



SUFFOLK CONSTABULARY

ORIGINATOR: CHIEF CONSTABLE

PAPER NO: AP24/49

**SUBMITTED TO: ACCOUNTABILITY AND PERFORMANCE PANEL –
22 NOVEMBER 2024**

SUBJECT: TACKLING SERIOUS VIOLENCE

SUMMARY:

1. This report details the current performance, demand, and activity in relation to Serious Violence. It provides an update in respect of activity being carried out within policing to tackle and prevent serious violence.
2. The period of reporting refers to the date range of 01/10/23 – 30/09/2024, the previous 12 months refers to 01/10/24– 30/09/24, the 2019 baseline is the full 2019 calendar year.

RECOMMENDATION:

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

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Tackling serious violence is a Constabulary commitment within the Police and Crime Plan 2022-2025 [Police-Crime-Plan-2022-2025.pdf \(suffolk-pcc.gov.uk\)](#) and as a priority within the Chief Constable's Force Strategic Plan 2023-2028. [Chief Constable's Delivery Plan 2023-2028 | Suffolk Constabulary](#).
- 1.2 It is recognised that the Constabulary's response to offences involving serious violence is imperative to keeping people safe, protecting people from serious harm supporting victims and establishing wider trust, confidence, and satisfaction in our service.
- 1.3 The Serious Violence Duty is a partnership where relevant services work together to share information and target interventions, where possible through existing partnership structures and collaborate to prevent and reduce serious violence within their local communities. The Serious Violence Strategic Needs Assessment is completed by Suffolk Office and Data and Analytics, [Suffolk Observatory – SODA – Serious Violence Duty – Strategic Needs Assessment](#). This report shapes the Serious Violence Duty Holders approach to violence as a collective over the following 12 months.
- 1.4 The Home Office serious violence strategy defines serious violence as specific types of crime such as homicide, knife crime, and gun crime and areas of criminality where serious violence or its threat is inherent, such as in gangs and County Lines drug dealing. It also includes emerging crime threats faced in some areas of the country such as the use of corrosive substances as a weapon.
- 1.5 The primary offences and themes this report refer to are:
- Violence with injury
 - Violence without Injury
 - Knife Crime
 - County Lines
 - Prevention Activity
- 1.6 Whilst Rape and Serious Sexual Offences and domestic abuse could be included within the Serious Violence criteria, these offences are reported on separately in the 'Supporting Vulnerable Victims' report. Previously, this paper has reported on the Child Exploitation and Gangs and MACE meetings, however, this is extensively reported in the Supporting Children and Young People paper. Some reference is, however, made to actions we are taking to tackle broader offences involving Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG).

2. SERIOUS VIOLENCE REDUCTION

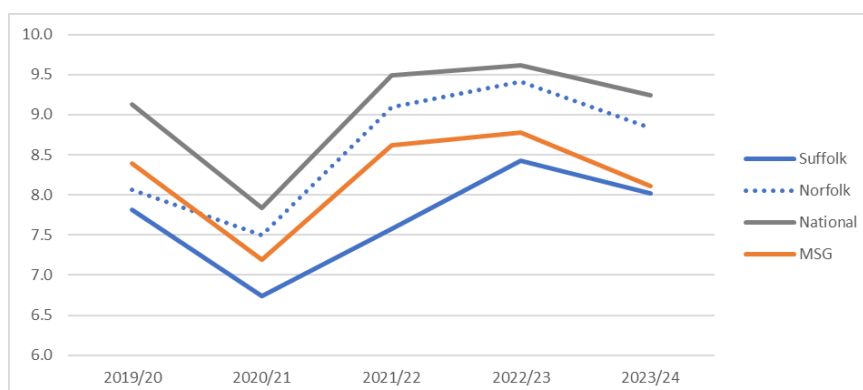
- 2.1 The Constabulary has both internal and external governance structures that governs the constabulary response to Serious Violence. The external governance focuses on the partnership approach to tackling Serious Violence and includes various meetings that report into the Safer Stranger Communities Board:
- 2.2 Criminal Exploitation Steering Group: This meeting directs and monitors the partnership response to Criminal Exploitation, this includes those who are in victim of both criminal and sexual exploitation, this includes those who are involved in County Lines.
- 2.3 Violence Against Women and Girls Strategic Group: Partnership response to violence against women and girls across the county, targeting activity, engaging with communities, and providing a holistic response. This reports into the Safer Stronger Communities Board.

