



# PEEL: Police effectiveness 2015

A national overview

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## Foreword

The scope of this inspection of police effectiveness is very wide. Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) has assessed and graded each of the 43 forces in England and Wales on their approach to preventing crime and anti-social behaviour; investigating crimes and managing offenders; protecting vulnerable people; and tackling serious and organised crime. To inform our judgments, we have examined practices spanning operational policing: from mapping organised crime groups to sharing information appropriately with partners, and from extracting evidence from a mobile phone to supporting victims of domestic abuse. The resulting grades provide a detailed picture of policing in England and Wales in 2015 – both in relation to its effectiveness and its breadth.

What did we find? Broadly, the public should feel confident that the police service in England and Wales is good at preventing crime and anti-social behaviour. HMIC has repeatedly said that a focus on prevention is the best way in which the police can keep the communities they serve safe, and stop individuals or groups from becoming victims of crime. I am therefore pleased that we found effective practice in this area. The police service deserves recognition and congratulation for these results, particularly against the backdrop of a period of reducing budgets and changing crime types.

However, the picture elsewhere is more mixed. Whilst we found both good practice and things that need to improve in all areas, forces are mostly good at tackling serious and organised crime (although we found they generally are better at 'traditional' organised crime, such as drug-dealing, than so-called newer areas, such as child sexual exploitation and cyber-crime). However, more forces are judged to require improvement in terms of their investigation practices, with backlogs and delays in the units which extract and analyse evidence from digital devices a particular concern. This is a similar picture to when we inspected this in 2014; it is disappointing that there hasn't been more progress.

We found the poorest performance in relation to the care and support for vulnerable victims, including children. HMIC published the findings on this separately in December 2015, in order to ensure that forces could start making immediate improvements to ensure that all vulnerable people receive the protection and support which they need. Chief officers, police and crime commissioners and all those who work in policing should act quickly to respond to these findings, and show the same momentum and commitment which has led to impressive progress in how they tackle domestic abuse.

It is striking that across this wide inspection, the contribution of neighbourhood policing to overall police effectiveness came up again and again. Neighbourhood officers anchor prevention work in communities; they have the best knowledge of

victims and offenders on their patch, and so can help to support and manage them, respectively; they are vital eyes and ears to gather intelligence on serious and organised crime. There are many more examples.

But, as this report highlights, we think there is a risk to neighbourhood policing, namely that the time neighbourhood teams can dedicate to their principal functions in their communities is being eroded and corroded. This is through a combination of a broadening of their roles in some areas, and more frequent reassignment of duties ('abstractions') in others.

HMIC fully acknowledges and appreciates that forces are having to make difficult decisions about where resources should be concentrated. But neighbourhood policing is, in our view, so vital to the overall effectiveness of policing that we are concerned changes are being made to it without proper analysis of the true effects. We will return to this issue again, and in greater detail, in our 2016 PEEL assessment.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Zoë Billingham". The signature is written in a cursive style and is centered within a light grey rectangular box.

**Zoë Billingham**

HM Inspector of Constabulary

## Summary

The primary role of the police is to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour, and to protect individuals, communities and victims – especially those who are vulnerable. This report sets out findings from an inspection of how effectively the 43 police forces in England and Wales are meeting these objectives.

This is one strand of HMIC's PEEL (police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy) annual, all-force assessment.

### About this inspection

HMIC defines an effective force as one that reduces crime, and keeps people safe.

After consultation with the public, forces, police and crime commissioners, Government and other interested parties, HMIC has assessed forces' effectiveness by evaluating how well they:

1. prevent crime and anti-social behaviour, and keep people safe;
2. investigate crime and manage offenders;
3. protect those who are vulnerable, and support victims; and
4. tackle serious and organised crime, including their arrangements for fulfilling their national policing responsibilities.

We have graded every police force on each of these four questions, and on their overall effectiveness. In each respect, we have made one of four judgments: outstanding, good, requires improvement or inadequate.

The inspection methodology is set out on p.20, with further information on the data collection in Annex A. The grades for all police forces (both by question, and for overall effectiveness) are in Annex B.

The rest of this summary sets out the grades and principal findings in respect of each of the four questions. It concludes with a discussion of the overall assessment grades, which provide an overview of the effectiveness of policing in England and Wales today.

HMIC's 2014 effectiveness inspection<sup>1</sup> assessed forces on some of the same areas (reducing crime and preventing offending; investigating offending; and tackling anti-social behaviour), but not all, and so is not directly comparable. Where it is possible to indicate trends in findings between years, we do so in this report.

## Findings

**Preventing crime and anti-social behaviour: The vast majority of forces are judged to be good; but prevention work is being eroded in some neighbourhood teams**

Outstanding	Good	Requires improvement	Inadequate
3	35	5	0

HMIC has repeatedly stressed the need for the police to get upstream of offending, and to give proper priority to the prevention of both crime and anti-social behaviour. Successful prevention work needs to be the work of the whole workforce, every day (not just the responsibility of neighbourhood policing teams). It should also be based on a good understanding of what works, and be rooted in systems and processes that can recognise and tackle harm.

The police alone cannot prevent crime and anti-social behaviour and keep people safe. While HMIC only has powers to inspect the police, statutory bodies (such as local authorities and housing, education and health providers), non-statutory bodies (such as voluntary sector organisations and businesses) and communities<sup>2</sup> all have vital roles to play in understanding, responding to and preventing crime, and dealing with its sometimes complex causes.

Effective prevention keeps people safe. It is therefore very encouraging that this question produced the highest grades, with 38 forces judged to be either good or outstanding.

<sup>1</sup> Thematic findings from the 2014 effectiveness inspection are set out in *State of Policing: The Annual Assessment of Policing in England and Wales, 2013/2014*, HMIC, November 2014, pp.29-57. Available at: [www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmic/wp-content/uploads/state-of-policing-13-14.pdf](http://www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmic/wp-content/uploads/state-of-policing-13-14.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> The effectiveness of police engagement with communities to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour is considered separately, as part of HMIC's PEEL assessment of police legitimacy. *PEEL: Police legitimacy 2015 – A national overview*, HMIC, February 2016. Available at [www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmic/wp-content/uploads/peel-police-legitimacy-2015.pdf](http://www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmic/wp-content/uploads/peel-police-legitimacy-2015.pdf)

We found that the police service continues<sup>3</sup> to work well to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour. Most forces are prioritising and planning for prevention work, including allocating resources to it, and maintaining their focus on tackling anti-social behaviour. The importance of prevention is generally well-understood by the workforce, and resources in neighbourhoods are targeted in response to local problems and vulnerable victims.

Durham Constabulary, which received a grade of outstanding in this area, places a particularly strong emphasis on developing a preventative ethos and commitment across the entire workforce, which translates into effective policing on the ground. Senior officers' clear articulation of this ethos, including the chief constable's focus on establishing a widely-understood and well-used problem-solving approach, means that all officers and staff understand their role in preventing crime and anti-social behaviour, and keeping people safe.

We found that forces are also making good use of a range of tools, tactics and powers aimed at preventing crime and anti-social behaviour. However, there is more to do to ensure they are consistently evaluating the success of the various tools at their disposal, so they can deploy the right ones, at the right times, and so solve local problems (only around half of forces do this consistently). Without a fully functioning and adequate process, forces are missing opportunities to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour, and continuously to improve wider practices and systems.

Forces are working with a range of organisations to help prevent crime and anti-social behaviour. This is primarily through formal partnerships (such as community safety partnerships<sup>4</sup> and local children safeguarding boards),<sup>5</sup> but also more widely with local business and voluntary sector organisations.

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<sup>3</sup> Last year's effectiveness judgments (although not directly comparable, because HMIC graded forces separately on prevention and anti-social behaviour) showed a similar picture. In 2014, for prevention, HMIC graded one force as outstanding, 39 forces as good, three forces as requiring improvement and no force as inadequate; while for anti-social behaviour HMIC graded four forces as outstanding, 40 forces as good, two forces as requiring improvement and no force as inadequate. Thematic findings from the 2014 inspection are set out in *State of Policing: The Annual Assessment of Policing in England and Wales, 2013/2014*, HMIC, November 2014, pp.29-57. Available at [www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmic/wp-content/uploads/state-of-policing-13-14.pdf](http://www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmic/wp-content/uploads/state-of-policing-13-14.pdf).

<sup>4</sup> Community safety partnerships are made up of representatives from the 'responsible authorities': police, local authorities, fire and rescue authorities, and probation and health services. The responsible authorities work together to protect their local communities from crime and to help people feel safer. Set up under Sections 5-7 of the Crime & Disorder Act 1998, they work out how to deal with local issues like anti-social behaviour, drug or alcohol misuse and reoffending.

<sup>5</sup> Established on 1 April 2006 under section 14(1) of the Children Act 2004, local safeguarding children boards are the principal statutory mechanism for agreeing how the relevant local organisations co-operate to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in that locality, and for ensuring the effectiveness of what they do.



The members of these other organisations who responded to our survey<sup>6</sup> painted a positive picture of the ways in which forces work with them.

### **Risk to prevention work**

As the grades for this question show, in 2015 we judge the significant majority of forces as good at preventing crime and anti-social behaviour. The police deserve recognition and praise for this, especially as it has been achieved against a backdrop of budget cuts and changing crime types.

However, HMIC considers there to be a significant risk that prevention work is being limited, reduced or weakened in some forces.

We found that neighbourhood officers (whose principal function is prevention work and community engagement) are now more frequently removed ('abstracted') for short periods from their regular duties to carry out other functions, such as guarding crime scenes, or staffing counters in police stations. In some forces, HMIC also found that response, neighbourhood and crime investigation functions have been formally merged, resulting in the workload and remit of neighbourhood teams being broadened.

HMIC acknowledges that these abstractions and changes to neighbourhood models are occurring in the context of fewer officers and higher workloads in investigation units. We also recognise that the ability and flexibility to move officers and staff to where the need for the police is greatest is important. However, we found that responding to calls and investigating crime is often taking priority over prevention. As a result, in some forces, preventative work – which is fundamental to the success of neighbourhood policing – is not being done systematically.

This risk to prevention work is made more acute by uncertainty over how many police community support officers (PCSOs) there will be in future years. PCSOs anchor policing in the neighbourhood and, while also carrying out work in support of investigations (for instance, by collecting CCTV evidence), they focus on prevention and problem-solving work. Many forces were planning to reduce PCSO numbers further as part of their response to budget cuts; but we found little evidence of analysis of the effect this would have on prevention work.

The Government's November 2015 Spending Review announcement did not bring the anticipated scale of cuts to the policing budget. It is therefore both timely and important for forces to assess again the reductions they were planning to make to neighbourhood policing. This assessment needs to include a proper analysis of the implications of reducing PCSO numbers, and of other changes to neighbourhood models.

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<sup>6</sup> HMIC carried out an online survey of other agencies involved in community safety partnerships; 461 responses were received. See Annex A (About the data) for more information on this survey.

Forces should assure themselves that they are dedicating adequate resource to neighbourhood work, and that time for prevention activity is protected within this.

**Tackling serious and organised crime, and arrangements for fulfilling national responsibilities: Most forces are judged to be good**

Outstanding	Good	Requires improvement	Inadequate
3	32	8	0

To tackle serious and organised crime effectively, each force needs a strong and up-to-date understanding of the threat and risk in its area. This means assessing long-term threats, and using detailed serious and organised crime local profiles<sup>7</sup> (drawing on data and exploiting fully the tools and intelligence sources available) in order to target the right resources to disrupt, investigate or prevent offending. It also requires a combination of an effective local, regional and nationally co-ordinated response, and seamless working between law enforcement agencies and other relevant entities.

We found good examples of collaboration between forces, regional organised crime units (ROCU) and the National Crime Agency (NCA) in the work to investigate and disrupt some of the most harmful organised crime groups (OCGs), although there needs to be better alignment of this activity to ensure it is as effective as possible.

At a regional level, ROCUs play an important role in tackling some of the most serious and organised criminals, with capable and motivated detectives and staff generally conducting high quality investigations. However, ROCUs and forces need to build on this to increase regional collaboration and ensure greater consistency in the services provided. HMIC has already stated that forces should move quickly and decisively to resolve this.<sup>8</sup>

We found that all forces gather and process intelligence about serious and organised crime, with most making good use of the recently established regional network of intelligence units to help with this. Most forces use this information to produce serious and organised local crime profiles, in line with national guidance. However, we found that these are often incomplete, short on detail or do not include

<sup>7</sup> These set out the threat, vulnerability and risk from serious and organised crime within local areas.

<sup>8</sup> The findings summarised here are discussed in detail in *Regional Organised Crime Units: A review of capability and effectiveness*, HMIC, December 2015. Available at [www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmic/wp-content/uploads/regional-organised-crime-units.pdf](http://www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmic/wp-content/uploads/regional-organised-crime-units.pdf)  
Recommendations from this report are reprinted in full in Annex C.

information held by other relevant entities (such as local authorities). Few forces had formed formal partnership boards to oversee actions taken in response to the information in these profiles. This ties in with a wider finding that there is scope for better engagement with others on serious and organised crime.

We found that almost every force has a threat assessment process in place to identify long-term trends and priorities relating to serious and organised crime. The best of these threat assessments take into account how much forces know about a particular threat, and enable forces to see which types of offending they understand least well. This means that they can identify and prioritise so-called newer threats such as child sexual exploitation, even if they know relatively little about them. This is particularly important as we found that understanding of 'traditional' threats (guns, gangs and drugs) is considerably more developed than that of 'newer' threats (child sexual exploitation, human trafficking and cyber-crime).

One reason for this is that some of the principal threat assessment methods on which the police rely, such as the mapping of organised crime groups,<sup>9</sup> remain better suited to traditional offending. Many forces recognise this as an issue and are taking steps to mitigate it at a local level; but the police service as a whole needs to continue to develop mapping tools and techniques that are applicable to current threats.

Most forces have effective structures to manage organised crime group activity, and conduct good investigations into serious and organised crime (especially large-scale drug-dealing conspiracies, on which we focused as part of this inspection). Most can also produce strong examples of how they deal with harmful organised crime groups; but the picture is less positive in relation to how they are tackling lower-level organised crime groups.

Chief constables and police and crime commissioners have a legal obligation to have regard to the *Strategic Policing Requirement*,<sup>10</sup> which sets out the six national threats which demand a co-ordinated response from police forces. We found that all forces have the basic necessary arrangements in place to test their ability to respond to SPR threats.

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<sup>9</sup> When a police force identifies a group of individuals whom it suspects may be involved in organised crime, the force goes through a nationally standardised 'mapping' procedure. This involves entering details of the group's known and suspected activity, associates and capability on computer software, which assigns a numerical score to each organised crime group (OCG). It also places each OCG into one of several 'bands' which reflect the range and severity of crime in which a group is involved as well as its level of capability and sophistication.

<sup>10</sup> *The Strategic Policing Requirement*, Home Office, March 2015. Available at [www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/417116/The\\_Strategic\\_Policin\\_g\\_Requirement.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/417116/The_Strategic_Policin_g_Requirement.pdf)

**Investigating crime and managing offenders: The picture is less positive, with backlogs in high-tech crime units a particular concern**

Outstanding	Good	Requires improvement	Inadequate
1	26	16	0

For the public to have confidence in the police, forces must investigate crimes effectively, take victims seriously, and identify, arrest and charge offenders swiftly. An effective investigation is well planned and supervised, with evidence (both digital and forensic) obtained and examined quickly and thoroughly; based on approved practice; and carried out by appropriately trained staff. Forces should also manage the risk posed by the most prolific or dangerous offenders (using national guidance, and the range of powers and tools at their disposal), as these are the most likely to cause harm; and make good use of prevention measures to divert vulnerable offenders from crime and the criminal justice system.

In the (broadly comparable) investigation section of last year's crime inspection, HMIC found serious inconsistencies in the way evidence was gathered during the initial stages of an investigation. These included failures to carry out house-to-house enquiries, to take photographs of injuries in domestic abuse assault cases, or to collect CCTV evidence on assaults in a public place.<sup>11</sup> More widely, we stated that opportunities to secure a successful outcome for victims of crime are being missed as a result of failures to conduct an effective, prompt and professional investigation.

This year, we found some improvements in how physical evidence is gathered and used, and in the quality of investigation plans and supervision. Initial investigation, and policies and procedures for subsequently allocating crimes (i.e. for deciding which officers have the right skills or experience to investigate them) are generally good, with evidence that many forces are making decisions based on the risk of further or new harm to victims.<sup>12</sup>

We found that investigators in specialist functions are generally well trained, which increases the likelihood of a good outcome for victims. However, we also found that staff in specialist units are struggling with high workloads.

<sup>11</sup> Thematic findings from the 2014 inspection are set out in *State of Policing: The Annual Assessment of Policing in England and Wales, 2013/2014*, HMIC, November 2014, pp.29-57. Available at [www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmic/wp-content/uploads/state-of-policing-13-14.pdf](http://www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmic/wp-content/uploads/state-of-policing-13-14.pdf).

<sup>12</sup> See p.58 for more on the THRIVE assessment approach.

Perhaps as a result, uniformed officers are increasingly investigating crime; but we found they are often not sufficiently skilled or experienced in this.

This problem is made more acute by the fact that many forces do not have sufficient specialist support to undertake the detailed and time-consuming work associated with digital evidence-recovery and protecting vulnerable people. Forces are aware of the issue and have started to increase the level of specialist support, but swifter action needs to be taken if the police service is to deal effectively with demand.

As a result, we found that there continue to be significant delays in digital evidence-recovery (of between four and six months in many forces, and up to 12 months in the worst cases we found). Many forces are addressing this, but mostly in ways which only tackle the immediate (and local) problem, with few plans to tackle it in the longer term, or nationally. There appears to be a lack of agreement in relation to collaboration, equipment, and standards, and a real danger that solutions will be reached in isolation that may hinder future efforts at collaboration.

