from the National Police Wellbeing Service (Oscar Kilo). This is offered to all teams and roles eligible as per the national provision. Additional support, both proactive and reactive, is also offered and ranges from basic wellbeing support, the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) and TRiM (Trauma Risk Incident Management) through to referral to a contracted force psychologist for assessment and therapy in cases where required.

A number of other groups within policing would and should benefit from additional support due to their trauma exposure. A report has been presented at People Board and further considered by the both Suffolk and Norfolk DCC's. Additional research and benchmarking is now being undertaken to ensure a through graduated range of options to support the psychological safety of our personnel is in place.

Part B: Workplace Health had had a period of difficulty due to recruitment challenges. However, during the months of August, September and October 2023 the teams have moved from less than 1FTE Nurse to approximately 3.6 FTE.

Waiting times from receipts of a management referral (nurse led) to first appointment are currently less than 1 week waiting time (As of November 2023). In addition to this, recording of quarterly KPIs have improved.

Self-Assessment against Enhanced and Advanced Occupational Health Standards completed in November 2023. A Workplace Health Skills Matrix has also been created and Gap Analysis updated (October/November 2023). A draft strategy for Workplace Health has been created within the People Services Department. This continues the key themes from the PCC's Police and Crime Plan, as well as the Chief Constable's Delivery plan and our People Directorate Strategy.

LEADERSHIP AND FORCE MANAGEMENT

HMICFRS assessed the Constabulary as adequate at leadership and management.

Areas for improvement

The HMICFRS report stated the following:

The constabulary should assure itself that it has effective governance of its strategic plans. This will make sure that all force plans have clear ownership and it is aware of how its plans are progressing

The constabulary needs to make sure that it has sufficient oversight of force plans so it can monitor their progress to make sure they are realised. This would also provide the constabulary with an awareness and clear understanding of any issues that arise so that appropriate action can be taken.

For example, during our 2020/21 inspection, we found the constabulary hadn't created a central database to record workforce skills and capabilities but was intending to develop its own bespoke skills database. Unfortunately, during our most recent inspection, we found that despite having a plan to create this database, the constabulary had made little progress and still doesn't fully understand the capability and capacity of its workforce.

Until recently the constabulary didn't have an ICT strategy and there was no governance structure in place to oversee its ICT requirement. Given the importance of digital, data and technology in providing an effective and efficient police service, a robust strategic governance structure would have identified and addressed this gap much earlier.

Force Response

This AFI will be coordinated by the HMICFRS Bronze Coordination group and delivered by Heads of Departments. The current position statement gives an overview of how strategic plans are governed and monitored at present.

This AFI sits across a number of commands and work is ongoing to determine where oversight will sit with regards to managing and progressing against this AFI. At this stage, initial position statements have been captured from across Suffolk's Local Policing Commands, People Directorate, Strategic, Business & Operational Services, ICT and at a force strategic level relating to the Chief Constable's delivery plan.

Suffolk Constabulary Chief Constable's Delivery Plan 2023/28

Regarding the governance of the plan, a number of meetings and events have been created that were not in place at the time of the HMICFRS inspection of Suffolk in early 2023, as the strategic plan had been launched only a few weeks prior to the visit.

Since that time, governance, oversight and monitoring of the plan is carried out in various forums that both avoids duplication of effort and ensures accountability for the delivery of the plan being maintained and activity progressed and monitored.

Firstly, the plan is a standing agenda item at weekly Chief Officer Management Group meetings, enabling executive officers to discuss any areas for improvement or provide updates on work carried out to address the objectives in the plan. This is underpinned by the Chief Officer Performance meeting, now being structured around the delivery plan, enabling quantitative and qualitative data to be captured to assess the effectiveness of the work and to improve the organisation's performance in delivering the objectives.

Furthermore, once a quarter, a dedicated meeting is held (called the Delivery Plan Monitoring Meeting) where all the objectives and aspirations captured in the plan are discussed and delegates (senior management levels across the organisation) are able to provide an overview of progress as well as identifying areas where insufficient progress has been made and collectively discuss and agree actions to correct this.

Finally, progress against elements of the delivery plan are included within the Police and Crime Commissioners (PCC) programme for the Accountability and Performance Panel (APP) where the PCC can hold the Chief Constable and her team to account for the delivery of the plan and specifically how this delivers the objectives set out in the Police and Crime Plan.