- 2.4 Combatting Drugs: Combines partners within Suffolk working to an action plan aligned to National requirements. A current strand of work seeks to improve reach and access to class A users at greater risk of synthetic opioids which are seeing increased deaths across the UK in 2024.
- 2.5 Serious Violence Duty Meeting: Steers activity and ensure all requirements of the duty are undertaken, making decisions on behalf of the Suffolk system.
- 2.6 The Constabulary is a vital part of these partnership meetings, and the meeting ensures a co-ordinated partnership response to some of the key drivers of violence that have been identified in the Strategic Needs Assessment. In addition to traditional policing methods there is a focus on primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention to both individuals and communities.
- 2.7 There is also a significant amount of activity at both strategic and tactical level within the Constabulary that focus' on serious violence. These have a range of governance structures that include the following:
- 2.8 Bi-monthly Force Performance Meeting: This meeting reviews force performance, how Suffolk is performing in a national context, as well as reviewing the most similar group forces.
- 2.9 Local Policing Board: This meeting reviews force, command and area performance and monitors crime trends and solved rates. This meeting provides oversight of both internal and partnership working to improve performance.
- 2.10 Domestic Abuse Delivery Group: This directs the force response to Domestic Abuse, which makes up a significant proportion of the overall violent crime.
- 2.11 Violence against Women and Girls Internal Governance: This supports a robust response across the Constabulary, both organisationally and operationally, embedding learning taken from published reports.
- 2.12 Drugs Board: Focuses on the Constabulary response to drugs, directing and monitoring both prevention activity and targeted response to drugs and associated crime across the county.
- 2.13 Tactical Tasking and Co-ordination Groups: Monthly meetings held on area and at force level that monitors violence and directs activity and targets resource to address violence hotspots using temporal and geographical analysis. The meeting also uses Vulnerable Victim, Offender and Location data to ensure that protective measures are put around victims and that offenders are targets. The Force Tactical Tasking and Co-ordination Group meeting monitors the progress of Clear Hold Build for the Constabulary.

3. PERFORMANCE OVERVIEW

- 3.1 Performance in Suffolk around Serious Violence is consistent and above the national average. Performance is monitored through the Force Performance meeting that are held bi-monthly and aspects, such as Domestic Abuse and Violence against Women and Girls are reported through the Local Policing Board. Monitoring crime trends inform the Area Tactical Tasking and Co-ordination Group (TTCG), who look holistically to identify key locations, repeat victims and priority offenders and review intelligence to identify the causation of any identified changes to trends. This allows for targeted activity to be focused where there are increases and impact is then monitored.

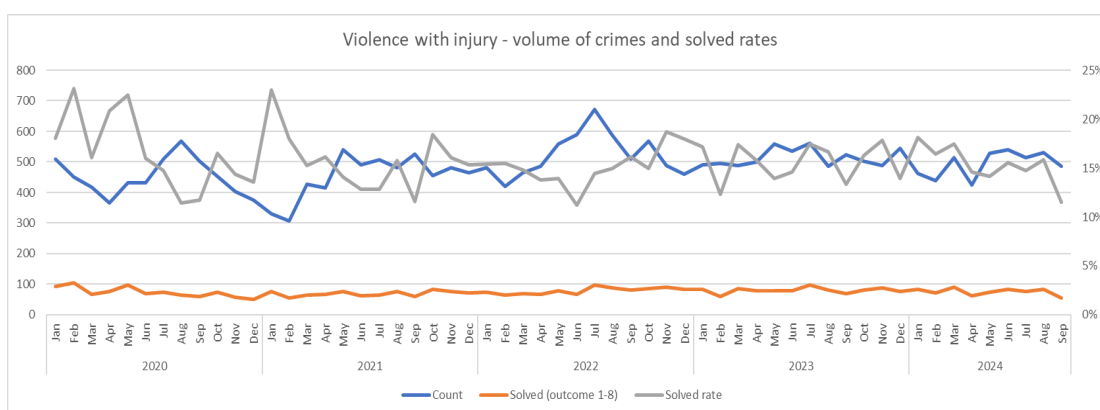
3.2 The table below demonstrates Suffolks violence with injury per 1000 per population performance. This is measured against the National average, our most similar group of forces (Norfolk, Warwickshire, North Yorkshire, Wiltshire and Devon and Cornwall) and neighbouring force Norfolk. Suffolk has less offences recorded consistently against Norfolk and the National average although there has been a reduced difference in offences against all of the Most Similar Group.