We raised the issue of backlogs in high-tech crime units in HMIC's 2014 effectiveness inspection. It is therefore disappointing to find little improvement over the last year.

All forces have diversionary schemes in place to help prevent re-offending, and are increasingly using restorative practices<sup>13</sup> to this end. Integrated offender management<sup>14</sup> is generally working well for dealing with prolific acquisitive crime offenders, although most forces need to make better use of it to deal with a wider range of offenders (e.g. in relation to domestic abuse or child sexual exploitation).

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<sup>13</sup> A restorative approach '...gives victims the chance to meet or communicate with their offenders to explain the real impact of the crime – it empowers victims by giving them a voice. It also holds offenders to account for what they have done and helps them to take responsibility and make amends.' Taken from the Restorative Justice Council website ([www.restorativejustice.org.uk](http://www.restorativejustice.org.uk)), accessed February 2016.

<sup>14</sup> Integrated offender management (IOM) brings a cross-agency response to the crime and reoffending threats faced by local communities. The most persistent and problematic offenders are identified and managed jointly by relevant agencies working together. See further pp.48f below.

**Protecting those who are vulnerable, and supporting victims: The majority of forces are failing to meet the needs of all vulnerable victims – although good progress in tackling domestic abuse provides some confidence that they can improve in other areas<sup>15</sup>**

Outstanding	Good	Requires improvement	Inadequate
0	12	27	4

Cases involving victims who are vulnerable in some way (because of their age, for instance; or a disability; or because the perpetrators of the crimes against them are family members) are often both complex and sensitive. Forces need to be able to assess quickly and establish reliably if a victim is vulnerable, and respond and investigate appropriately if this is the case. They also usually need to work closely with partner organisations (such as local authorities, or health and education services) to support the victims.

As well as assessing forces' responses to vulnerable victims as a broad category, HMIC also focused on the support of two particular groups of people: domestic abuse victims, and missing and absent children. Finally, we inspected each force's preparedness to tackle child sexual exploitation.

We found that the majority of forces require improvement when it comes to protecting people who are vulnerable from harm, and supporting victims. Forces define vulnerability inconsistently, and there is a corresponding absence of high-quality data across the police service relating to vulnerable people. Eight forces were unable to provide data on the proportion of recorded crime involving a vulnerable victim. This suggests that not all forces are completing comprehensive analyses to monitor the prevalence of vulnerable victims within their local areas in order to understand demand and monitor performance.

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<sup>15</sup> HMIC published national and force reports setting out findings and grades from this effectiveness question in December 2015, together with a thematic report on forces' response to domestic abuse. See *PEEL: Police Effectiveness 2015 (Vulnerability) – A national overview*, HMIC, December 2015. Available at [www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/wp-content/uploads/police-effectiveness-vulnerability-2015.pdf](http://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/wp-content/uploads/police-effectiveness-vulnerability-2015.pdf) ; and *Increasingly Everyone's Business: A progress report on the police response to domestic abuse*, HMIC, December 2015. Available at [www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/wp-content/uploads/increasingly-everyones-business-domestic-abuse-progress-report.pdf](http://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/wp-content/uploads/increasingly-everyones-business-domestic-abuse-progress-report.pdf) For completeness, a summary of these reports is included in chapter 3 of this document, with the recommendations from *Increasingly Everyone's Business* reprinted in full in Annex D.

When evaluating forces' initial responses to requests for help, HMIC found examples of response officers who were professional and acted quickly to make vulnerable victims feel safe. However, we also identified a number of areas for improvement, including the need for all forces to ensure that response officers have access to equipment to obtain photographic or video evidence at the scene of an incident.

While HMIC found some examples of good-quality investigations involving vulnerable victims, forces need to ensure that appropriately trained and skilled staff are allocated to the right investigations, and that workloads in specialist investigative units are manageable.

Forces are continuing to develop their working practices with other relevant agencies to share information more effectively and the establishment of multi-agency safeguarding hubs<sup>16</sup> (MASHs) is positive. However, it is important that these models are based upon what works; despite this, we found that forces currently have little or no evidence to determine this.

### **Domestic abuse**

We found that police leaders, officers, PCSOs and staff have undertaken extensive work over the last eighteen months to improve the service provided to victims of domestic abuse, and there have been improvements to the overall police response as a result.

There has been a determined effort to make domestic abuse a priority, and we found that the attitudes and understanding of frontline police officers are improving. Police officers and staff increasingly see domestic abuse as their business, not someone else's, and are acting in a supportive and sympathetic way when responding to victims.

However, there is still much more to be done, and HMIC found a number of areas for improvement. The recommendations from HMIC's domestic abuse progress report, *Increasingly Everyone's Business*, are reprinted in full at Annex D.

### **Missing and absent children, and preparedness for tackling child sexual exploitation**

We found variation in how forces define and collect data on missing and absent children. Although the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) definitions of 'missing' and 'absent' are used by the majority of forces, these are interpreted differently in some. A small number of forces do not use the term 'absent' for children, while some categorise all those below a certain age who go missing as 'missing' regardless of the circumstances.

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<sup>16</sup> Multi-agency safeguarding hubs (MASHs) bring together staff from police and other relevant agencies who work from the same location, sharing information and ensuring a timely and co-ordinated response with the objective of protecting children and vulnerable adults.

This is important, because the police treat cases of people who are missing from home more seriously and with greater urgency than those who are considered absent. It is crucial that force leaders evaluate the detail of their data in order to understand the nature and scale of the issue in their local areas and monitor performance. They should also ensure that they are providing the best service they can to those who go missing and their parents and carers.

A report on the police management of missing and absent children will be published in spring 2016.

The sexual exploitation of children causes very severe damage to some of the most vulnerable members of communities. HMIC's assessment of forces' preparedness to tackle child sexual exploitation found that dedicated resources have been increased throughout England and Wales. Forces are providing training and staff development opportunities to increase officer and staff awareness and knowledge of child sexual exploitation and how to respond to it. Some forces have established specialist teams to deal specifically with such investigations, and to support victims. Despite this, forces are at different stages of preparedness.

## Overall grades and conclusions

As we explained in the preceding pages (and as is summarised in Annex B):

- HMIC has graded most forces as good (35) or outstanding (3) in relation to the effectiveness with which they **prevent crime and anti-social behaviour** and keep people safe. These are the principal objectives of policing; and almost all forces are meeting the standard.
- Most forces are also either good (32) or outstanding (3) in how they **tackle serious and organised crime**. The public can therefore have confidence that the police are generally working well to keep them safe in these respects.
- However, we are concerned that 16 forces require improvement in how they **investigate crime and manage offenders**, in particular in relation to their ability to obtain and evaluate digital evidence quickly, and to show that investigations are supervised adequately. This is a broadly similar picture to last year; there must be in 2016.

These findings, combined with the relatively poor performance regarding the support of **vulnerable victims** (in which 27 forces were judged as requiring improvement, and 4 as inadequate), result in 18 forces being assessed as requiring improvement in their overall effectiveness:



<b>Outstanding</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>Inadequate</b>
1	24	18	0

One force (Durham Constabulary) was judged to be outstanding.

In addition to these findings and conclusions, some overarching themes are apparent.

### Capabilities

In launching last year’s annual assessment of the state of policing in England and Wales, Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector of Constabulary stated: “Although performing well in many respects, the police are falling behind the curve of rapidly changing criminality, policing the crimes of today with the methods of yesterday and insufficiently prepared for the crimes of the future”.<sup>17</sup> This year’s effectiveness inspection revealed a similar picture.

Forces need to increase the level and capability of specialist support available to do the specialist and time-consuming work in areas such as digital evidence-recovery, and protecting vulnerable people. Many forces are beginning to adapt to these growing demands, for example by increasing the numbers of detectives in specialist policing roles. However, all forces need to be able to anticipate these demands and develop their workforce plans accordingly.

### Evidence-based policing

In our 2014 effectiveness inspection, HMIC found that forces’ ability to learn from what works, and evaluate their own practices, was limited. This year, while HMIC found impressive examples of this working well, this is still generally the case. This absence of systematic understanding, learning and sharing of evidence of what works (both within the service, and with other relevant organisations, such as housing, education and health authorities) has adverse implications for police effectiveness at local and national levels, across all four areas of our inspection. The police should take prompt, adequate and effective action to resolve these problems.

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<sup>17</sup> Statement made by HM Chief Inspector of Constabulary, Sir Thomas Winsor, at the launch of his annual assessment of policing in England and Wales 2013/14, Text available at [www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/news/news-feed/policing-the-crimes-of-today-with-the-methods-of-yesterday/](http://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/news/news-feed/policing-the-crimes-of-today-with-the-methods-of-yesterday/)

## Neighbourhood policing

While most forces remain good at preventing crime and anti-social behaviour and keeping people safe, the broadening of neighbourhood functions and the increase of abstractions have potential adverse implications for all areas of police effectiveness. For instance:

- they can reduce the amount of protected time available for preventative activity, including early intervention to protect vulnerable people from harm, and to manage offenders in order to help prevent further offending; and
- they can reduce the ability of these teams to play their parts in identifying and disrupting threats such as those presented by organised crime and terrorism.

It is crucial that forces carry out a proper analysis of the implications of changes they have made to neighbourhood models, and the work of their neighbourhood teams, so they can assure themselves that their principal objectives are not being jeopardised.

We will evaluate the work of neighbourhood teams in more detail in our PEEL 2016 effectiveness assessment.

## Recommendations

### Recommendation 1

There continue to be significant delays in digital evidence-recovery, with few plans to tackle this in the long term, or nationally.

**By 1 December 2016**, the NPCC, working with the College of Policing, should have developed and begun to implement an adequate national plan to:

- reduce delays in the examination of digital devices to ensure that these do not have a detrimental effect on the timeliness of investigations; and
- bring together expertise and innovation in digital examination from forces across England and Wales, to ensure a co-ordinated and informed national response.

### Recommendation 2

Vulnerable victims have to be identified as such in order to receive the extra support they need (and to which they are entitled under the provisions of the *Code of Practice for Victims of Crime*). Accurate and consistent identification is therefore both the first step and crucial to the police's ability to assess the risks which victims face, to respond and investigate appropriately, and to keep them safe.

**By 1 September 2016**, the College of Policing, working with the NPCC, should have established consistent approaches to defining when a person is vulnerable, and to collecting data on how effectively vulnerable people are identified. These processes should be adopted no later than 31 December 2016, so that more vulnerable victims are identified effectively and consistently.

In addition to these recommendations, and those set out in the domestic abuse and the ROCU thematic reports, there are several areas where we found unacceptable inconsistency in practice between forces. These areas for improvement are detailed in the relevant force reports. We summarise the major themes here, as they are areas in which progress should be established when we inspect forces in autumn 2016, as part of the next cycle of PEEL assessments.

There should be materially greater consistency in:

- use of integrated offender management teams: Forces which are using IOM teams solely to deal with prolific acquisitive crime offenders should establish whether more use could be made of the teams to tackle those offenders who cause the greatest harm, threat and risk to local communities;
- implementation of the Government's Serious and Organised Crime Strategy. In particular:
  - the further development of serious and organised crime local profiles in conjunction with other relevant agencies, with local partnership structures in place with responsibility for tackling serious and organised crime; and
  - an enhanced focus on preventing serious and organised crime through deterrence initiatives, serious crime prevention orders and lifetime offender management; and
- awareness of organised crime groups among neighbourhood teams, to ensure that they are in the best positions to be able to identify these groups, collect intelligence and disrupt their activities.

## **Next steps**

Findings and judgments from this year's PEEL inspection are being used in the design of the next cycle of effectiveness assessments. The detail of this is still to be confirmed; but given our concerns over neighbourhood policing, it will include a fuller analysis of the work of neighbourhood teams.

The four forces which were judged to be inadequate in how they support vulnerable victims are subject to revisits, to check on progress against recommendations. The results will be published in early summer 2016.

# Introduction

## About this inspection

In 2013, the Home Secretary announced that Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) would introduce an annual inspection of all forces' effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy, known informally as the PEEL programme. This report sets out findings from the first complete assessment of police effectiveness. It is based on inspections carried out in summer and autumn 2015, and follows the publication of assessments of police efficiency<sup>18</sup> and legitimacy<sup>19</sup> (in September 2015 and February 2016, respectively).

The potential scope of an inspection of police effectiveness is extremely wide: an assessment of how well forces are preventing and investigating the whole spectrum of crime and anti-social behaviour, from the more minor through to the most serious. After consultation with the public, forces, Government and other interested parties, HMIC has assessed forces' effectiveness by asking how well they:

1. prevent crime and anti-social behaviour and keep people safe;
2. investigate crime and manage offenders;
3. protect those who are vulnerable, and support victims; and
4. tackle serious and organised crime, including their arrangements for fulfilling their national policing responsibilities.

HMIC's 2014 effectiveness inspection<sup>20</sup> assessed forces on some of the same areas (reducing crime and preventing offending; investigating offending; and tackling anti-social behaviour), but not all, and so is not directly comparable. Where it is possible to indicate trends in findings between years, we do so in this report.

## Methodology

To answer the four inspection questions, HMIC collected data and documents from all 43 forces; examined the police and crime plans for each area; interviewed chief constables, police and crime commissioners, and the officers responsible for these four areas of policing in each force; surveyed the public, and organisations which work in partnership with the police; and held focus groups with officers and staff.

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<sup>18</sup> *PEEL: Police efficiency 2015*, HMIC, October 2015. Available at [www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/wp-content/uploads/peel-police-efficiency-2015.pdf](http://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/wp-content/uploads/peel-police-efficiency-2015.pdf)

<sup>19</sup> *PEEL: Police legitimacy 2015*, HMIC, February 2016. Available at [www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/wp-content/uploads/peel-police-legitimacy-2015.pdf](http://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/wp-content/uploads/peel-police-legitimacy-2015.pdf)

<sup>20</sup> Thematic findings from the 2014 effectiveness inspection are set out in *State of Policing: The Annual Assessment of Policing in England and Wales, 2013/2014*, HMIC, November 2014, pp.29-57. Available at [www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/wp-content/uploads/state-of-policing-13-14.pdf](http://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/wp-content/uploads/state-of-policing-13-14.pdf).

We then graded every police force on each of the four questions, and on their overall effectiveness, awarding one of four judgments: outstanding, good, requires improvement or inadequate.

The data collection methodology is in Annex A. The grades for all police forces (both by question, and for overall effectiveness) are in Annex B.

## About this report

This report sets out thematic findings from the inspection, with a chapter dedicated to each of the four effectiveness questions.<sup>21</sup> It concludes with a discussion of the main themes from across the inspection as a whole, to give an overview of the effectiveness of policing in England and Wales today.

It is supported by 43 individual force reports,<sup>22</sup> which examine in detail findings at a local level, and include information about particular areas of good practice, or where improvement is required, in each force.

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<sup>21</sup> HMIC published national and force reports setting out findings and grades from the third effectiveness question (on police effectiveness as regards supporting vulnerable victims) in December 2015, together with a thematic report on forces' response to domestic abuse. See *PEEL: Police Effectiveness 2015 (Vulnerability): A national overview*, HMIC, December 2015; and *Increasingly Everyone's Business: A progress report on the police response to domestic abuse*, HMIC, December 2015, both available from [www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmic](http://www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmic). For completeness, a summary of these reports is included in chapter 3 of this document, with the recommendations from *Increasingly Everyone's Business* reprinted in full at Annex D.

<sup>22</sup> Available from [www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmic](http://www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmic)

# 1. Preventing crime and anti-social behaviour

The primary role of the police is to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour and keep people safe; and as a result, the police's ability to do so is a principal measure of its effectiveness. Crime prevention can stop lives being lost or damaged, save people from becoming victims, and make society a safer place. It is also efficient; it is cheaper than investigating crime once it has already occurred, and it can reduce demands on the police and other public services by reducing calls for service.

Reductions in demand should also improve the quality of service and the level of engagement the police are able to provide to victims and the wider public, which in turn improves police legitimacy. In this way, a preventative approach to policing forms a core aspect of a virtuous circle that makes the police not only more effective, but also more efficient and legitimate.

To assess how effectively forces are preventing crime and anti-social behaviour, HMIC's inspection examined how well they:

- prioritise prevention;
- resource prevention activity;
- target prevention activity;
- take an evidence-based approach;
- work with other organisations; and
- tackle anti-social behaviour.

Findings are organised under these headings in the rest of this chapter.

## **How effective are forces at preventing crime and anti-social behaviour, and keeping people safe?**

HMIC has graded three forces as outstanding, 35 forces as good, five forces as requiring improvement and no forces as inadequate on how well they prevent crime and anti-social behaviour and keep people safe.

Last year's crime inspection (although not directly comparable, as we graded forces separately on prevention and tackling anti-social behaviour), showed a broadly similar picture.

## Prioritising prevention

To assess how far forces have a preventative approach in the way they prioritise and plan their activities, HMIC interviewed senior police officers and staff and looked for references to such an approach in forces' operational plans and other force documentation, including checking if explicit prevention strategies were in place. We also assessed how well preventative approaches were prioritised, communicated to, and understood by officers and staff.

HMIC found that senior police officers and staff were generally able to articulate the value they place on (and their strong commitment to) a preventative approach in the way they prioritise activity and resources. The extent to which forces explicitly referred to a preventative approach in their priorities and operational plans is more variable. Thirty-eight operational plans prioritise the prevention of crime, and 31 detail anti-social behaviour as a priority. More than half of forces have a specific prevention strategy.