People Directorate – People Strategy

The People Directorate work to a People Strategy, which has been signed off by Suffolk Chief Officers. Governance of the strategy sits with People Board, chaired by the DCCs (of Suffolk and Norfolk), and progress is reported on at that meeting. We are in the process of developing a series of performance metrics to allow us to measure our performance against the strategy and these will form part of People Board as soon as they are ready.

Underpinning the People Strategy we have, and are in the process of developing, a series of sub-strategies. These include a retention strategy, wellbeing strategy and a positive action strategy, all of which have been drafted and are currently subject to consultation with relevant stakeholders. Performance against these sub-strategies will be managed by the Director of People at monthly People SLT meetings.

Our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (ED&I) Strategy is already agreed and has a separate governance process, which is the ED&I Board, which is again chaired by the DCCs. The ED&I Strategy is underpinned by an ED&I action plan.

Strategic, Business & Operational Services (SBOS) – Strategic Planning and Monitoring

At present, the Programme Management Office (PMO) – a division of SBOS – facilitates and enables the Strategic Planning and Monitoring Board (SP&M), chaired by the two DCCs. The purpose of the meeting is to enable the DCCs and key stakeholders (including ICT, HR and Finance) to maintain and manage oversight of the whole change programme and review/assess this against the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) and Establishment/Workforce plans.

All significant project and programme boards, as well as governance boards, feed into the Strategic Planning and Monitoring board, which in turn reports up to the Joint Chief Officer Team (JCOT).

ICT

The new Suffolk and Norfolk Constabularies Joint ICT strategy was formally launched at the end of June 2023. This focuses on the core architecture, strategic principles and metrics to ensure the future national and regional digital needs of both forces are met. This strategy supports the current digital strategy which is set up to, among other things, identify productivity and automation opportunities. The ICT strategy will support this by ensuring that these opportunities can be delivered against the Constabularies' technology stack and principles. The longer-term strategy is to combine the ICT and digital strategies within the next 2-3 years. The strategy will be monitored via a Strategy On A Page

(SOAP), and will be presented at governance meetings to monitor progress on things such as digital deliverables and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).

In June 2024, a new ICT Targeted Operating Model will be completed. This will provide the organisation with new resource skills to help achieve future ICT deliverables.

Suffolk Local Policing

Suffolk Local policing, specifically CPC is in the process of developing core strategies aligned to delivery of the local policing priorities devolved from the chiefs 5-year plan. It is hoped that advanced draft for each of the 4 plans will be ready for beginning of February:

- Victims code and service delivery
- Improving Positive outcomes
- Improving OOC
- People plan - welfare & wellbeing, sickness, culture – supported by the force cultural survey launched November 2023, skill modelling, forecast and distribution – supporting the skills matrix joint force board, talent and underrepresentation support.

There are currently SMT and performance meetings (Local Policing performance, and force performance monthly meetings). In addition, the joint force People board examines strategic people issues and delivery.

The constabulary has made some investments in information technology that have provided new digital processes to help reduce sources of internal demand. But there are a number of processes across the constabulary that remain inefficient

The constabulary isn't currently making the most of the technology it has available to help it increase productivity, and this is restricting progress. We were encouraged to see some use of digital solutions, such as Power BI, which can replace manual and time-consuming processes with a fully automated way to present data and management information. However, currently the constabulary lacks the capacity needed to fully develop this technology and benefit from the efficiencies it offers.

The constabulary should also seek other opportunities to automate existing manual processes. For example, robotics can replace some manual tasks that are repetitive and can be completed more efficiently using technology. This will help the constabulary increase productivity and workforce capacity and meet the demand challenges it faces.

Force Response

This AFI will be owned and lead by the Head of ICT.

A new Joint ICT strategy was formally launched at the end of June 2023. This focuses on the core architecture, strategic principles and metrics to ensure the future national and regional digital needs of both forces are met. This strategy supports the current digital strategy which is set up to, among other things, identify productivity and automation opportunities. The ICT strategy will support this by ensuring that these opportunities can be delivered against the Constabularies' technology stack and principles. The longer-term strategy is to combine the ICT and digital strategies within the next 2-3 years. The strategy will be monitored via a Strategy On A Page (SOAP), and will be presented at governance meetings to monitor progress on things such as digital deliverables and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).

In June 2024, a new ICT Targeted Operating Model will be completed. This will provide the organisation with new resource skills to help achieve future ICT deliverables.