a) ONS figures showing number of violence with injury crimes per 1,000 population for the 12 months to the end of March 2024 compared with 12 months to the end of March 2023, March 2022, March 2021, and March 2020. Comparison is of Suffolk against neighbouring force Norfolk, Suffolk's Most Similar Group, and National rates.

3.3 The chart below shows a rolling violence with injury offences and the solved rates force wide. There was a reduction during the pandemic, and a peak of reported incidents in the Summer 2022. However, since then, there has been an overall decrease in violence. There was a slight increase from May to August 2023. This is usual and aligns to peak demand periods during the summer months, the overall crime rates continue a year-on-year reduction. The last 12 months comparative to the previous 12 months show a reduction of 2.7%.

3.4 The solved rate is slightly reduced against the previous 12 months from 15.8% to 15.6% a reduction of -0.2%. However, over the five months until the end of August, the solved rate was consistently at or above previous years, seeing a slight reduction in September. This emerging pattern will be continued to be monitored to establish whether improvements made to investigative response and criminal justice outcomes will have a sustained positive impact.

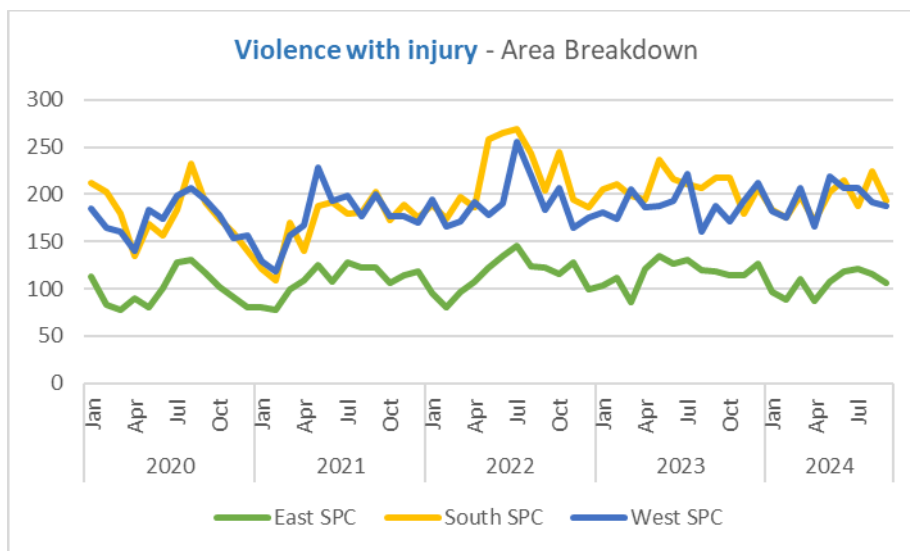


b) Monthly figures for Violence with Injury crimes and solved rates across Suffolk, 01/01/2020 to 30/09/2024