Senior officers and supervisors across forces ensure that operational activity reflects crime and anti-social behaviour prevention priorities. Around a quarter of forces have worked hard to ensure that preventative activity is also reflected in force performance management frameworks, despite the fact that the effect of preventative activity can be harder to measure than traditional performance measures related to crime rates. The result of this work to prioritise and communicate a preventative approach is reflected in the workforce's generally good understanding of the importance of prevention.

HMIC found, however, that in a small number of forces prevention is still described and measured in quite traditional terms, which focus on primary prevention techniques (such as bike marking, use of traceable liquids and providing crime prevention advice leaflets for burglary victims).

In around a quarter of forces, while the importance of preventative activity is generally well understood by officers and staff, it was still predominantly viewed as being the preserve of neighbourhood teams, rather than something that the whole workforce should be concerned about, and take responsibility for, in their everyday work.

HMIC remains concerned that if officers and staff from across forces, over and above those in neighbourhood policing teams, do not all have a broad understanding of prevention in all its forms, opportunities to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour and keep people safe will be missed. For example, response officers may not be sufficiently aware of the potential to inform and advise victims and the wider public about potential preventative measures at the first point of contact (straight after an incident); and investigators may not consider how the type of crime they are investigating might have been prevented, or be prevented, in future.

Considering that our efficiency inspection found that many forces' workforce plans included projected falls in PCSO numbers, and the merging of neighbourhood and response teams,<sup>23</sup> this view of prevention as being a specialist activity must be addressed.

## Resourcing for prevention

### Models of neighbourhood policing

HMIC found that police forces' understanding of the importance of preventing crime and anti-social behaviour is generally (but not always) also demonstrated by their allocation of suitably trained and equipped officers and staff to undertake preventative activity in local communities.

Nearly all forces allocate resources to preventative activity, primarily through their neighbourhood or local policing teams. These teams aim to provide an identifiable, visible and accessible presence in communities. They work with communities and local, regional and national partner organisations to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour and keep people safe.

HMIC's *PEEL: Efficiency 2015* inspection concluded that some forces "maintained an impressive focus on neighbourhood policing, viewing it as an essential element in improving preventative policing";<sup>24</sup> this inspection found this had not changed. This is despite the fact that resourcing for preventative activity looks increasingly different across police forces, as local policing models continue to undergo significant change in response to austerity. These changes have potential implications for how well forces allocate and target resources for preventative activity.

Most forces retain a 'traditional' neighbourhood policing model. Typically, this comprises a sergeant and a mixture of police officers and PCSOs allocated to a local area. However, many forces have merged (albeit to varying degrees) their response, neighbourhood and crime investigation department (CID) policing functions, so uniformed officers respond to calls from the public, undertake preventative activity and investigate crime. Forces argue that officers within this merged model are trained to be able to carry out a variety of functions effectively.

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<sup>23</sup> *PEEL: Police efficiency 2015 – A national overview*, HMIC, October 2015, p.35. Available at [www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/wp-content/uploads/peel-police-efficiency-2015.pdf](http://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/wp-content/uploads/peel-police-efficiency-2015.pdf)

<sup>24</sup> *PEEL: Police efficiency 2015 – A national overview*, HMIC, October 2015, p.36. Available at [www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/wp-content/uploads/peel-police-efficiency-2015.pdf](http://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/wp-content/uploads/peel-police-efficiency-2015.pdf)



In HMIC's 2014 report *Policing in Austerity: Meeting the Challenge*,<sup>25</sup> HMIC expressed concern that the workload and remit of neighbourhood teams was being broadened. Officers were increasingly being asked to respond to calls for service from the public and to investigate crime. Officers also expressed concern that they were frequently being used to support other teams in responding to emergency calls or carrying out other functions such as public order. As a result these officers were not always available to undertake their core work in neighbourhoods.

Furthermore, PCSO numbers were continuing to reduce. As a result, opportunities to prevent crime were being lost. Our efficiency inspection found evidence that "within those forces where demand was not being managed well, there were signs of an ever-larger proportion of the workforce being drawn into responding to incidents, leading to a degradation in problem-solving skills and a reduced ability to intervene early in problems".<sup>26</sup>

While HMIC did find evidence of good preventative activity happening in neighbourhoods (described in more detail later on in this chapter), we also found evidence that neighbourhood officers continue to be abstracted from their preventative function. This abstraction takes different forms; either officers are taken out of their role to carry out other functions, or their principal focus has been broadened to include responding to calls and undertaking crime investigation as part of their neighbourhood role (the 'merged' model outlined above). This move was also identified in our most recent efficiency inspection, where forces told us "they believed that this would mean a higher percentage of the force would demonstrate the skills of traditional neighbourhood policing. However, we found that only a small number of forces were able to demonstrate that proactive problem-solving skills were developed sufficiently in order to avoid policing becoming increasingly reactive".<sup>27</sup>

The inspection also found in too many cases that while crime prevention is intended to remain a core aspect of these merged neighbourhood roles, responding to calls and investigating crime tended to take priority over prevention.

Forces have to find new ways of dealing with their demand with fewer officers,<sup>28</sup> and HMIC saw examples of this merged model working well.

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<sup>25</sup> *Policing in Austerity: Meeting the challenge*, Available at [www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/wp-content/uploads/policing-in-austerity-meeting-the-challenge.pdf](http://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/wp-content/uploads/policing-in-austerity-meeting-the-challenge.pdf)

<sup>26</sup> *PEEL: Police efficiency 2015 – A national overview*, HMIC, October 2015, p.37. Available at [www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/wp-content/uploads/peel-police-efficiency-2015.pdf](http://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/wp-content/uploads/peel-police-efficiency-2015.pdf)

<sup>27</sup> *PEEL: Police efficiency 2015 – A national overview*, HMIC, October 2015, pp.35-6. Available at [www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/wp-content/uploads/peel-police-efficiency-2015.pdf](http://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/wp-content/uploads/peel-police-efficiency-2015.pdf)

<sup>28</sup> Some forces are making better use of volunteers, for instance. See *PEEL: Police legitimacy*, HMIC, February 2016, p.8. Available at [www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/wp-content/uploads/peel-police-legitimacy-2015.pdf](http://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/wp-content/uploads/peel-police-legitimacy-2015.pdf)

Nonetheless, we remain concerned that not all forces have undertaken proper analysis of the effects of changes to their neighbourhood policing models on the vital prevention and other local activity which these teams carry out.

### **Analytical support**

Resourcing for prevention also includes provision of analytical support to neighbourhood teams – a resource that HMIC found was in increasingly short supply in at least a quarter of forces. This reduction in analytical support limits the ability of forces to carry out effective analysis and evaluation as part of a wider local problem-solving process (described in more detail later on in this chapter).

### **Training**

This inspection found that there is generally good initial training on crime prevention for specialist prevention roles, and officers and staff in neighbourhood teams, including content on problem-solving. However, this is not regularly refreshed, and is not always provided as mandatory training for all neighbourhood officers, or offered more widely to officers and staff in different units. Forces should work with the College of Policing to consider the best way to ensure that officers and staff have the appropriate skills and knowledge.

With fewer dedicated local resources for prevention it will be more important than ever that the remaining workforce understands the importance of prevention and is trained to consider opportunities for prevention in everything they do. HMIC has not found evidence that this is currently the case, and we are concerned that officers (e.g. response and CID) will not have the time or the skills to do this work effectively.

## Targeting resources in neighbourhoods

Police forces need to ensure that their resource is focused on undertaking proactive preventative activity in the right areas, and with the right people, as part of a wider problem-solving approach (which is discussed in more detail later on in this chapter).

We found that forces are using various types of analysis to identify and understand where most crime and anti-social behaviour is occurring (or is likely to), so that resources can be effectively targeted. For instance:

- **analysing crime trends** (such as time-bound and seasonal trends) to identify and understand where most crime is occurring ('hot-spotting'), and in some cases predict where crime and anti-social behaviour is most likely to occur ('predictive policing'). This, or a similar form of crime pattern analysis, was usually used at the force's daily management meeting<sup>29</sup> to direct immediate preventative activity. Forces were able to provide HMIC inspectors with examples of how they put measures in place to address these problems. For example, planning for increases in alcohol-related crime in some towns and cities on particular evenings, or planning preventative activities in the lead-up to dates such as bonfire night or Halloween; and
- mechanisms for **identifying vulnerable and repeat victims** of anti-social behaviour so they can put in place plans to protect them and prevent further incidents. This is important as a person who has reported anti-social behaviour before is more likely to be vulnerable to future incidents, and because by identifying early signs of criminal and anti-social behaviour, the police and other organisations can intervene early to stop it from escalating.

However, while HMIC found this model was working well at a local level, this sort of systematic analysis of anti-social behaviour to inform local policing priorities and activity with partner organisations was not yet business as usual across many police forces.

## Evidence-based policing

The basic premise behind evidence-based practice requires officers and forces to understand and learn from what works in reducing crime, and assess the effectiveness of the tactics they are using.

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<sup>29</sup> Forces use daily management meetings to brief, task and co-ordinate local preventative activity based on an understanding of what and where the local problems are. Daily management meetings provide an opportunity to react to overnight intelligence and use further analysis to deploy officers and staff in problem areas, and give them the task of resolving problem issues. HMIC attended a daily management meeting in each force area to understand how well forces understood the issues they face, and how well they target preventative activity in response to new information.

HMIC looked for evidence of officers and forces taking a systematic problem-solving approach, including a well-understood and well-used problem solving process, and examined problem-solving plans in each force (where available). We found that while most forces were able to show evidence of routinely using some form of a robust, systematic and widely-understood problem-solving process (with the SARA model<sup>30</sup> – scanning, analysis, response and assessment –being the most common and well-established), the degree to which forces were aware of and systematically used it varied greatly.

Some forces were able to show good evidence of scanning activity to identify problems; not least as a result of the extensive knowledge and understanding of local officers and staff of the issues in local areas, and in the communities that live there.

Some forces provided HMIC with evidence of analysis of identified local problems, including sophisticated use of data from other organisations, to provide a rich picture of their causes as a means of identifying which responses were most likely to be effective. However, around half of forces struggled to provide evidence of routine analysis to understand and respond to specific local problems within a wider problem-solving process. A lack of or reduction in analytical support for this kind of work could be contributing to this.

HMIC found that most forces are using a broad range of tools and tactics in ‘response’ to local problems, to help prevent further crime and anti-social behaviour and to keep people safe. These include:

- targeted police patrols to deter criminality in hot spot areas;
- initiatives which identify and address the physical characteristics of locations known to be vulnerable to crime and anti-social behaviour;
- addressing the social factors that may lead individuals to commit crime;
- identifying and protecting vulnerable victims;
- use of public space protection orders and dispersal orders; and
- use of out of court disposals, community remedy and restorative justice to prevent people from re-offending.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> For a summary of SARA and problem-solving more widely, see ‘The effects of problem-oriented policing on crime and disorder: What Works Briefing’, College of Policing, undated. Available at <http://whatworks.college.police.uk/Research/overview/Pages/best.aspx>

<sup>31</sup> For more information on out of court disposals, community resolutions, and restorative justice, see Possible justice outcomes following investigation, College of Policing, 2015. Available at [www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/prosecution-and-case-management/justice-outcomes/](http://www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/prosecution-and-case-management/justice-outcomes/)

Durham Constabulary involves primary school children in an initiative known as the Mini Police. This involves the children recording internet blogs relating to cyber safety and security. These are shared on YouTube and are perceived to be highly effective in increasing the understanding of young people in relation to the dangers of online contact with strangers.

### **Evaluating and learning lessons of what works**

HMIC found some excellent examples of using evidence of what works to direct and improve local activity. Some forces produced 'crime prevention toolkits' or had established evidence-based policing sections on their intranets to help share information.

However, when we asked officers and staff how they knew 'what worked' when designing preventative responses to local problems, there was limited awareness, understanding and use of the existing evidence base and how to access it; just over half of forces were unable to provide consistent evidence of being able to identify what works.

HMIC found good individual examples of police forces evaluating the effectiveness of their preventative activity, including working with universities to evaluate specific projects and interventions. However, we also found evidence that routine and systematic evaluation of local projects and activities is less common, with only around a third of forces assessed as doing this consistently. Again, a lack of analytical support may be a reason for this.

HMIC found that a minority of forces have force-wide problem-solving databases, with some of these also accessible to partner organisations. Such a database can support a more systematic approach to problem-solving as it enables officers and staff to keep records of problems identified, analysis completed, and the activity carried out by police and partners to resolve them. This is particularly important in the assessment phase of problem-solving; the ability to track policing activity and measure progress enables officers and staff to adjust tactics when necessary and provides evidence of the effectiveness of these tactics, which can be adopted by others when similar issues arise.

HMIC concludes that many forces still have work to do to establish a systematic problem-solving process, supported by shared systems that enable effective problem identification, recording, understanding, monitoring of response, evaluation and sharing. Without a fully functioning problem-solving process, forces are missing opportunities to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour and keep people safe and continuously to improve wider practices and systems.

The Government is also producing its own Modern Crime Prevention Strategy (due for publication in 2016), which will set out the latest research and practice on how

forces, industry and civil society can prevent crime. HMIC hopes this will help provide an opportunity for police forces to reach common and consistent standards.

## **Working with other organisations**

The police cannot prevent crime and anti-social behaviour and keep people safe alone. The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 states that it is the duty of each listed authority to exercise its functions with due regard to the need to do all that it reasonably can do to prevent crime and disorder in its area.<sup>32</sup> As part of fulfilling their duties under section 17, forces seek to work with partners and agencies to identify local crime and disorder priorities, to formulate strategies to assist in tackling these priorities, and to reduce crime at the local level and monitor and evaluate those strategies.

Police effectiveness in this area, therefore, goes beyond establishing good working relationships; it includes forces' ability to access, use and share a wide range of information and systems to understand local problems, to carry out joint risk assessments and use expertise, tools and powers from across organisations to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour and keep people safe.

To ensure we gathered evidence on the perspective of these partner organisations, of how well the police work with them, HMIC carried out an online survey of community safety partners. We also held a focus group with partner organisations in each force during inspection fieldwork.

Respondents to the partnership survey painted a positive picture of the way forces are working with other organisations to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour and keep people safe. Forces are working with a range of organisations to help prevent crime and anti-social behaviour. This is primarily through formal partnerships (such as community safety partnerships<sup>33</sup> and local children safeguarding boards<sup>34</sup>), but also more widely with local business and voluntary sector organisations.

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<sup>32</sup> Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 states that it shall be the duty of each authority to exercise its various functions with due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on, and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent, crime and disorder in its area.

<sup>33</sup> Community safety partnerships are made up of representatives from the 'responsible authorities': police; local authorities; fire and rescue authorities; probation service; and health service. The responsible authorities work together to protect their local communities from crime and to help people feel safer. Set up under sections 5-7 of the Crime & Disorder Act 1998, they work out how to deal with local issues like antisocial behaviour, drug or alcohol misuse and reoffending.

<sup>34</sup> Established on 1 April 2006 under section 14(1) of the Children Act 2004, local safeguarding children boards are the principal statutory mechanism for agreeing how the relevant local

The Metropolitan Police Service makes good use of information-sharing in its neighbourhood policing ward profiles. These profiles use information from other relevant agencies to provide as detailed a picture of local policing issues as possible. We also found that the force is sharing information with businesses to help prevent crime and keep people safe. This includes the use of a secure online system to capture and share CCTV images of criminal suspects, and a secure partnership information-sharing database which members of the Safer London Business Partnership use.

We found that senior police leaders understand the benefits of working closely with other relevant agencies, both for the force and for local communities, and they generally invest time, effort and resources into doing so. In many cases, working in partnership on prevention, particularly to tackle anti-social behaviour, has become 'business as usual'.

Forces generally have adequate arrangements for joint risk identification, assessment and prioritisation with other relevant organisations, particularly in relation to vulnerable and repeat victims of anti-social behaviour, and vulnerable individuals and groups more generally (see chapter 3 for more detail on this).

The sharing of appropriate information with partners is generally good across police forces, with effective agreements in place to facilitate this. The predominant way of sharing information is through force-level partnership governance arrangements, and local meetings to discuss cases and agree actions.

Some forces have roles dedicated to the effective sharing of information.

Devon and Cornwall Police has a children's information sharing officer based within the force's public protection unit, who exchanges information with partner organisations such as local authority children's services, housing providers and probation services.

About a third of forces have also developed integrated systems to support information sharing and joint case management, particularly for anti-social behaviour cases, although many would benefit from being used by an even wider range of partners, and being used as repositories for storing and sharing good practice.

Most forces are making use of partner data in a variety of ways to build a more detailed picture of the causes and consequences of crime and anti-social behaviour, including opportunities for preventing it. However, HMIC found that some forces are missing opportunities to do this, which limits the contribution that that partner

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organisations co-operate to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in that locality, and for ensuring the effectiveness of what they do.

organisations can make to joint problem identification and analysis and the extent to which learning and good practice can be shared.

Some forces are going even further with joint working with public service partners to tackle issues relating to specific crimes, groups or areas. We found particularly sophisticated integrated partnership approaches in place to intervene early to support individuals and families who have been identified as being at high risk of offending, or victimisation.

In Lancashire, the police and their partners from across public services are working together in fully integrated operational 'early action' teams, including shared governance, location, resources, budgets and training, to intervene quickly to support and protect vulnerable children, families and adults across the county. The aim of the approach is to improve the lives of children, families and adults and to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour and other social problems by addressing their root causes through the delivery of collaborative services and joint commissioning.

Troubled families programmes<sup>35</sup> are in place across forces, although the models vary from area to area. These programmes focus on partner organisations such as the police, children's services, health, education and housing providers working together with children and young adults to reduce the risk of their being involved in crime and anti-social behaviour in the future, or to stop existing offending and anti-social behaviour from escalating. Another well-established model for working in partnership for prevention is that of integrated offender management (see chapter 2).