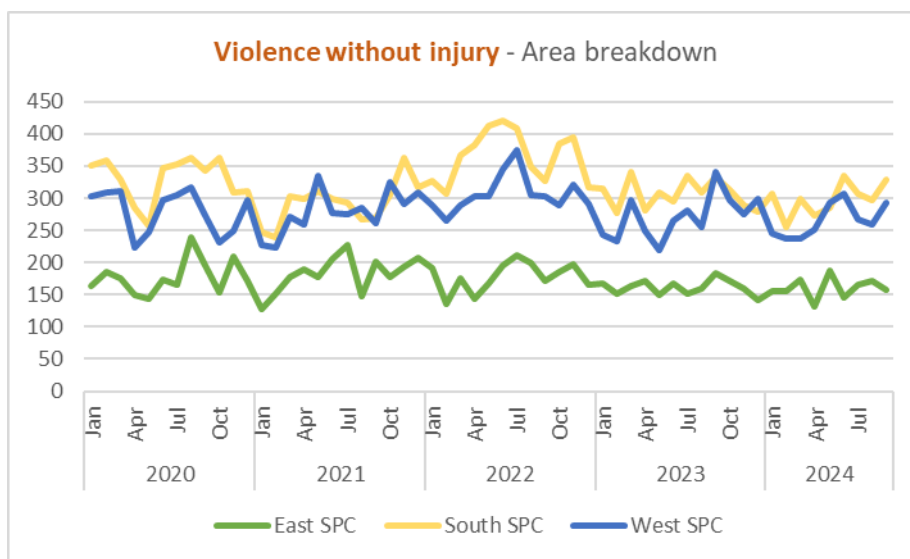
3.5 The following chart at c), shows the longer-term trend of violence with injury broken down into the three geographical command areas over the last 4 years. The chart shows reduced levels of violence with injury in 2020 and 2021 during the pandemic. There is a peak in July 2022, since that time the levels of Violence with Injury have steadily reduced, but with the

slight increase in the summer months, which is where Suffolk sees peak demand across all crime.

- 3.6 The chart at d) below shows the levels of violence without injury from 2020 to 2024 across the three geographical command areas. The levels of violence without injury peaked in 2022 following reduced levels during the pandemic. Levels of violence without injury have fallen consistently since.



c) Monthly volumes of Violence with Injury by geographical command area of Suffolk. Data from 01/01/2023 to 30/09/2024



d) Monthly volumes of Violence without Injury by geographical command area of Suffolk. Data from 01/01/2020 to 30/09/2024.

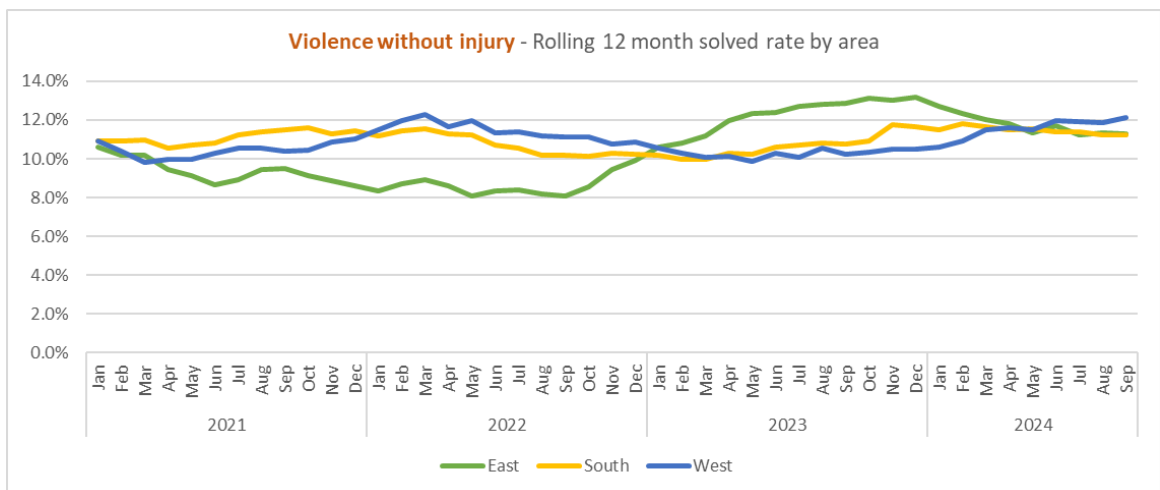
- 3.7 The below chart e) shows the levels of violence with and without injury comparing the last 12 months, 01/10/23 to 30/09/24, to the previous 12 months 01/10/22 to 30/09/23 over the three geographical command areas. Violence with injury across Suffolk has reduced by 172 crimes over the last 12 months. There have been decreases in violence with injury in the East and the South, however, the West has seen an increase in violence with injury by 75 crimes.