## Tackling anti-social behaviour

### HMIC's previous inspections of the police response to anti-social behaviour

HMIC's 2010 report *Anti-social Behaviour: Stop the Rot*<sup>36</sup> found that limited ability to tackle anti-social behaviour was a weakness across the police service. It concluded that even in times of financial constraint, it would be a significant mistake for chief constables and police authorities to reduce the amount of work they do to tackle anti-social behaviour.

We returned to forces in 2012 to assess progress since the previous review and identified some noticeable improvements, albeit with considerable variation in practice and performance and the pace and extent of progress.

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<sup>35</sup> Launched in the aftermath of the 2011 riots, the troubled families programme paid all 152 local authorities in England to identify and turn around so-called troubled families on their patch by May 2015, through an intervention that gave families a single key worker who coordinated services. The programme was expanded in 2013.

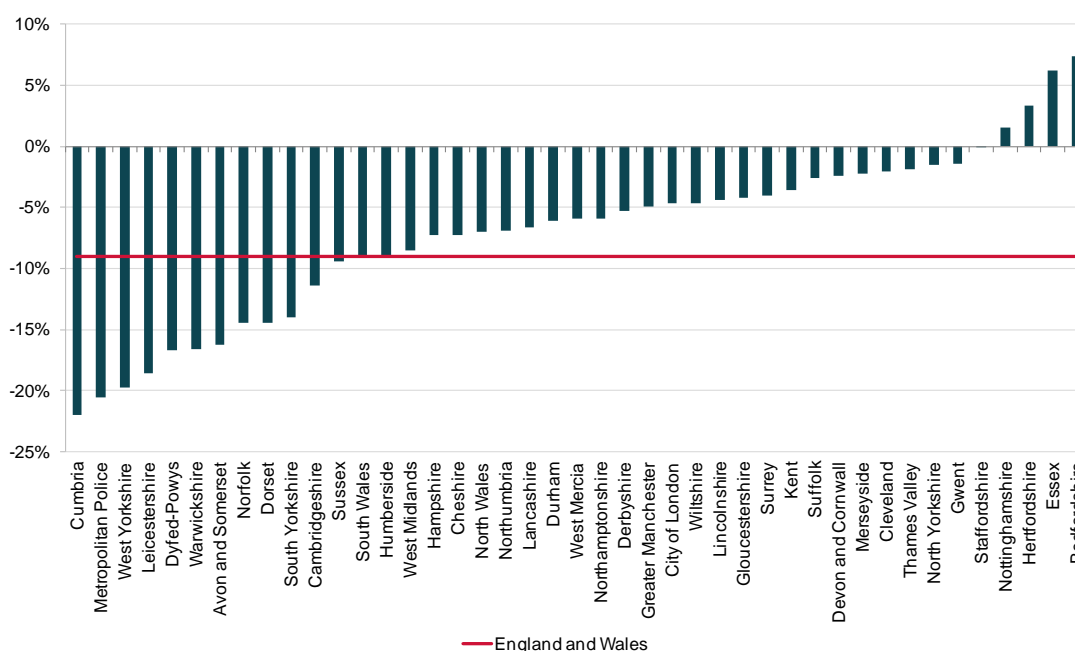
<sup>36</sup> *Anti-social Behaviour: Stop the rot*, HMIC, 2010. Available at: [www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/media/stop-the-rot-20100923.pdf](http://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/media/stop-the-rot-20100923.pdf)



During last year’s effectiveness inspection, we found further evidence of “a sustained and impressive improvement in the way forces tackle anti-social behaviour”.<sup>37</sup> Almost all forces treated anti-social behaviour as a priority, and in the majority of forces, the workforce recognised the importance of dealing with anti-social behaviour swiftly and effectively. Forces were working well with other bodies to identify, assess and respond to vulnerable victims, and taking appropriate and early action to reduce incidents and keep people safe.

## Recorded incidents of anti-social behaviour

**Figure 1: Percentage change in the volume of anti-social behaviour incidents, by force, comparing the 12 months to 30 June 2015 with the 12 months to 30 June 2014**



Source: HMIC data collection

## Identifying and managing cases of anti-social behaviour

Forces continue to improve the way they identify vulnerable and repeat victims of anti-social behaviour. However, it is no longer the case that all forces are choosing to prioritise anti-social behaviour within their operational plans, and HMIC found that this is in some cases is reflected in the workforce seeing anti-social behaviour as a low priority.

While recorded incidents of anti-social behaviour in England and Wales have decreased by 9 percent for the 12 months to 30 June 2015 compared to the 12 months to 30 June 2014. HMIC is concerned that a move away from focusing on tackling anti-social behaviour as a priority could potentially undermine the positive developments made in this area since 2012.

<sup>37</sup> *State of Policing: The Annual Assessment of Policing in England and Wales, 2013/2014*, HMIC, November 2014, p.47.

## **Working with partners**

Almost all forces continue to be good at managing and resolving cases of anti-social behaviour (affecting either an individual or a community) by working in partnership with other organisations such as local authorities, in line with the principles of effective anti-social behaviour casework management.<sup>38</sup> We found that forces are continuing to invest time and resources in working closely with other organisations – particularly local authorities and housing providers – to protect victims and prevent further escalation. About three-quarters of forces were working together in the same buildings as other partner organisations (primarily local authority anti-social behaviour officers).

Forces working particularly well in this area are using analysis of data from police and partner organisations to identify and/or predict anti-social behaviour geographical ‘hot spots’ and repeat victims and concentrating patrol and problem solving on these areas.

In Cheshire, HMIC found evidence of effective information sharing through problem-solving groups and community safety partnerships such as Operation Centurion, a multi-agency approach to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour connected with the night-time economy in Chester city centre.

The majority of forces are moving beyond traditional information sharing agreements and towards a more integrated approach, including shared goals and systems to share information and manage activity on anti-social behaviour. Around a third also had a shared IT system for managing anti-social behaviour cases.

## **Use of powers and tactics**

Forces and partner organisations have powers at their disposal to prevent anti-social behaviour. In 18 forces, officers and staff in local policing functions have had training on the anti-social behaviour powers and provisions set out in the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014,<sup>39</sup> so their understanding and use of them is generally good.

Surrey Police provides comprehensive additional training to neighbourhood officers, to ensure they are well-equipped to undertake effective proactive policing in their communities.

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<sup>38</sup> As set out in *Effective ASB Case Management Principles*, Home Office et al, 2010. Available at [www.cih.org/resources/PDF/Policy%20free%20download%20pdfs/HO%20-%20ASB%20Case%20Management%20Principles.pdf](http://www.cih.org/resources/PDF/Policy%20free%20download%20pdfs/HO%20-%20ASB%20Case%20Management%20Principles.pdf)

<sup>39</sup> As detailed in *Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014: Reform of anti-social behaviour powers – Statutory guidance for frontline professionals*, Home Office, July 2014. Available at [www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/352562/ASB\\_Guidance\\_v8\\_July2014\\_final\\_2\\_.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/352562/ASB_Guidance_v8_July2014_final_2_.pdf)

Those selected to be safer neighbourhood officers receive a three-week training course, which includes problem-solving, crime prevention and effective partnership working.

Last year, HMIC found inconsistencies in forces' use of analysis of the effects of the tactics used to tackle anti-social behaviour; this inconsistency remains. As highlighted in the previous section, forces are not yet consistently evaluating their responses to anti-social behaviour as a means of learning and sharing evidence of what works to prevent anti-social behaviour.

## 2. Investigating crime and managing offenders

When a crime occurs, the public must have confidence that the police will investigate it effectively, take their concerns as victims seriously, and bring offenders to justice. To be effective, investigations should be well planned and supervised, based on approved practice, and carried out by appropriately trained staff. Authorised Professional Practice (APP),<sup>40</sup> the official source of professional practice on policing, sets out guidance for police officers on how to investigate crime. Police officers and staff are expected to have regard to APP in discharging their responsibilities.<sup>41</sup>

The risk posed by those who are identified as being the most prolific or dangerous offenders must also be properly managed (in partnership with other organisations) to minimise the chances of continued harm to individuals and communities. There is national guidance available on managing prolific<sup>42</sup> and dangerous offenders<sup>43</sup>.

To assess how effective forces are at investigating crime and managing offenders, HMIC's inspection looked for evidence of how well police forces:

- initially investigate and allocate crimes for further investigation;
- investigate different types of crime;
- recover digital and forensic evidence;
- identify vulnerable offenders and prevent them from re-offending;
- deal with repeat offenders; and
- deal with dangerous and sexual offenders.

Findings are organised under these headings in the rest of this chapter.

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<sup>40</sup> *Authorised Professional Practice on investigation*, College of Policing, 2013. Available at [www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/investigations/](http://www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/investigations/)

<sup>41</sup> There may, however, be circumstances when it is legitimate to deviate from APP, provided there are sound reasons and/or emerging new research evidence.

<sup>42</sup> *Authorised professional practice on enforcing sentences and managing offenders*, College of Policing, 2014. Available at [www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/prosecution-and-case-management/enforcing-sentences-and-managing-offenders/#integrated-offender-management](http://www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/prosecution-and-case-management/enforcing-sentences-and-managing-offenders/#integrated-offender-management); *Integrated Offender Management: Key principles*, Home Office/Ministry of Justice, February 2015. Available at [www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/406865/HO\\_IOM\\_Key\\_Principles\\_document\\_Final.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/406865/HO_IOM_Key_Principles_document_Final.pdf)

<sup>43</sup> *MAPPA guidance 2012*, Ministry of Justice, HM Prisons Service and National Offender Management Service, March 2014. Available from [www.gov.uk/government/publications/multi-agency-public-protection-arrangements-mappa--2](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/multi-agency-public-protection-arrangements-mappa--2)

## **How effective are forces at investigating crime and managing offenders?**

HMIC has graded one force as outstanding, 26 forces as good, and 16 forces as requiring improvement on how well they investigate crime and manage offenders. No force was inadequate.

Last year's crime inspection, though not directly comparable as we did not include an assessment of offender management, showed a broadly similar picture.

### **Initial investigation and allocation for further investigation**

Authorised Professional Practice provides extensive guidance on the appropriate procedure for securing a crime scene, preserving evidence, identifying the offender and establishing the main facts when the police start an investigation. Carrying out these activities is a principal part of a police officer's job.

In the 2014 effectiveness inspection, HMIC found serious inconsistencies in the way evidence was gathered during the initial stages of an investigation, including failures to do house-to-house enquiries, to take photographs of injuries in domestic abuse assault cases, or to collect CCTV evidence on assaults in a public place. Opportunities to secure a successful outcome for victims of crime were being missed as a result of failures to conduct an effective, prompt and professional investigation

When HMIC returned in 2015 we carried out a similar exercise to the previous year; we looked at the quality of investigations by reviewing 20 case files in every force before the force inspections, and further files during the inspection.<sup>44</sup> We also talked to investigative officers and staff, including supervisors and senior leaders in all forces.

This year we found an improved picture in some respects. Increasingly, forces are handling and responding to calls for service using intelligence and risk assessment tools to prioritise attendance and understand the needs of victims. HMIC found evidence that intelligence specialists are often sitting alongside call-takers to support them in their decision making, and officers on the scene assess risk and provide immediate searches for intelligence across a range of databases. In around 95 percent<sup>45</sup> of the files we examined as part of our case file review, we found that the

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<sup>44</sup> HMIC reviewed a sample of 1,784 rape, burglary, offences of serious violence and actual bodily harm cases from across England and Wales. In most forces the review consisted of 10 cases from each crime category but in some larger forces the sample was increased to 15. The file review was designed to provide a broad overview of the identification of vulnerability and the effectiveness of the investigation.

<sup>45</sup> Percentages cited in relation to the file review are for all applicable cases only. This means offences where the course of action we were looking for was appropriate for that particular crime (for

police had attended within appropriate timescales, and that the victim or witness had been traced and spoken to quickly on or shortly after arrival.

Initial investigation following an incident is generally good, with attending officers understand the importance of securing and preserving evidence quickly: in our file review, we found evidence that all investigative opportunities were taken without unexplained delays in around 90 percent of cases. Supervision of attending officers is also generally good, with officers telling us they receive adequate support and advice from their supervisors. However, some officers reported they are always under pressure to move on to the next emergency call, which means not all initial enquiries were being completed at the scene.

### **Use of incident resolution or telephone investigation units**

In some forces, 'incident resolution' or 'telephone investigation' units have been introduced. These units take the initial details of an incident and ask questions of the caller to decide, at an early stage, if there are sufficient 'solveability' factors to deploy an officer to the scene. If there are not, details are taken over the phone and the investigation is closed without any police officer attending the scene. The matter can be re-opened if further information comes to light.

The main reason for the introduction of these units is to use resources better and prevent 'unnecessary' deployments; and telephone resolution in theory can achieve this. However, HMIC found the work of these teams is inconsistent, and it is often unclear how forces had ensured staff have the necessary skills to fulfil this role. It was also unclear what evaluation had been done of the effectiveness of such units.

Better forces use a model that took the views of the victim into account and had a system of checks and balances in deciding upon whether an officer should attend. Some forces, for example Durham Constabulary and Cheshire Constabulary, have not opted for this system and still physically attend all calls within their force area. HMIC understands the pressures that have caused forces to introduce such units, but would like to see forces routinely assessing their effect on crime outcomes, crime investigation and in reducing demand on investigative teams, to ensure they are not having any unintended negative effects.

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example, if a victim did not sustain any physical injuries then photographs of the injury would not be applicable).

## **Allocation of crimes for investigation**

HMIC looked at how effective forces are at allocating crimes for investigation, both at the time of the incident and then subsequently. Some forces have formal policies where crime is allocated by type, while others do not. Irrespective of the system used, HMIC spoke to officers and staff of different ranks in each force to ascertain their understanding of the way that crimes were allocated.

HMIC found evidence that crime allocation policies and procedures are increasingly aligned with threat, risk and harm principles. This means that crimes which are more serious, or which involve vulnerable victims exposed to potentially greater harm, receive priority in the allocation of resources. These offences are increasingly allocated to suitably qualified and well supervised officers. HMIC found evidence that, in the better forces, all staff understood who would deal with a particular crime and that there were clear and effective mechanisms for dealing with any areas of dispute.

We found evidence that officers and staff were generally clear about the types of cases that they would be expected to investigate; however in some cases, we found that allocation of an investigation is decided based on available resource rather than on the assessment of threat, harm and risk. This means investigations may not be conducted by suitably qualified officers, and there is a risk that victims may not receive the support they require.

## **Investigating different types of crime**

Effective crime investigation is reliant on investigating officers having the skills and knowledge they need, and good supervision. Investigative training is provided through the Professionalising Investigative Practice programme (PIP), which is aimed at ensuring that officers are trained, skilled and accredited to conduct the highest quality investigations. Effective supervision helps officers to develop these skills and expertise and to consider opportunities for gathering evidence that they might not have considered previously. Supervision should be a normal part of the investigative process that supports the professional discretion of the investigating officer.

As outlined in the previous section, HMIC's 2014 effectiveness inspection report expressed concern about the way forces investigate crime, including the quality of investigation plans for less complex crimes such as burglary and assault. Investigation plans should set out what investigators need to do to gather all relevant evidence about a crime, based on a full consideration of the individual circumstances of the crime, offender and victim, to build a case for prosecuting the offender or pursuing an alternative outcome (such as a community resolution). HMIC found that in 18 forces initial investigation plans were of a poor standard or absent altogether.

At the time, HMIC identified “a deficit in the skill and experience of officers investigating crimes and a lack of appropriate supervision” as being the primary reason behind the low quality of some investigations. In some cases this deficit in skill and experience was a result of the fact that “crimes are now being investigated by officers who also respond to calls for service from the public or provide neighbourhood policing services such as patrols, some of whom have not investigated crimes for a number of years”.<sup>46</sup> The lack, or poor quality, of investigative supervision, which in itself appeared to be a result of inadequate training, meant that inexperienced and untrained officers were not improving the way they investigated crime, which was “undermining the effectiveness of the criminal investigation process in those forces.”

We were pleased to find that the quality of investigation plans, and their supervision, has improved in some forces. However, this is not consistent across England and Wales: we judged that 25 percent of the files we reviewed still did not show evidence of a clear investigation plan.

Officers and staff interviewed during the inspection stated that supervisors are now taking a more active role in reviewing and driving investigations, but HMIC found that this is not always reflected in documentation or investigation plans. Better forces have clear investigation plans with clear direction from supervisors, which results in a better chance of bringing a case to a successful conclusion. In forces where this did not occur, HMIC found less effective investigations with officers feeling less supported, delays in the gathering of evidence and opportunities for detection of the crime being missed. This finding was triangulated by the results of our file review, which found a clear link between the cases where there was no clear investigation plan, and those which were not well supervised.

HMIC also remains concerned about the lack of opportunity to gain investigative skills provided to uniformed officers who are increasingly being asked to investigate crime. Training is not the answer to everything, and HMIC acknowledges that it can create further abstractions. However, investigators need to be capable of dealing with the crimes they are allocated. HMIC found evidence that many officers, particularly mid-service officers, have not received the appropriate investigative training for some years. This has a detrimental effect on their ability to investigate crime effectively. Few forces had plans in place to rectify this in the immediate future. While specialist advice, review and supervision appear to be mitigating this issue to a certain extent by improving the quality of case files, it is not as efficient as ‘doing it right first time’. Many forces remain under financial pressures and are looking to reduce the levels of supervision and review; if this occurs, improvements in investigation quality may not be sustainable.