- 3.8 Violence without injury has also reduced across Suffolk when comparing the last 12 months with the previous 12 months by 446 crimes. The largest decrease has been in the South Area Command where violence without injury who have seen a decrease of 317 crimes.

		L12M	P12M	Percent difference
Violence with injury	East	1312	1396	-6.0%
	South	2355	2518	-6.5%
	West	2322	2247	3.3%
Violence without injury	East	1920	2020	-5.0%
	South	3568	3885	-8.2%
	West	3267	3296	-0.9%

Tabular form showing violence with and without injury by geographical command area for the last 12 months (01/10/2023 – 30/09/2024) and previous 12 months (01/10/2022 – 30/09/2023), and the percentage difference.

3.9 The graph at e) shows the solved rates for violence without injury across the three geographical command areas. There has been a slight increase in the numbers of crimes that have been detected for violence without injury, when comparing the last to the previous 12 months. The graph shows the East have realigned the percentage of detections with the South and West.

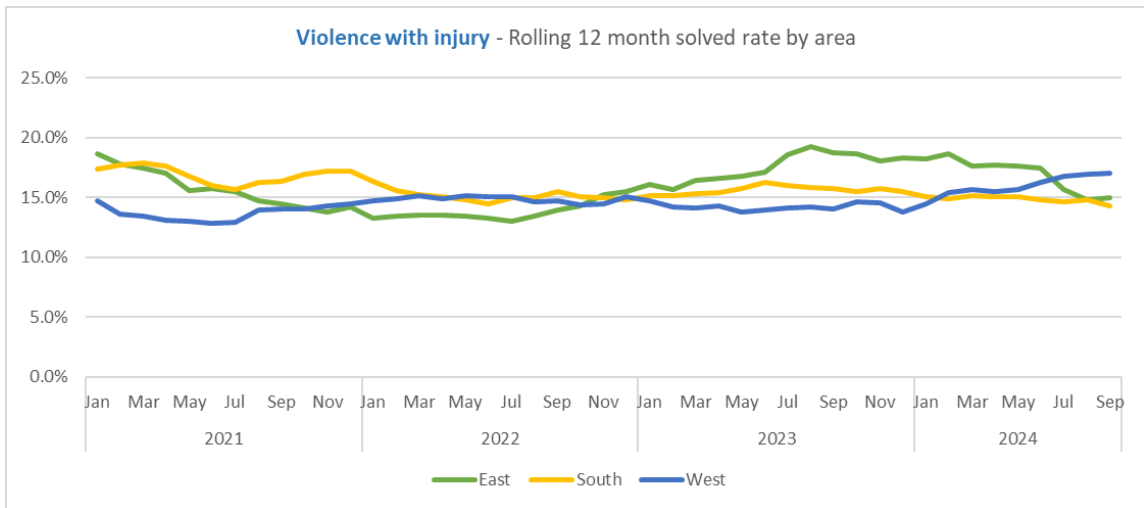


e) Violence without injury rolling solved rates by geographical command area. Solved rates are calculated for rolling 12-month periods.

Solved rate		L12M	P12M	Percent difference
Violence without injury	Created Count	8823	9300	-5.1%
	Type 1-8 count	1036	1028	0.8%
	Solved Rate	11.7%	11.1%	0.6p.p

Tabular form showing violence without injury volumes and solved rate for the last 12 months (01/10/2023 – 30/09/2024) and previous 12 months (01/10/2022 – 30/09/2023), and the percentage difference.

3.10 The tables below at f) and g) shows the solved rates of violence with injury across the three geographical command areas over the last four years and the overall numbers of positive outcomes across Suffolk. There has been a slight decrease in solved rates of 0.2%. The constabulary seeks to improve solved rates across all crime, improvement of investigative standards is governed through the Investigative Standards Board chaired by the Suffolk Assistant Chief Constable, supported by sub-groups which focus on raising standards of investigations that will improve positive outcomes.



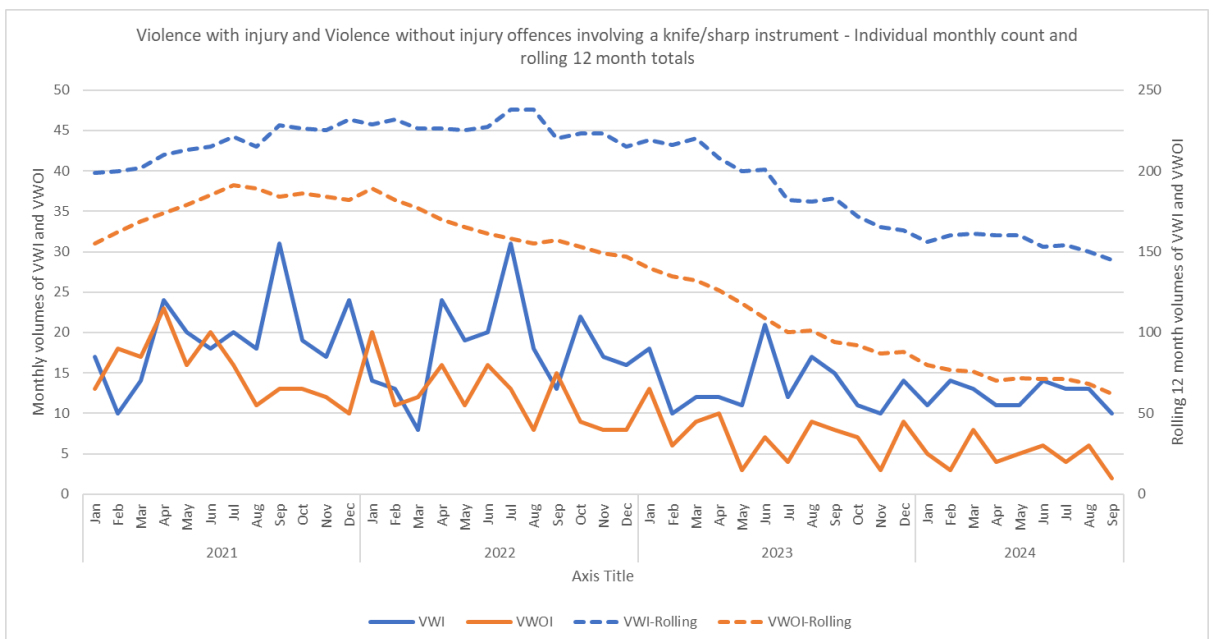
f) Violence with injury rolling solved rates by geographical command area. Solved rates are calculated for rolling 12-month periods.

Solved rate		L12M	P12M	Percent difference
Violence with injury	Created Count	6045	6211	-2.7%
	Type 1-8 count	942	979	-3.8%
	Solved Rate	15.6%	15.8%	-0.2p.p

Tabular form showing violence with injury volumes and solved rate for the last 12 months (01/10/2023 – 30/09/2024) and previous 12 months (01/10/2022 – 30/09/2023), and the percentage difference.

4. Knife Crime

4.1 The reduction of knife crime remains a key focus for Suffolk Constabulary and the number of incidents involving a knife or other sharp incident remains low comparative to other forces. Suffolk has the 8th lowest reported numbers of offences involving a knife or sharp instrument nationally for the year ending in June 2024. This is an area that the constabulary keeps under constant review as the impact to those who are victim of knife crime can be devastating.



g) Knife related VWI and VWOI. Monthly volumes are shown in solid lines and correspond to the left axis. Rolling 12-month totals are shown in dashed lines and correspond to the right axis.