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<sup>46</sup> *State of Policing: The Annual Assessment of Policing in England and Wales, 2013/2014*, HMIC, November 2014, p.39.



HMIC also found evidence that in some forces, PCSOs were responsible for investigations of low level crime, or carrying out simple investigative tasks such as collecting CCTV evidence. In these cases it is important that PCSOs are effectively trained to carry out these tasks properly, and forces need to understand how much time this is taking away from their principal functions, including preventative activity with partners.

As with last year's crime inspection, HMIC found that the quality and timeliness of investigations into more complex crimes such as serious sexual assault and robbery is much higher, with effective and appropriate supervision, and oversight by senior officers. Specialist investigators are generally appropriately trained to PIP2 level, with the knowledge and skills to investigate serious offences effectively.

However, as is discussed in chapter 3 of this report, investigators within the public protection arena have seen a great increase in workload and forces are having to re-assess the levels of resource put into this area of policing. It is likely that more resources will need to be placed into protecting vulnerable people, and these resources are likely to come from existing detective units. This may limit the effectiveness and resilience of these units. Forces will therefore need to ensure that officers conducting complex investigations outside the public protection arena remain sufficiently well trained and skilled to perform this role.

HMIC found that in most forces, most investigative staff, whether investigating non-complex or complex crimes, uniformed or plain clothed, demonstrated a focus on the needs of victims. We also found good examples of how the police were working with police and crime commissioners and partner agencies to improve the service to victims and ensure appropriate support and advice was given. Overall, however, the quality of victim care (in terms of keeping victims informed in line with the requirements set out in the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime)<sup>47</sup> is not as good as it should be (see pp.59-60 below), with only better performing forces able to demonstrate that the victim was at the centre of their thinking, and that this had affected the actions of staff.

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<sup>47</sup> *Code of Practice for Victims of Crime*, Ministry of Justice, October 2015. Available at [www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/476900/code-of-practice-for-victims-of-crime.PDF](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/476900/code-of-practice-for-victims-of-crime.PDF)

## **Crime outcomes<sup>48</sup>**

Since April 2014, police forces in England and Wales have been required to record how investigations are concluded in a new way, known as 'outcomes'. Replacing what was known as 'sanction detections', the new outcomes framework gives a fuller picture of the work the police do to investigate and resolve crime. The new broader framework (now containing twenty different types of outcomes) is designed to support police officers in using their professional judgment to ensure a just and timely resolution. It reduces the focus on a criminal justice sanction (e.g. charge or caution) as being the sole measure of success in resolving offences. The resolution should reflect the harm caused to the victim, the seriousness of the offending behaviour and the effect on the community, and deter future offending.

Given the work involved in amending police force crime-recording systems to accommodate fully the new outcomes framework, two forces have not yet been able to provide a full year of data for all new outcomes types. The complete range of new outcome types will be used in future HMIC inspections, once all forces have provided a full year of data.

## **Recovering digital and forensic evidence**

### **Digital evidence**

The massive growth of digital technology, expansion of social media and the widespread use of the internet in daily life have led to a huge increase in online crime. The police therefore must be able to examine and retrieve evidence from seized digital devices (such as mobile phones, tablets and computers). Traditionally, this has been the preserve of staff in specialist digital forensics units, which are often known as high-tech crime units (HTCUs). These vary in size and remit across the forces inspected.

As part of the effectiveness inspection, HMIC looked at the capability of forces to access and examine digital evidence in the most appropriate, effective and speedy way possible, including providing sufficient local capability to deal effectively with digital crime. We looked at how well forces understood their current and future demand for these services, and how well they are prioritising and planning to meet these needs now and in the future, in accordance with force priorities.

In HMIC's crime inspection in 2014, we found that the forensic support services available to officers had not kept pace with the ways in which crimes are now committed. Officers told of delays of several months in receiving evidence back from the High-tech Crime Unit, which was in turn lengthening the time it took to deal with

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<sup>48</sup> For a full commentary and explanation of outcome types please see *Crime Outcomes in England and Wales 2014/15*, Home Office, London, July 2015. Available from:

[www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/445753/hosb0115.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/445753/hosb0115.pdf)

offenders. Suspects were spending long periods of time on police bail, resulting in a delay of justice for victims, a reduction in public confidence and a potential increase in the risk to communities as serious offences were not being quickly resolved, and offenders were unnecessarily at liberty and free to commit further offences.

The same problem was identified in HMIC's 2015 inspection of the police response to online child sexual exploitation, *Online and on the edge: Real risks in a virtual world*,<sup>49</sup> and in the scoping report *Real lives, real crimes: A study of digital crime and policing.*, which was published in the same year.<sup>50</sup>

Despite highlighting this problem, HMIC found a similar picture during this year's inspection. Police officers and staff are still concerned about the length of time it takes for digital devices to be examined, and too often, we found backlogs of between four and six months (with delays of up to 12 months in the worst cases).

It is clear that such delays are a real problem for the police, although we found evidence of most forces seeking to mitigate this in several different ways, as detailed in the following list.

Better-performing forces have analysed this demand and introduced processes to prioritise activity and minimise backlogs. These forces have recognised that the increasing and widespread use of digital technology by the public has removed evidence gathering from devices out of the specialist high-tech world and into mainstream policing. By providing appropriate equipment to officers and staff to do early, basic examinations in local police stations of mobile phones, some forces report large reductions in delays in obtaining the evidence necessary to complete non-complex investigations speedily. This allows the HTCUs to concentrate its resources on the more complex enquiries that require its specialist skills. While this approach is to be welcomed, forces need to ensure that such processes retain sufficient investment to keep pace with changes in technology, e.g. increasing encryption, and are compliant with the requirements of the forensic regulator.<sup>51</sup>

A number of forces have also introduced 'triage' processes to reduce the number of items seized for examination; these are based on an initial examination, using a threat, risk and harm based approach. This approach enables frontline officers and staff, and those within high-tech crime units, to prioritise which devices to seize at a

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<sup>49</sup> *Online and on the edge: Real risks in a virtual world*. An inspection into how forces deal with the online sexual exploitation of children. HMIC, July 2015. Available at [www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/wp-content/uploads/online-and-on-the-edge.pdf](http://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/wp-content/uploads/online-and-on-the-edge.pdf)

<sup>50</sup> *Real lives, real crimes: A study of digital crime and policing*. HMIC, December 2015. Available at [www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/publications/real-lives-real-crimes-a-study-of-digital-crime-and-policing/](http://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/publications/real-lives-real-crimes-a-study-of-digital-crime-and-policing/)

<sup>51</sup> HMIC is aware that these issues are currently being addressed by the national police lead for digital evidence-recovery.

crime scene, and the sequence in which to examine these devices, and to decide what and how much evidence to extract (depending on what is most likely to make the most progress in an investigation and achieve subsequent prosecution).

These approaches are further supported by local or regional agreements with the Crown Prosecution Service, which provide a framework for the provision of evidence necessary to obtain a conviction and to provide the court with enough detail to consider its sentence. Before these agreements were in place, forces generally provided details of all the evidence on the computer, which could run to hundreds of thousands of files, which have little or no bearing once legal thresholds have been met. HMIC finds such agreements to be beneficial and would encourage more forces to implement them.

Finally, some forces have chosen to outsource examination of digital devices to private companies, while others are entering into or exploring collaborative opportunities with neighbouring forces to increase capacity. Nearly all forces also have processes to expedite high priority cases relating to complex crime and vulnerable victims, with devices in these cases being examined quickly and effectively. This could still improve in some forces.

HMIC assesses that generally the actions taken by most forces will help to reduce backlogs in the short term. However, those forces that have not already done so need to prepare a longer-term plan to deal with the ever increasing demand placed by the increased use of digital devices to commit crime. Failure to do so will affect adversely their ability to investigate crime in the future and protect victims.

Whilst there were some encouraging signs, HMIC found that too many forces still had long backlogs within their HTCUs. This is not solely an issue for the 43 forces in England and Wales. At present, there appears to be a lack of agreement among law enforcement agencies around collaboration, equipment, and standards, and a real danger that solutions will be reached in isolation that may hinder future efforts at collaboration and aggregation of capacity. There is scope for law enforcement agencies to work together to develop solutions for examining digital devices, harness innovation and build enhanced capabilities to equip the police service with the tools it needs to tackle this problem effectively.

### **Forensic evidence**

Recovering forensic evidence from the scene of criminal offences remains an important weapon in the effective investigation of offences. Although acquisitive crime has fallen in recent years, forces need to retain this capacity so that physical forensic evidence (e.g. DNA, fingerprints and photographs) can be gathered in a timely fashion and examined quickly in order to identify offenders. Where identification of an offender is made, the force needs a process to ensure these forensic “hits” are acted upon quickly to arrest and prosecute offenders and prevent further offences occurring.

HMIC found that the recovery of and analysis of this physical forensic evidence is generally working well in forces. However, pressure on budgets has seen some reduction in attendance at incidents, particularly in relation to high-volume offences such as vehicle crime and burglary that is not from a residential dwelling. In addition, a large number of forces screen incidents in advance of attendance in an attempt to ensure that they only send crime scene investigators (CSIs) to scenes where there is forensic evidence to collect. Those forces that had completed assessments of the benefits of scene attendance, and based attendance on the evaluation of the chances of a forensic identification being made, were generally found to be more effective.

Many forces are attempting to further reduce costs through increasing collaboration in the provision of forensic services, both through pooling CSIs who attend scenes and also by combining staff who undertake forensic analysis. This is further supported by an investment in the increased use of 'in house' accredited laboratories; these allow forces to employ scientists to examine items and analyse evidence (under independently accredited and scrutinised conditions) rather than using commercial forensic service providers, which is often more expensive. Where external commercial providers are used, most forces are now part of forensic consortia that use contractual agreements to minimise and fix the cost of forensic examination. Combined with more rigorous screening processes in force to decide which items are required to be examined, and an increasing use of the staged forensic reporting<sup>52</sup> process, HMIC found that forces are generally able to provide an effective, cost-efficient service that meets their needs in this area.

Despite this finding, HMIC believes that forces could make further improvements to ensure that:

- they fully understood and have evaluated the results from scene attendance when deciding on future attendance policy. Many forces have now introduced a performance framework that details the success rates of different types of evidence in potentially identifying offenders; this gives a proper basis for resource allocation and scene attendance;
- attendance decisions are made after consultation with a crime scene investigator or are reviewed by a CSI, rather than by an officer or member of staff with limited or no skills or training in forensic work. This would lead to a more consistent service and increase the quality of decision-making; and

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<sup>52</sup> This process is designed to provide forensic evidence proportionate to the needs of each case. Therefore, just enough forensic work is undertaken to support a charge. A full evidential report (known as a Stage 2 report) is prepared only if the case is contested. For further information, see [www.cps.gov.uk/legal/s\\_to\\_u/scientific\\_evidence/sfr\\_guidance\\_and\\_toolkit/sfr\\_guidance/sfr\\_g\\_and\\_a/index.html](http://www.cps.gov.uk/legal/s_to_u/scientific_evidence/sfr_guidance_and_toolkit/sfr_guidance/sfr_g_and_a/index.html)

- they understand the true cost of insufficient CSI cover, particularly in the evening or overnight. In those forces with limited CSI availability, officers can still spend long periods guarding scenes, as CSI staff will generally only be called out for major or complex crimes. Police officer numbers are often at minimal levels and this practice has an effect on call attendance, progression of investigations, proactivity and officer safety. Forces would benefit from proper analysis of costs of enhancing their cover versus delays in (for example) work progression and overtime incurred.

## Identifying offenders

Central to the investigation process is the identification, arrest and effective prosecution of those people committing crime. Forces need to ensure that investigations are done quickly and effectively, and that officers and staff are actively targeting those offenders who have committed crime. This is done by the regular sharing of information, by directing officers to apprehend offenders, and by supervisors and senior officers demonstrating leadership and direction.

During our inspection, HMIC found that police officers and staff know about local prolific offenders, priorities for the day and those who are wanted for offences committed recently. Daily management processes and briefings allow staff to be assigned appropriate tasks, although too often these were not specific enough, with little or no follow-up during the shift. Better-performing forces demonstrated clear management and direction of the activity undertaken by officers, with review of progress on a regular basis by supervisors.

In general, the understanding of wanted or outstanding persons is not sophisticated. Manual searching is required or there are imperfect systems with inaccurate data used to understand numbers. For offenders who are not arrested quickly, too often there is a lack of focus on arresting them as responsibility passed away from the initial investigating officers. Few forces could demonstrate regular activity to trace and arrest those people named as wanted on the Police National Computer (PNC). Officers in some forces did attempt to maintain their own offender databases, but this was localised with little or no corporate governance and oversight. In contrast, effective forces had really good processes for 'catch and convict', with clear governance and oversight.

HMIC was disappointed to find that a number of forces, despite knowing how many forensic identifications they had, could evidence little governance around the progression of these 'hits' and whether arrests had been expeditious. For example, one force stated that it had 70 identifications in a month, but was unaware how many had actually been dealt with. The lack of governance undermines efforts to bring offenders to justice quickly, delays justice for victims, and leaves offenders at large to commit further offences. The better forces recognise this and have robust

processes in place to manage these identifications, to research the potential for linked offences, and to expedite the arrest of the suspected person. All forces should strive to do the same in order to maximise their effectiveness in this area.

Travel across the European Union (EU) has become much easier and much more widespread. This applies to those with a criminal past as well as any other group. Therefore it is important that police are able to access the full criminal history of any offender so that they can assess any risks they may pose and have the best possible information when deciding on how best to deal with that offender. Such information may inform charge or bail discussions with the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), or influence sentencing decisions by a court. In addition, it may inform risk assessments whilst the offender is within the community. Through the ACRO criminal records office, police forces can check the criminal records of many other countries.

HMIC found that the take-up of the ACRO criminal records check in some forces is poor. Better-performing forces have automated this process, so that any foreign national arrested is automatically checked with ACRO once a custody record has been created. This approach was supported by clear direction from senior officers that the checks were a priority for the force, and has resulted in an increase in the number of checks made. If the police are to properly understand their communities, and the threats posed to them, this needs to be more consistent across England and Wales.

## **Identifying vulnerable offenders and preventing them from re-offending**

Forces continue to make good use of measures to divert vulnerable offenders from crime and the criminal justice system. This usually occurs within custody suites following arrest. All forces have diversionary schemes in place, offering support for addiction or mental health issues through specialist support agencies. In many forces, staff from these agencies are based in the custody suites, allowing the opportunity for early and tailored support for an individual.

One of the aims of the new outcomes framework for criminal offences is to increase the speed at which a criminal offence is resolved, partially by giving the police the discretion to use other methods of resolution than charge or caution (both of which involve a longer term 'sanction' effect). This kind of approach needs to consider the needs of both the offender and the victims, and HMIC was pleased to see that most forces are adopting such tactics when dealing with offences. This is a recognition that often diversion and lower level interventions provide better routes to long-term prevention of crime.

HMIC found that most forces were appropriately using tactics such as out of court disposals and community remedy.<sup>53</sup> Many forces have also trained staff to conduct restorative justice meetings, in which offenders and victims are brought together in face to face meetings. In this way the offender sees the effects of an offence, is given an opportunity to apologise, and the victim gains some understanding of why the offence occurred, which often brings reassurance.

Taking crime prevention and deterrence one step further, some forces have introduced schemes to focus on providing interventions aimed at achieving long-term desistance from crime. Such interventions deal with the underlying reasons a person commits crime with the aim of providing support to deal with these issues and to stop the most prolific offenders committing crime completely. This is ultimately better for the community and the offender, as well as breaking the so-called 'culture of crime' which affects future generations within the offender's family.

Overall, processes to use diversionary methods, out of court disposals and restorative justice are well understood by forces. HMIC found increased collaboration with partner agencies and an improving service.

## **Dealing with repeat offenders: Integrated offender management**

HMIC inspected forces on how well they manage the most persistent and problematic prolific offenders to protect victims and communities and to prevent reoffending. All forces work in partnership with other organisations to identify and assess the risk posed by offenders with a history of committing crime, and put in place interventions to reduce their likelihood of reoffending, through an approach known as Integrated Offender Management (IOM).<sup>54</sup>

HMIC interviewed officers and staff from IOM teams in forces to find evidence of how well forces are working with partner organisations to protect victims and communities and reduce repeat offending, in accordance with IOM principles.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> These are lower-level resolutions, often involving apologies to the victims and some form of community work, which do not criminalise the offender in the longer term.

<sup>54</sup> More information on Integrated Offender Management is available on GOV.uk, at [www.gov.uk/integrated-offender-management-iom](http://www.gov.uk/integrated-offender-management-iom)

<sup>55</sup> *Integrated Offender Management: Key principles*, Home Office/Ministry of Justice, February 2015. Available at [www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/406865/HO\\_IOM\\_Key\\_Principles\\_document\\_Final.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/406865/HO_IOM_Key_Principles_document_Final.pdf)



## **IOM governance and meeting structures**

HMIC found that forces are generally working well with partner organisations as part of an integrated IOM approach to preventing re-offending – primarily with prisons, probation services and community rehabilitation companies, but also with other organisations such as housing providers and drug and alcohol charities. Preventing these most prolific offenders from committing further offences was seen as important tool in overall crime prevention and keeping communities safe. In better forces, there is clear involvement, oversight and governance at a senior level, with clear guidelines as to what success looks like. In other forces, HMIC found evidence of a lack of appropriate resource and a lack of direction of staff as to how they should best perform their role. This had a detrimental impact upon the success of the IOM scheme.

All IOM teams we saw had, at the very least, regular meetings with partner organisations to discuss individual cases and agree actions as part of an offender management plan. This appeared to work better and be more effective in those forces where police and partners (particularly probation) are co-located and could access shared IT systems. This minimises the duplication of activity and allows staff to share freely information that could assist in the management of the offender, and in making decisions as to how successful interventions were. The forces that do not have this daily interaction are less effective, with more time being spent on administrative tasks.

## **Types of offences managed through IOM**

The joint Home Office and Ministry of Justice principles that underpin the IOM scheme in forces state that local IOM models should reflect local circumstances and priorities, responding to the crime and reoffending risks faced by local communities. In almost all forces it is a stated priority that they seek to protect vulnerable people, with some forces specifically placing the protection of domestic abuse victims as a priority.

In HMIC's 2014 effectiveness inspection, we were pleased to find that a number of forces had extended the IOM scheme to include the management of offenders who commit crimes of violence, particularly repeat perpetrators of domestic abuse.

During this inspection, HMIC found that while more forces have begun to use this broader IOM approach, this is not yet the norm. Many forces continue to use IOM teams solely to deal with prolific acquisitive crime offenders, despite the fact that the levels of such crime are falling while offences of personal violence continue to rise. Forces should consider whether more use could be made of IOM teams to tackle those offenders that cause the greatest threat, harm and risk to local communities (e.g. offences against vulnerable victims and violent offences including domestic abuse).

Lancashire Constabulary has begun to integrate IOM with the Early Action programme. Where this has started, it provides for the comprehensive management of offenders and brings the additional benefit of dealing with the cause of the offending in a way that involves the whole family, including siblings, and children. This helps to ensure that the culture of offending within the household is changed, and the lives of those who are offending is improved.

### **Tactics used by IOM teams**

In HMIC's 2014 crime inspection, we found that IOM teams were using a range of tactics to reduce the risk of re-offending amongst their cohorts, including the use of tagging and drug testing and providing help with finding housing and employment, but also the early use of targeting and arrest for those who continue to offend despite the support offered to them.

More effective forces demonstrate high levels of joint working between IOM staff and local policing teams, with all staff knowing who is in the IOM cohort and being briefed on individuals during daily management meetings. This however was not the norm across the forces. Too often IOM staff worked in relative isolation, with local policing staff only being aware of offenders who were actively wanted for committing offences. In these cases, the preventative element of IOM had already failed.

### **Evaluation of IOM work**

HMIC found inconsistency in how IOM teams define, measure and evaluate the success of their work. There are some good examples of IOM teams who are being measured against clear performance indicators, and those who are undertaking or commissioning evaluations of their activity. However, most IOM teams that our inspectors talked to are not clear about what success looked like for them, over and above looking at re-offending rates, and examples of robust evaluations are few and far between. The most effective IOM teams and their partners offer meaningful rehabilitative support for those who engage with the programme, supported by robust arrangements for dealing with offenders who continue to re-offend; other forces should consider how they could replicate this.

## Dealing with dangerous and sexual offenders

The police in England and Wales have a statutory duty, in conjunction with agencies such as the probation service and prison service, to manage the risk posed by the most dangerous offenders. This is done through multi-agency public protection arrangements (MAPPAs).<sup>56</sup> In a MAPPA, those identified as posing the most risk are subject to regular multi-agency risk meetings, with agencies allocating resources and playing a part in taking action to minimise the risk of that individual re-offending. In most forces, such offenders are very few in number. In this inspection HMIC assessed forces on how well they manage this risk.

Separate to MAPPA, there is also a statutory duty to manage those offenders who have been convicted of sexual offences that warrant them being placed on the sex offenders register and subject to continuing management and scrutiny. The level of scrutiny and intervention is dependent on the assessed level of risk and is subject to national guidelines. Not all such offenders are assessed as posing sufficient risk to be also managed under MAPPA, although this can happen. HMIC also inspected forces on how well they manage this risk.

Devon and Cornwall Police has well-developed and effective procedures for identifying and monitoring sexual and other dangerous offenders. MAPPAs and domestic abuse serial and serious perpetrators (DASSPs) arrangements are used by police and their partners to effectively identify and tackle dangerous offenders, including perpetrators of domestic abuse and child sexual exploitation. Repeat offenders are managed through routine daily processes, with progress being scrutinised by the senior managers within each policing area to ensure effective and robust management.

For both MAPPA and sex offender management, inspectors spoke to officers and staff to find evidence of how well forces were working with partner organisations to protect victims and communities and minimise the risk of repeat offending.

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<sup>56</sup> The Criminal Justice Act 2003 provides for the establishment of MAPPAs in each of the 42 criminal justice areas in England and Wales. These are designed to protect the public, including previous victims of crime, from serious harm by sexual and violent offenders. They require the local criminal justice agencies and other bodies dealing with offenders to work together in partnership in dealing with these offenders.

## **MAPPA**

MAPPA is well-established in all forces across England and Wales. HMIC found good knowledge and understanding of it at a strategic level, with appropriate representation from forces on the Strategic Management Board (SMB).<sup>57</sup>

At an operational level, there was less knowledge, and HMIC found inconsistency in the way in which resources were allocated:

- if the person subject to MAPPA has specialist resources allocated to their management, e.g. a sex offender manager, then attendance at multi-agency meetings is good and there is clear responsibility and involvement in the action plan to reduce risk; but
- this is not always true for dangerous offenders not managed specifically by a specialist team. In those cases, HMIC found a lack of understanding of who should attend meetings and who should undertake the risk management activity. In addition, the action plans were not shared outside of the MAPPA arena, meaning that the local policing teams were unaware of the dangers and could not assist in keeping people safe.

### **Management of sexual offenders**

Officers in many forces report concerns that their capacity to manage sexual offender is becoming stretched, with resilience an issue. During this inspection HMIC found that, in most cases, the situation remains manageable; but we encourage forces to review their plans for managing sex offenders and ensure that they have the necessary resource to deal with it.

### **Use of preventative orders**

During this inspection, HMIC found that most forces are continuing to make good use of preventative orders to keep the public safe. There was generally good knowledge and use of serious harm prevention orders and existing Sexual Offences Prevention Orders,<sup>58</sup> particularly within the specialist management units and public protection officers. However, the increasing demands on these staff (as discussed above) are limiting the opportunities to undertake proactive work in relation to breaches of these orders, which may limit their effectiveness.

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<sup>57</sup> MAPPA strategic management boards oversee activity of MAPPA in each of the criminal justice areas. Membership includes representatives of probation, prison and police services, as well as two lay advisors.

<sup>58</sup> Serious Harm Prevention Orders replaced Sexual Offences Prevention Orders in March 2015, although existing Sexual Offence Prevention Orders remain valid until their expiry. Both orders allow restrictions to be placed on the behaviour of registered sex offenders to assist in reducing the risk they pose.

Forces should consider how best this could be done. In better performing forces, there is widespread knowledge of these orders and who is subject to them, amongst response and neighbourhood officers. This enhances the scrutiny of offenders and reduces the chances of them re-offending.

HMIC found some impressive work with partners in a few forces to provide diversionary schemes for sex offenders. This was not widespread, however, and forces could do more in this area, and could learn from some of the most effective IOM teams.

### 3. Protecting from harm those who are vulnerable, and supporting victims

The information in this chapter was published in the separate *PEEL: Police effectiveness 2015 (vulnerability) – A national overview*<sup>59</sup> in December 2015.

Victims of crime and anti-social behaviour who are vulnerable in some way<sup>60</sup> are often those at the greatest risk of harm. The identification, protection and support of vulnerable victims remain a vital part of the policing mission to prevent crime and disorder. The complex and often sensitive nature of cases involving vulnerable victims means that the police need to work in close partnership with a range of agencies including local authorities, health and education services to ensure this happens.

Calls for assistance from vulnerable victims account for a considerable amount of the overall demand on police time. For example, police in England and Wales receive over 100 calls an hour about domestic abuse. How successfully a police force identifies, protects and supports those who are vulnerable is therefore a core indicator of its overall effectiveness.

To assess how effectively forces protect vulnerable victims from harm, HMIC evaluated how well they:

- identify those who are vulnerable, and assess their level of risk and need;
- force respond to vulnerable victims;
- take subsequent action and work with partners to keep victims safe; and
- respond to and safeguard specific vulnerable groups (missing and absent children and victims of domestic abuse); and how well prepared is it to tackle child sexual exploitation

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<sup>59</sup> *PEEL: Police effectiveness 2015 (vulnerability) – A national overview*, HMIC, 2015. Available at [www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/wp-content/uploads/police-effectiveness-vulnerability-2015.pdf](http://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/wp-content/uploads/police-effectiveness-vulnerability-2015.pdf)

<sup>60</sup> People may be vulnerable because of their age, race, or disability, or because they have been subjected to repeated offences, or are at high risk of abuse (for example).

## How effective are forces at protecting from harm those who are vulnerable, and supporting victims?

For this part of the effectiveness inspection, HMIC has graded no force as outstanding, 12 forces as good, 27 forces as requiring improvement and 4 forces as inadequate. The national overview report, *PEEL: Police effectiveness 2015 (vulnerability)* published in December 2015 summarises the top level findings of the vulnerability inspection.

## Identifying those who are vulnerable, and assessing levels of risk and need

### Identification

The first stage of an effective police response is accurately and reliably to identify if a caller is vulnerable in some way, in order to ensure an appropriate response is deployed. HMIC found that, despite every force having a stated priority on the importance of responding to vulnerability or placing a focus on this in another way, there is a lack of consistency across forces as to how vulnerability is defined. The majority of forces use either the definition in the government's Code of Practice for Victims of Crime<sup>61</sup> or the ACPO guidance.<sup>62</sup> Nine forces use their own definition, or a combination of the definitions above. This lack of consistency could result in victims receiving a different level of service across the country, as a victim who is identified as vulnerable by one force may not be in the neighbouring force area.

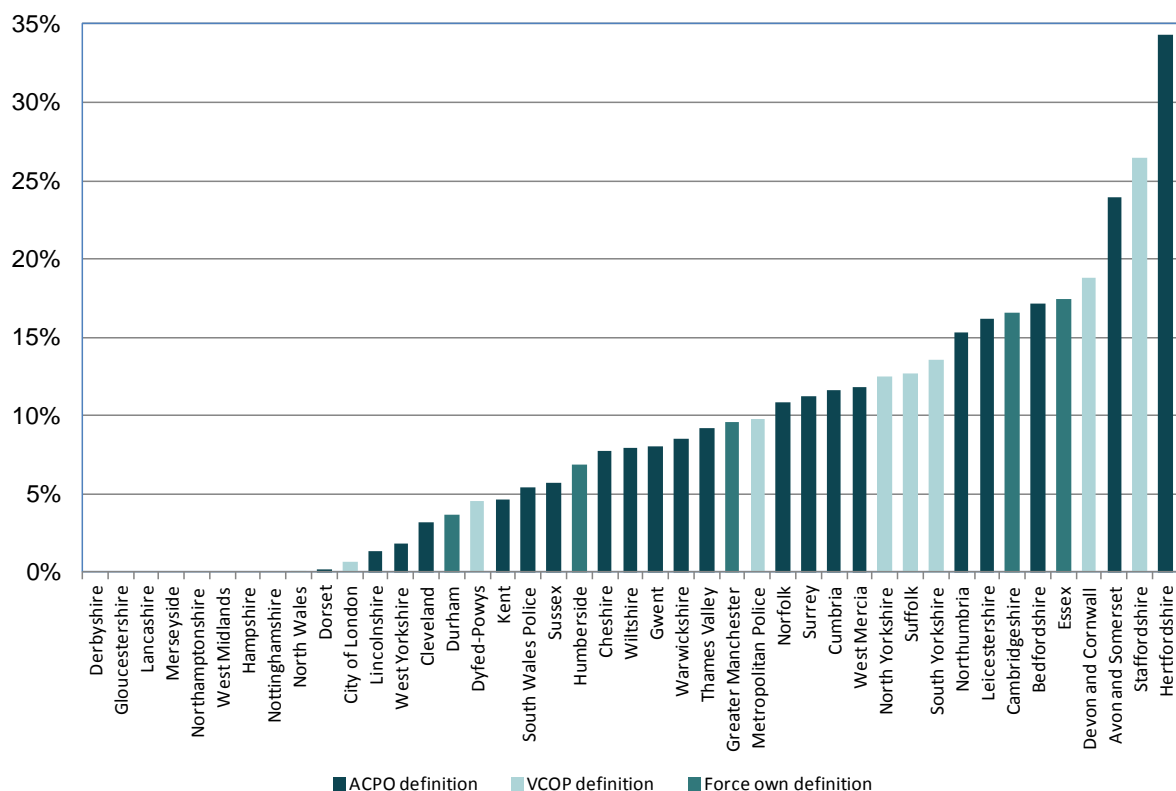
The lack of a single definition of vulnerability also contributes to inconsistencies in the proportion of police recorded crime involving a vulnerable victim. For the forces that do collect this data (eight forces were unable to provide this), there are considerable variations in these numbers, varying between 0.03 percent in North Wales and 34.3 percent in Hertfordshire for the 12 months to 31 March 2015.

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<sup>61</sup> *Code of Practice for Victims of Crime*, Ministry of Justice, October 2015. Available at [www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/254459/code-of-practice-victims-of-crime.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/254459/code-of-practice-victims-of-crime.pdf)

<sup>62</sup> *ACPO Guidance on Safeguarding and Investigating the Abuse of Vulnerable Adults*, NPIA, 2012. Available at [www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/major-investigation-and-public-protection/vulnerable-adults](http://www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/major-investigation-and-public-protection/vulnerable-adults) To note, the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) replaced the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) on 1 April 2015.

**Figure 2: The proportion of police recorded crime with a vulnerable victim identified, by force, for the 12 months to 31 March 2015**



**Source: HMIC data collection**

Overall, across the police service there appears to be a lack of high quality data relating to vulnerable people. HMIC is concerned that some forces are still unable to provide data on the number of recorded crimes with a vulnerable victim identified, as it suggests that they are not using this important information to improve the service provided to victims. Further analysis is also required to explain the wide variations in this data. It is crucial that force leaders explore the detail of their data in order to understand the nature and scale of the issue in their local area and monitor performance, but also ensure they are providing the best service they can to victims.

When it came to the initial identification of vulnerable people, HMIC found some progress, including in certain forces better use of IT systems which highlight if a caller is a repeat victim, and the use of call-scripting and drop-down menus containing question prompts by call-handlers, which aid the identification of vulnerable victims and decision-making in relation to the subsequent action taken. Many forces now also use intelligence staff within control rooms, with some having access to these twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. These staff can quickly look up any information on victims and perpetrators, which aids call-handlers and dispatchers by ensuring more detailed research is completed and better information is made available to responding officers.



HMIC found, in thirteen forces, specific areas of concern relating to initial contact with victims. The areas these cover include ensuring:

- front desk staff receive the same training as call-handlers on the identification of vulnerability (and access to processes including call-scripting and question prompts and information systems to help with this); and
- there are effective supervision and review procedures in place for call-handlers.

### **Assessing levels of risk and need**

Risk assessments – whether completed at the point of initial contact with the police or by a response officer at the scene of an incident – are used to identify the level of harm posed to the victim, and should underpin immediate safety planning measures to protect them.

Overall, 15 forces received a cause of concern or an area for improvement on risk assessments. This was due to a number of reasons, including:

- inconsistencies in the completion of risk assessments by staff, with no apparent action to address this;
- some forces allow officers to use discretion to decide whether a risk assessment is completed, with some evidence that this had led to them not being completed in cases where force policy required completion;
- in at least two forces at the time of the inspection, risk assessments for victims of domestic abuse were being completed over the telephone on some occasions. HMIC questions the appropriateness of this approach given that these cases were not always followed up with police attendance and may result in a victim of domestic abuse (and other family members) not being appropriately safeguarded. HMIC is firmly opposed to the practice of telephone-based risk assessment for intimate partner violence because the perpetrator may be present at the time of completion, which could influence the victim's response and prevent recording of the full extent of the risk; and
- some forces have backlogs in secondary assessment processes, which can result in delays in the completion of risk assessments, sharing information and making referrals to other organisations, as well as safety planning.

## **Use of THRIVE**

The Threat, Harm, Risk, Investigation, Vulnerability and Engagement (THRIVE) system is now being used in the control rooms in many forces. It provides a structured way of assessing the threat, harm, risk and investigation opportunities associated with a call, the vulnerability of the victim, and the level of engagement that is required to resolve the issues.

While this is designed to allow the police to tailor the service they provide according to the particular needs of the victim, and help staff decide how best to resolve a call, HMIC is concerned there is evidence of staff in some forces viewing the model as a means of managing police resources, rather than servicing public need; and of either delaying the deployment of officers to incidents, or not sending them at all. This potentially puts the needs of the force above the need of the victim, which is the opposite of what the THRIVE model is designed to achieve.

## **The initial police response**

The initial police response to an incident involving a vulnerable victim is vital, as a negative experience can result in the victim losing confidence in the police and failing to report future incidents.

HMIC found examples of response officers who acted quickly, professionally, showed empathy and made vulnerable victims feel safe.

However, HMIC also identified a number of areas for improvement. In particular, this inspection highlighted the need for all forces to ensure that response officers have access to equipment that enables them to collect photographic or video evidence at the scene of an incident. HMIC recognises that body-worn video cameras require substantial investment (in both the equipment itself but also the download and storage facilities), which is challenging at a time of budgetary constraint. Nevertheless, videos are a powerful source of evidence in any prosecution, but particularly those where the victim does not support police action.

HMIC found some evidence that whilst the initial response including immediate safeguarding for victims of domestic abuse assessed as being at high risk is generally effective, this is not always the case for those assessed as medium or standard risk. Although those at the greatest risk of harm should receive immediate safeguarding and support, it is crucial that these victims do not fall between the gaps, and that all forces have clear policies in place which outline where responsibility for safeguarding victims at medium and standard risk lies, and the quality of service they can expect to receive.