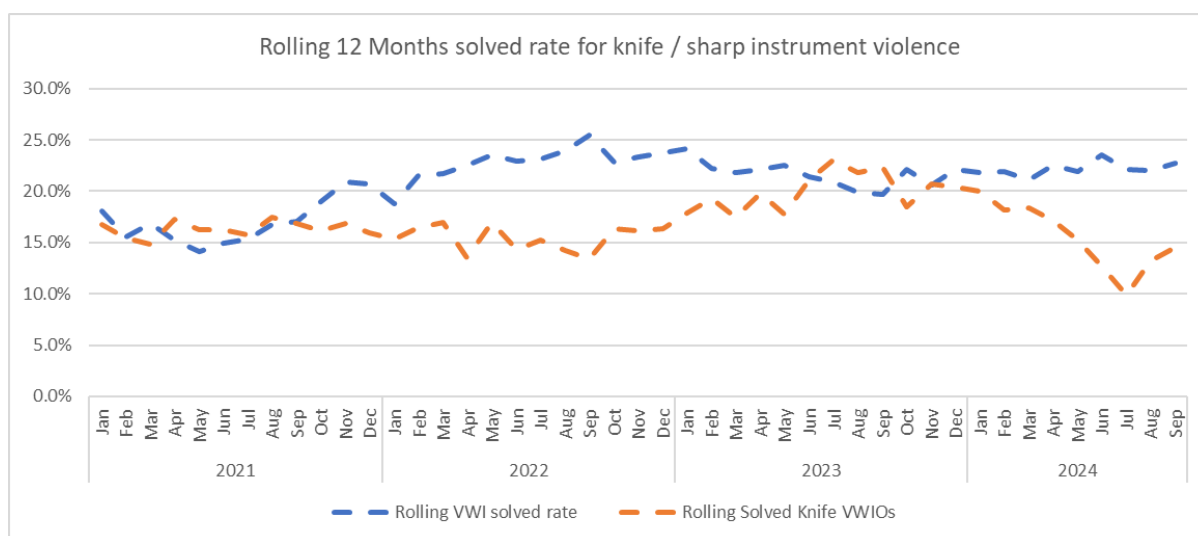
4.2 The above chart g) shows data in two different ways. The smooth lines at the bottom show the volume of Violence with Injury and Violence without Injury offences per month over time, this fluctuates month to month, Violence with Injury peaked in September 2021, and July 2022. There was another peak in June 2023, however, the volumes were not as high as previous peaks and are not unusual as crime demand overall increases across the summer months. Violence without Injury has not recorded such a steep peak. The monthly volume makes direction of travel harder to identify.

4.3 The dotted lines have been provided above, these show the rolling 12-month count, allowing for the direction of travel to be presented more clearly. It can be seen since the rolling 12 months of March 2023; the volume of Violence with Injury and Violence without Injury knife crime has continued to decrease, and it is at its lowest over the last four years.

		L12M	P12M	Percent difference
Violence with	County	142	183	-22.4%
	East	24	39	-38.5%
	South	54	74	-27.0%
	West	64	70	-8.6%
Violence	County	62	93	-33.3%
	East	16	24	-33.3%
	South	28	39	-28.2%
	West	18	30	-40.0%

Tabular form showing knife-related violence with injury and violence without injury volumes for the last 12 months (01/10/2023 – 30/09/2024) and previous 12 months (01/10/2022 – 30/09/2023) by geographical command area, and the percentage differences.

4.4 The table above shows violent offences involving a knife and sharp object data crime data from the last 12 months compared to the previous 12 months. This shows significant decreases in these crime types across all the three geographical command areas. Percentage wise the east Command area has seen the largest decrease, but the South area has continued to show significant decreases in this and the previous paper.



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

4.5 The table h) shows the solved rates for knife/sharp instrument related violence across the constabulary. It is worth noting that the numbers recorded over the year period are small numbers. The solved rate for relevant crimes for violence with injury are consistent however, there has been a reduction in the solved rate of relevant crimes for violence without injury.