## **Action taken and work with partners**

### **Investigation**

While HMIC found examples of investigations being undertaken in an effective way, inspection staff documented that there needs to be a focus within forces on ensuring that appropriately trained and skilled staff are allocated to the right investigations and that their workloads are manageable – both across vulnerability as a whole, and in relation to certain types of offending (for example, domestic abuse). Twenty forces have received a cause of concern or an area for improvement on investigations, covering areas including a lack of recorded investigation plans or poor-quality plans; weaknesses in the handover process with poor quality of initial action and gaps in the documentation handed to the investigator and ineffective processes to locate and arrest outstanding perpetrators (including those wanted for breaches).

Police forces have faced significant financial challenges over the last four years, resulting in reduced budgets and reductions in the numbers of police officers and staff. Despite this, forces have continued largely to protect their investment in public protection resources. While this is encouraging, it is worth noting that this investment only averages 4 percent of forces' total budgets; and, with greater demand due to the increase of domestic abuse crimes and other kinds of offending involving vulnerable people (for instance, related to reports of child abuse), forces need to keep their budgets under close review.

Generally, HMIC found that police officers in specialist protecting vulnerable people units conduct more effective investigations than non-specialists. However, in some forces these specialist resources are overstretched.

As a result, HMIC found for example that some domestic abuse investigations including high-risk cases are allocated to non-specialist staff due to capacity issues; and in some forces, those investigating high-risk cases receive the same level of training as those investigating medium or low-risk cases.

### **Compliance with the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime**

All police forces have a statutory duty to comply with the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime, which sets out the service victims can expect from all parts of the criminal justice system. Vulnerable victims are eligible for enhanced entitlements under the code. At the police investigation stage, the code states that:

- victims of crime should be able to make a Victim Personal Statement (VPS) at the same time as giving a witness statement, which they can use to explain how the crime has affected them (and are entitled to be offered the opportunity to read their VPS aloud at any court hearing);

- victims are entitled to be informed by the police of any actions relating to the suspect, for example arrest, charge, bail conditions or release from custody; and
- victims are entitled to receive regular updates on the status of their case and be consulted about the possible outcomes.

During this inspection, HMIC found that more than half of all forces need to improve their compliance with the code. Most of these involve the need for greater consistency in the completion of victim personal statements (VPS), as HMIC found that VPSs are not consistently being offered until later in the criminal justice process so victims, are not being given the opportunity to decide at what stage they make a VPS. In addition, in some forces:

- victims are not being provided with regular updates on the status of their case, which can be crucial in order to safeguard not only them, but often their children; and
- adequate discussions are not being undertaken with the Crown Prosecution Service on the need for ‘special measures’ to assist vulnerable witnesses to give their best evidence in court, for example via a video link or behind a screen.

### **Working with partners**

An effective response to vulnerable victims requires both statutory and voluntary sector organisations to work jointly to undertake risk assessments and safety planning to address their often complex needs and the needs of their children or other dependents. HMIC found evidence of effective and innovative work between the police and partner organisations including:

- representatives from specialist domestic abuse organisations accompanying officers to domestic abuse incidents. For example, Gwent Police is piloting having a domestic abuse expert from Women’s Aid with an officer in a response car on Friday and Saturday nights to provide a co-ordinated service to high-risk victims;
- good police involvement and leadership in established multi-agency partnerships, especially in MARACs<sup>63</sup> and (in many but not all parts of England and Wales) MASHs;<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> MARACs are multi-agency meetings where statutory and voluntary agency representatives share information about high-risk victims of domestic abuse in order to produce a co-ordinated action plan to increase victim safety.

- work with local schools to teach young people about healthy relationships and internet safety; and
- close links between forces and schools attended by children affected by a domestic abuse incident. For example, Merseyside Police is one of a number of forces which run Operation Encompass. When a domestic abuse incident is attended by a police officer and children are present, a member of staff from the Vulnerable Persons Unit (VPU) or the MASH makes immediate contact with the child's school to make them aware. This informs the school of the incident and provides for additional safeguarding.

HMIC found, in six forces, specific areas of concern relating to working with partners. These cover issues including the type of information shared and when and how this is shared with partners by forces in order to provide comprehensive and consistent support to vulnerable victims. Some of the problems in relation to sharing data were due to incompatible or inaccessible IT systems, although there was evidence of partners seeking solutions to these problems.

Forces are continuing to develop their working practices with partners to share information more effectively. There have been positive advances in the establishment of multi-agency safeguarding hubs and central referral units (CRUs) to share information, jointly assess risk and agree actions to safeguard victims.

HMIC found however, that some MASHs have particularly heavy workloads, which in some forces is resulting in backlogs of cases and delayed referrals to MARACs. There are also variations in practice across the country, which are brought into sharper focus by the lack of any national guidance on what a MASH is expected to do. All agencies are in agreement that the sharing of relevant information is vital to ensure vulnerable people are properly safeguarded. However, it is important that these models are based upon what works, and forces have little or no evidence to determine this. HMIC's thematic report, *Increasingly everyone's business: A progress report on the police response to domestic abuse*,<sup>65</sup> proposes that a 'task and finish group' evaluates the effectiveness of the various models in place for MASHs at achieving good outcomes for victims.

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<sup>64</sup> A multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH) brings together staff from police and partner agencies who work often from the same location, sharing information and ensuring a timely and co-ordinated response to protect children and vulnerable adults.

<sup>65</sup> *Increasingly everyone's business: A progress report on the police response to domestic abuse*, HMIC, 2015. Available at: [www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/wp-content/uploads/increasingly-everyones-business-domestic-abuse-progress-report.pdf](http://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/wp-content/uploads/increasingly-everyones-business-domestic-abuse-progress-report.pdf)

## Responding to and safeguarding specific groups of vulnerable victims

The first three vulnerability sub-questions examined how well forces identify vulnerable (including repeat) victims, how officers and staff assess and respond to the risks faced by victims, and the action taken to investigate crimes and work with partners to keep them safe. This question specifically looked at how forces manage three specific areas of vulnerability: domestic abuse; missing and absent children and its preparedness to tackle child sexual exploitation.

### Missing and absent children

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is a principal duty for the police and requires effective joint working between agencies. Cases of people (including children) who are missing<sup>66</sup> from home are treated with greater seriousness and urgency than those who are regarded as being absent.<sup>67</sup> This is because there is no 'apparent risk' and the expectation is that the individual will return of their own accord without the need for a police investigation.

A full report of the police management of missing and absent children will be published in spring 2016. The rest of this section summarises some of the key findings of this inspection.

It is important to acknowledge that most children who go missing are found, or return of their own accord safe and well. While distressing for the parents and carers involved, they can be reassured that the police response in most cases is timely, proportionate and appropriate. Where the immediate risks are assessed as high, HMIC found that police action is immediate and co-ordinated. There is variation however, in how forces define and collect data on missing and children. Although the National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC) definitions of 'missing' and 'absent' are used by the majority of forces, these are interpreted differently in some. A small number of forces do not use the term 'absent' for children, whilst some categorise all those who go missing below a certain age as 'missing' regardless of the circumstances. One force only uses the category 'absent' for children looked after by the local authority.

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<sup>66</sup> The NPCC definition of missing is: "Anyone whose whereabouts cannot be established and where the circumstances are out of character to the context suggests the person may be subject of crime or at risk of harm to themselves or another." Quoted in *Statutory guidance on children who run away or go missing from home or care*, Department for Education, June 2013, p.6. Available at [www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/307867/Statutory\\_Guidance\\_-\\_Missing\\_from\\_care\\_3\\_.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/307867/Statutory_Guidance_-_Missing_from_care_3_.pdf)

<sup>67</sup> The NPCC definition of absent is: "A person not at a place where they are expected or required to be and there is no apparent risk." *Ibid.*

The length of time a person has been missing before they are categorised as missing 'long term' also varies considerably from between 24 hours to 6 months. Some forces do not have a set definition for 'long term' missing at all. Overall, there appears to be a lack of consistency in the data on missing and absent children across the police service. It is crucial that force leaders explore the detail of their data in order to understand the nature and scale of the issue in their local area and monitor performance, but also ensure they are providing the best service they can to those that go missing and their parents and carers.

Additional areas of concern identified by HMIC during this inspection include:

- weaknesses in the current risk assessment processes. For example, if a child is not assessed as being at high risk, the level of protection and support offered is inconsistent and in some cases can be lacking;
- return interviews, which are completed by the local authority or a third party to determine the reasons why the child ran away, their experience while away and any issues that need to be resolved are not always completed. Important intelligence in relation to any risks faced by the child could be lost as a result. In some cases, it may be appropriate for a return interview not to take place, however the evidence to support this decision is often not recorded on the relevant case file; and
- limited use of trigger plans, which outline the actions that should be taken to locate children who frequently go missing as quickly as possible even in forces where use of them is part of locally-agreed practice.

Seven forces were assessed as having a cause of concern in relation to their response to missing and absent children and HMIC has made specific recommendations designed to improve the service those forces provide. These cover areas including appropriate risk assessment and correct use of missing and absent categories, improving investigations and supervision, using information from previous incidents to inform repeat missing approach and improving safeguarding. A further 14 forces were found to have areas for improvement relating to this area.

### **Domestic abuse**

In March 2014, HMIC published a report, *Everyone's business: improving the police response to domestic abuse*,<sup>68</sup> that found significant weaknesses in the services that were provided to victims of domestic abuse by the police service. As part of that report, HMIC called on forces to take urgent action to improve both their ways of working and to make their services more effective.

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<sup>68</sup> *Everyone's business: Improving the police response to domestic abuse*, HMIC, 2014. Available at [www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/publications/improving-the-police-response-to-domestic-abuse/](http://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/publications/improving-the-police-response-to-domestic-abuse/)

HMIC committed to inspecting forces' progress in making these changes as part of the PEEL effectiveness inspection in 2015. This included looking at how well they identify repeat and vulnerable victims of domestic abuse; how officers and staff assess and respond to the risks faced by victims; the training and support that officers and staff receive; and the standard of investigations of domestic abuse incidents. HMIC also examined the progress that forces have made on the action plans they put in place in response to the findings of *Everyone's business*.

The thematic report, *Increasingly everyone's business: Improving the police response to domestic abuse*<sup>69</sup> (published in December 2015), outlines the full findings on the police response to domestic abuse and the progress that has been made since HMIC last inspected this area in 2014. This report found overall that police leaders, officers, PCSOs and staff have acted on the messages of *Everyone's business* and now see tackling domestic abuse as an important priority for them – domestic abuse is increasingly becoming 'everyone's business'. HMIC found a number of improvements in the police response to victims of domestic abuse.

There has been a 31 percent increase in the number of domestic abuse-related crimes recorded in England and Wales since the publication of *Everyone's business*. The Office for National Statistics suggests that this is due, in part, to police forces improving their recording of domestic abuse incidents as crimes. Forces have also been actively encouraging victims to come forward to report crimes and it may be that this is reflected in this increase. The reporting and identification of domestic abuse as a crime is vitally important as it increases the chances that victims will receive from the police and partner agencies the service and support they need.

Police leaders have made a determined effort to make domestic abuse a priority, not just on paper, but also in practice. Once again, all forces told us that tackling domestic abuse is a priority for them. This stated intent is now beginning to translate into operational reality. In many forces we have seen tangible improvements in the service provided to victims of domestic abuse including – better identification and assessment of the risks faced by victims, better supervision of officers' initial response at the scene and improvements in the standard of subsequent investigations. Tackling domestic abuse also features more prominently in forces' day-to-day activities including the deployment of officers and their management and monitoring arrangements.

Importantly, we found that police attitudes towards victims of domestic abuse and frontline officers' understanding of the importance of dealing with victims in a supportive and sympathetic way are improving. In many forces, particularly where there have been extensive training programmes, we found that police officers and

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<sup>69</sup> *Increasingly everyone's business: A progress report on the police response to domestic abuse*, HMIC, 2015. Available at: [www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/wp-content/uploads/increasingly-everyones-business-domestic-abuse-progress-report.pdf](http://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/wp-content/uploads/increasingly-everyones-business-domestic-abuse-progress-report.pdf)



staff are increasingly seeing domestic abuse as their business, not someone else's. There is still some way to go in many forces, but this progress is enormously encouraging.

There are large numbers of officers and staff who are dedicated and passionate about protecting victims of domestic abuse and their families. In particular, HMIC welcomes the increased use by response officers of body-worn video cameras at domestic abuse incidents as this provides a powerful source of evidence in any later prosecution.

At a time of significant financial challenge, forces have continued largely to protect their dedicated teams or other resources that focus on public protection work, which includes domestic abuse.

Partner organisations and domestic abuse practitioners recognise the steps that forces have taken to tackle domestic abuse. The leadership of the police in local multi-agency risk assessment conference (MARAC) processes which are designed to safeguard victims and their children is particularly welcomed.

There are however, specific areas where further improvement is required to ensure that victims of domestic abuse are better protected and supported, and ultimately, made safer. Nine forces were assessed as having a cause of concern in relation to their response to domestic abuse and HMIC has made specific recommendations designed to improve the service those forces provide. The areas that these cover include risk assessments and the supervision of these, investigation (mainly relating to officers and staff having the appropriate professional skills and experience), the supervision of investigations and safeguarding. A further fifteen forces were found to have areas for improvement relating to how they tackle domestic abuse.

HMIC acknowledges that the scale of change called for in the last domestic abuse inspection will take time to bring about in full, but believes that the police service should immediately appreciate that change needs to start now to ensure that there is effective and consistent operational practice across all force areas. The areas that cause HMIC particular concern include:

- difficulties in identifying repeat callers and victims due to limitations of force computer systems;
- although the THRIVE (Threat, Harm, Risk, Investigation, Vulnerability and Engagement) decision model appears to be starting to be established with more forces using it, there is evidence of some staff applying it to reduce or ration competing demands rather than tailoring the service to address the needs of victims;

- inconsistent awareness particularly among response staff of coercive and controlling behaviour. Where training is provided, there is still undue reliance on e-learning packages;
- domestic abuse investigations still largely being allocated based on crime type and complexity rather than the assessment of risk;
- confusion in some forces over roles and responsibilities in relation to the safeguarding of victims at medium and standard risk;
- notable increases in workloads in specialist public protection teams;
- limited application of Domestic Violence Protection Orders (DVPOs) and lack of appropriately robust action in enforcing breaches of these and other orders;
- notable increases in the number of high-risk cases being identified mean the capacity of MARACs to safeguard victims is becoming an issue for police and partners;
- inconsistency in the application of the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime;<sup>70</sup>
- better analysis of police and partner organisation data is needed to understand performance and how domestic abuse is dealt with in force areas; and
- limited evidence of victim engagement to provide forces with feedback on the service provided and how this can be improved.

These conclusions do not diminish the value of the often excellent work being completed by a large number of police leaders, officers and staff. HMIC is grateful to chief constables and their teams for the work they have done so far on this important issue of public interest. As police forces and partners face growing challenges over the next few years, it is vitally important that they sustain their efforts to improve the service they provide to some of the most vulnerable people in our society.

The thematic report, *Increasingly everyone's business*, contains a set of recommendations (reproduced at Annex D), which have been developed in consultation with police officers and staff, police and crime commissioners, voluntary sector organisations, government departments and academics. These build upon the previous recommendations in *Everyone's business* and outline the next phase of action needed to secure lasting change for victims of domestic abuse.

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<sup>70</sup> *Code of Practice for Victims of Crime*, Ministry of Justice, October 2015. Available at [www.cps.gov.uk/publications/docs/victims\\_code\\_2013.pdf](http://www.cps.gov.uk/publications/docs/victims_code_2013.pdf)

## **Preparedness to tackle child sexual exploitation**

The sexual exploitation of children causes extremely severe damage to some of the most vulnerable members of our community. HMIC's assessment of forces' preparedness to tackle child sexual exploitation found that dedicated resources have been increased across England and Wales. Training and staff development opportunities are being provided to increase officer and staff awareness and knowledge of child sexual exploitation and how to respond to it. Some forces have established specialist teams to deal specifically with such investigations, and to support victims. Despite this, forces are at different stages of preparedness. The areas that cause HMIC particular concern include:

- implementation is patchy and initial commitment has not always been sustained;
- there is wide variation between forces in the training provided and a lack of evaluation so it is unclear how effective it has been in terms of the outcomes for victims; and
- some measures including the production of child sexual exploitation profiles, return interviews and trigger plans are taking time to embed within forces and be used to inform policy and practice in this area.

Good practice in this area is largely dependent upon having skilled and knowledgeable staff. Forces have made progress in establishing expertise through staff training and the development of specialist posts and teams. HMIC found that overall, the practice of specialist teams is markedly better than the practice of non-specialists.

Although some forces are using different disruption techniques including trigger plans, abduction notices and inter-agency discussions, use is variable both within individual forces and across the country. The level of supervision of child sexual exploitation cases is also inconsistent. We found that the police and children's social care services do routinely exchange information and discuss cases requiring an immediate response and the development of multi-agency teams has assisted with this.

City of London Police has undertaken work with the City's hoteliers to provide advice on how they can avoid their premises being used for sexual abuse. South Yorkshire Police has developed an in-depth training and awareness programme known as Operation Makesafe for staff and targeted sectors of society. Over a two-year period, training is being provided to hotel staff, shop workers and taxi drivers on how to spot the signs of child sexual exploitation. Although these are positive developments, further work is required to evaluate the effectiveness of such initiatives.

One force was assessed as having a cause of concern in relation to their preparedness to tackle child sexual exploitation. HMIC has made a specific recommendation designed to improve the service this force provides, which covers updating their local profile on child sexual exploitation and improving staff skills and safeguarding. A further 13 forces were found to have areas for improvement in this area.