4.6 **Operation Sceptre**

- 4.7 Operation Sceptre was conducted from the 13th May 2024 to 19th May 2024. Operation Sceptre is a week long National Operation focused on tackling knife crime. This does not just focus on enforcement activity, but it is also about education and a wider awareness of knife crime.
- 4.8 The activity and results for Operation Sceptre included 15 arrests, high visibility patrols, 16 weapons sweeps and 9 stop and searches. Working in partnership and communities, officers held engagement events and gave education presentations in schools. In conjunction with trading standards, officers also made visits to local retailers to check the safe and responsible sale of knives.

South Area Focus

- 4.9 Over the last two years, from the peak in Summer 2022 to the end of September there has been consistent reduction in violent crime in the South Area, both with and without injury and a reduction in violent crime involving a knife or a sharp instrument. Working with partners across several different areas to reduce levels of violence and criminality has been a focus for the South Area Command. There has been activity focusing on Serious Youth Violence, County Lines and Anti-Social behaviour.

Operation Hull

- 4.10 Operation Hull was commissioned in early 2022 as the response to increasing gang tensions resulting in an increase in serious youth violence. Working in partnership with a range of stakeholders, the operation combined a focus of actively pursuing key individuals to achieve criminal justice outcomes, with identifying those who were at risk of exploitation and potential of involvement with gangs. Key individuals, in addition to traditional investigative opportunities and prosecutions, disruption and preventative measures such as Criminal Behaviour Orders and Gang Injunctions were sought and obtained. Those who were identified as being on the cusp of involvement in gangs, or those at risk of exploitation were engaged by the Gang and Exploitation Team and Suffolk County Councils Criminal Exploitation Hub, where diversionary activity was co-ordinated.

Clear, Hold, Build

- 4.11 Clear, Hold, Build Clear, Hold, Build (CHB) is a whole system approach delivered in an operational way to improve the local response to tackling Serious and Organised Crime (SOC) threats. CHB is a preventative partnership approach which requires engagement and active participation including from statutory, third and private sector partners. The Home Office initiative is designed to deliver impact by reducing SOC threats and create change from within communities to build sustainable safety and increase community resilience.
- 4.12 Felixstowe was identified as the second CHB site for Suffolk, the clear phase started in March 2024. There has been a significant impact on crime as a result of the activity and the threat assessment has halved since the start of the operation. The activity is moving into the hold phase, before moving into the build phase which should be partnership led. This will ensure a whole systems approach to improve the living, working and residential environment.
- 4.13 During CHB there have been over 15 warrants carried at addresses in Felixstowe, seizing both Class A and B drugs. 8 criminal cases being progressed through the criminal justice system, around £250,000 criminal proceeds retained and the arrest of four significant individuals.

Op Avant

- 4.14 Locally commissioned operation focusing on serious violence and vulnerability in the Nighttime Economy, particularly Violence Against Women and Girls. This has seen a sustained reduction in NTE offending over the previous 12 months. There has also been an increase in closure notices to target problem premises.

Operation Spotlight

- 4.15 This is part of the Governments Hotspot Policing initiative. This focuses activity on 16 areas that have been identified through review of serious violence and anti-social behaviour data. There are a range of initiatives including the following:

- An increase in dedicated pulse patrol activity in hotspot areas at relevant times
- Enhanced intervention and diversion activity working across partnerships and within communities that are affected.
- Targeted social media engagement
- County Lines:

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no financial implications at this stage. Serious Violence Duty funding has not been set by Central Government at this stage.

6. OTHER IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

- 6.1 There are no risks identified at the present time. This will be kept under review.

7. CHIEF OFFICER CONCLUSION

- 7.1 Serious violence is a wide-ranging subject that is focussed on by many areas of the public sector and Constabulary teams. The paper evidences complex governance and strong plans that will seek to make Suffolk even safer where violence is concerned. Importantly, offending rates remain low and have decreased in most areas during the reporting period. There are some slight improvements to outcomes and Suffolk performs well when compared nationally and against MSG partners.

- 7.2 There is extensive evidence of the Constabulary working with partners to impact on the wide range of relevant criminality. There are good initiatives around prevention and pursuing offenders and there has been good progress made against priority areas such as county lines and serious and organised crime.