## 4. Tackling serious and organised crime and fulfilling national policing responsibilities

Serious and organised crime includes human trafficking, drug trafficking, organised illegal immigration, high value fraud and other serious financial crimes, counterfeiting, organised theft, burglary or robbery and cyber-crime. It is perpetrated by groups of people operating collaboratively on a continuing basis, typically in order to realise substantial financial gain and sometimes with the use of serious violence. These are known as organised crime groups (OCGs).

Serious and organised crime is the subject of a cross-government strategy,<sup>71</sup> which also covers the serious (but not necessarily organised) offences of child sexual exploitation and certain other kinds of fraud. Serious and organised crime is one of several forms of crime which present a serious risk to the UK's national security. In particular, the government has identified organised crime and large-scale cyber-crime as "priority risks" in its *National Security Strategy*.<sup>72</sup> Serious and organised crime is one of six national threats included in *The Strategic Policing Requirement*,<sup>73</sup> which places a legal obligation upon police forces to have regard to national responsibilities set out by the Home Secretary in addition to their local priorities.

To assess how effective forces are tackling serious and organised crime, HMIC's inspection looked for evidence of how well police forces:

- understand the threat and risk posed by serious and organised crime;
- respond to serious and organised crime by investigating or disrupting OCGs;
- work with partners to prevent serious and organised crime; and
- test their ability to fulfil their national policing responsibilities.

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<sup>71</sup> *Serious and Organised Crime Strategy*, HM Government, October 2013. Available at [www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/248645/Serious\\_and\\_Organised\\_Crime\\_Strategy.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/248645/Serious_and_Organised_Crime_Strategy.pdf)

<sup>72</sup> *A Strong Britain in an Age of Uncertainty: The National Security Strategy*, HM Government, October 2010, p.27. Available at [www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/61936/national-security-strategy.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/61936/national-security-strategy.pdf) The risk of large-scale cyber-crime appears in tier one (the highest set of priority risks for UK national security), and the risk of a significant increase in the level of organised crime affecting the UK appears at tier two.

<sup>73</sup> *The Strategic Policing Requirement*, Home Office, March 2015, Part A, page 5, paragraph 1.9. Available at [www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/417116/The\\_Strategic\\_Policing\\_Requirement.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/417116/The_Strategic_Policing_Requirement.pdf)

## **How effective are forces at tackling serious and organised crime, including their arrangements for fulfilling their national policing responsibilities?**

For this part of the effectiveness inspection, HMIC has graded 3 forces as outstanding, 32 forces as good, and eight forces as requiring improvement. No force was graded as inadequate.

### **Understanding the threat**

Serious and organised crime poses a threat to the public across the whole of the UK and beyond. Its effects can be felt by individuals, communities and businesses. Effectively tackling serious and organised crime necessitates a local response in neighbourhoods, and also demands a nationally co-ordinated response which draws on the specialist capabilities of police forces, regional organised crime units (ROCU) and the National Crime Agency (NCA) as well as wider partner organisations.

It is vitally important that forces understand the threat and risk posed by serious and organised crime. A good understanding of these threats enables forces to respond to them more effectively. While the threat posed by serious and organised crime varies between force areas, there are basic procedures and capabilities which all forces should have in place to protect their communities from this type of offending.

As a minimum, HMIC expects forces to demonstrate:

- a rigorous, structured approach to identifying and assessing serious and organised criminal threats;
- active use of a detailed serious and organised crime local profile which draws on relevant data from partner organisations;
- a partnership structure to make joint decisions about how to tackle serious and organised crime;
- use of a range of intelligence sources to identify and understand organised crime; and
- the ability to map organised crime groups and re-assess them at regular intervals in line with national guidance.

### **Threat assessment**

Almost every force has a structured threat assessment process in place to identify long term trends and determine priorities. Forces reassess the principal organised criminal threats faced by their communities on a regular basis, and many ensure that partner agencies are involved in this process.

This is of vital importance, as police data alone cannot produce a comprehensive understanding of the threat from serious and organised crime.

Many organised crime groups are involved in several different types of illegal activities, and they differ markedly in their intent and capability to commit crime. However, not all forces use the same threat assessment methods, which can make it more difficult to identify and agree upon shared priorities between forces in each region. HMIC found that these sometimes differ, which inhibits the ability of forces to act together in order to understand and respond to organised crime. It would be beneficial if all forces, ROCUs and the NCA were to adopt the same threat assessment methods. This would enable better comparison of threats, and help forces and ROCUs to align their priorities.

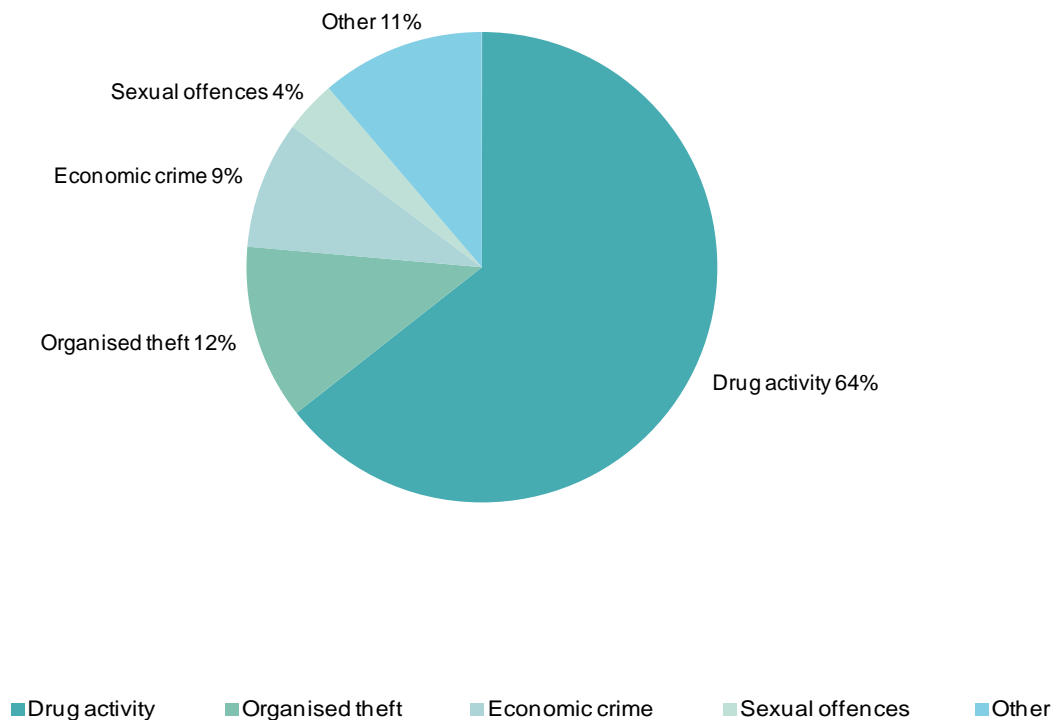
The best threat assessment methods take into account how much forces know about a particular threat, not just those which are causing the most obvious or measurable harm. This enables forces to identify and prioritise so-called 'newer' threats such as child sexual exploitation even if they know relatively little about them. This is essential if forces are to understand organised crime, which is rapidly changing and growing in complexity. Newer types of offending may cause serious harm to communities, although they are often hidden or unreported. As a result, they can be more difficult to uncover and understand.

Forces categorise OCGs by the predominant form of criminal activity in which the group is involved. Although the OCGs are likely to be involved in multiple forms of criminality, this indicates their most common characteristic. 'Drug activity' was the most common predominant crime type recorded by all forces in England and Wales,<sup>74</sup> with 64 percent of all OCGs classified in this way.

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<sup>74</sup> The Metropolitan Police Service figures are not included in the England and Wales figure, because they do not categorise OCGs in the same way as other forces.

**Figure 3: Organised crime groups in England and Wales by the predominant crime type, as at 30 June 2015**



**Source: HMIC data collection**

Although forces are beginning to understand and confront so-called ‘newer’ threats such as child sexual exploitation, modern slavery and cyber-crime, their understanding of ‘traditional’ threats, for example drug dealing and criminal use of firearms, remains considerably more developed. Forces have more experience of assessing these activities, and many of the intelligence gathering techniques and operational tactics used to tackle serious and organised crime have evolved in response to them. Threat assessment methods such as organised crime groups mapping, for example, were originally devised to help forces to understand crimes such as drug dealing and criminal use of firearms, and remain better suited to these types of offending than newer threats.

In this respect, the police service is not well-equipped to assess the threat posed by, for example, organised grooming, forced labour and cyber-dependent crime. However, it is positive that many forces recognise this and are taking steps to improve both their understanding of newer threats and their ability to spot these at a local level – for example by providing officers and staff with training to help them identify potential victims of human trafficking. All forces should develop their ability to identify and understand these threats, while continuing to enhance their understanding of more established types of organised crime.



It is essential that forces work with other organisations such as local authorities, schools, health service providers and Immigration Enforcement if they are to build a sophisticated understanding of serious and organised crime. This means sharing information as well as undertaking joint operational activity. In the last year, most forces have produced serious and organised crime local profiles in line with national guidance issued in November 2014.<sup>75</sup> These profiles enable forces and partner organisations to pool information and develop a single, detailed picture of the threat from serious and organised crime in local areas. This is essential if forces are to build an effective response to serious and organised crime involving multiple agencies. However, only a minority of forces have gone beyond the bare minimum to develop local profiles for specific areas within the force – many have only one profile for the entire force area, which does not necessarily provide sufficient detail, particularly in larger forces. In many forces, local profiles are based solely on police data and lack information from partner agencies. This means that they cannot provide police and partners with a comprehensive picture of serious and organised criminal threats. Forces should include relevant data from partner organisations in their local profiles to improve their accuracy and usefulness.

Only some forces have established a partnership board to oversee progress on recommendations made in their local profile, in line with national guidance. In these forces, there has been extensive and meaningful consultation with partners throughout the production of the local profile, with good representation from a number of agencies. This means that these forces are well-equipped to draw on the knowledge and powers of other organisations to help them tackle serious and organised crime. However, elsewhere partner engagement has been minimal. This needs to improve if forces are to strengthen their ability to understand serious and organised crime.

### **Use of intelligence**

Forces gather intelligence about serious and organised crime from a range of sources including communities, prisons and partner organisations. This is routinely assessed, corroborated and analysed in order to produce a more detailed understanding of serious and organised criminal activity.

All forces are able to gather and process intelligence about serious and organised crime. A recently established regional network of intelligence units has enhanced their ability to collect sensitive and confidential intelligence – most forces make good use of this network. However, some forces do not exploit the full range of intelligence sources available to them. For example, intelligence gathering in prisons is not well

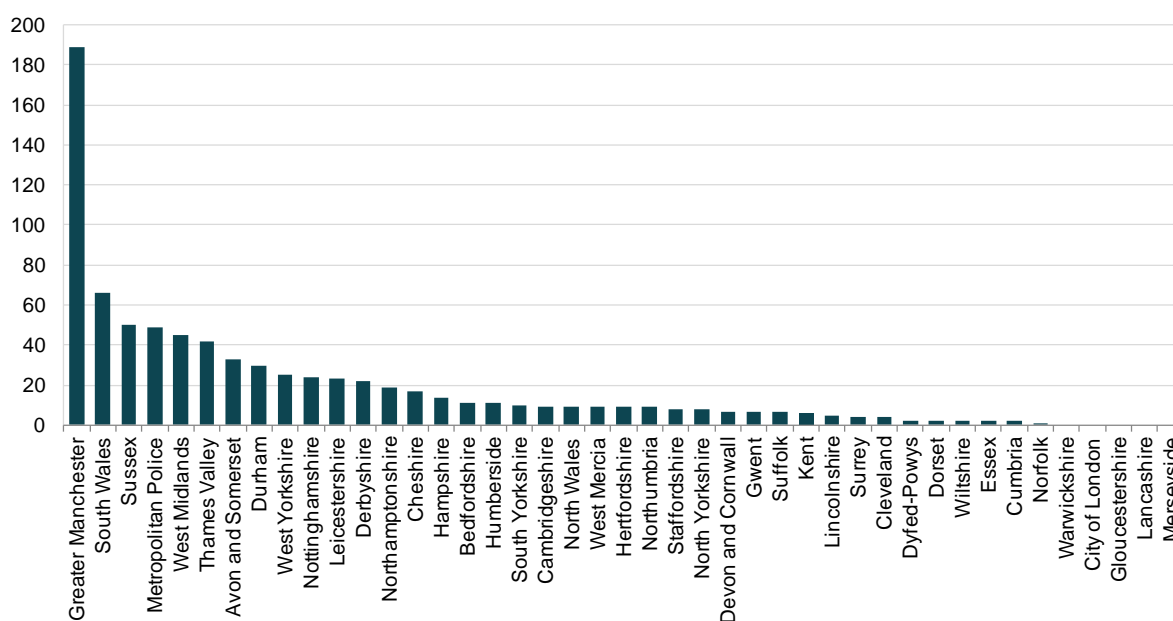
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<sup>75</sup> *Serious and Organised Crime Local Profiles: A Guide*, HM Government, November 2014. Available at [www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/371602/Serious\\_and\\_Organised\\_Crime\\_local\\_profiles.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/371602/Serious_and_Organised_Crime_local_profiles.pdf)

co-ordinated between forces and regional prison intelligence units, which means that there is not systematic monitoring of all organised criminals who are serving prison sentences. A national prison intelligence co-ordination centre has recently been established to address this problem, and HMIC will monitor its activity and effects.

Almost all forces could make greater use of the Government Agency Intelligence Network (GAIN). GAIN provides forces with access to intelligence held by a range of agencies including Trading Standards and the Environment Agency. GAIN enables police forces to have access to valuable information about organised criminals, and helps partner agencies to understand the threat which they face from serious and organised crime. It also gives them the ability to draw on powers belonging to partner organisations – for example, HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) – in order to disrupt OCGs. In the 12 months to 30 June 2015, there were 792 referrals for intelligence made by forces in England and Wales. Figure 4 shows that very few forces use GAIN extensively. Forces should consider making greater use of this facility as a means of improving their understanding of serious and organised crime.

**Figure 4: Government Agency Intelligence Network (GAIN) referrals by force – 12 months to 30 June 2015**



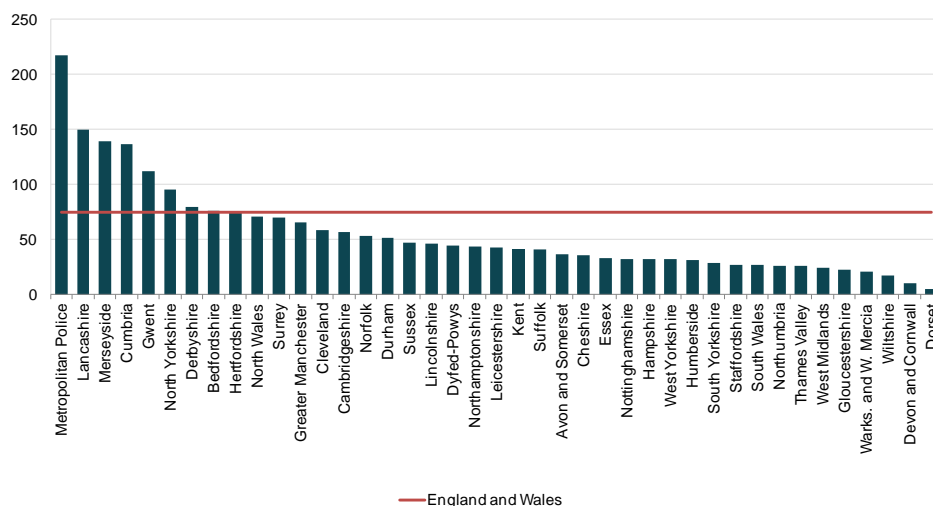
**Source: HMIC data collection**

HMIC also found some occasions when forces have failed to seek out intelligence about active organised crime groups. In a small number of cases, no new intelligence had been recorded on force systems about organised crime group members for several months. Forces should ensure that they take opportunities to collect intelligence about active organised crime groups, including where possible confirming that they have ceased their activity, and record this intelligence on force systems. Where gaps exist in intelligence, force activity should be directed to fill these. When appropriate this should include intelligence collection by neighbourhood policing teams – this is described in more detail in the next section of this report.

## Organised crime group mapping

When a police force identifies a group of individuals whom it suspects may be involved in organised crime, it goes through a nationally standardised ‘mapping’ procedure. This involves entering details of the group’s known and suspected activity, associates and capability on a piece of computer software, which assigns a numerical score to each organised crime group (organised crime groups). It also places each organised crime groups into one of several ‘bands’ which reflect the range and severity of crime in which a group is involved as well as its level of capability and sophistication. This information is used by forces to inform decisions about when and how to respond to each organised crime group. Organised crime groups mapping is used by forces, ROCUs, the NCA and a number of non-police organisations such as Border Force. All organised crime groups which meet a police definition should be mapped at the earliest opportunity.<sup>76</sup>

**Figure 5: Organised crime groups per one million population, by force, as at 30 June 2015<sup>77 78</sup>**



Source: HMIC data collection

<sup>76</sup> The police service defines an organised crime group as individuals, normally working with others, with the intent and capability to commit serious crime on a continuing basis, which includes elements of: planning / control / coordination / structure / group decision-making. In this context, serious crime is defined by section 93(4) Police Act 1997 as crime that involves the use of violence, results in substantial financial gain or is conducted by a large number of persons in pursuit of a common purpose, or crime for which a person aged 21 or over on first conviction could reasonably expect to be imprisoned for three or more years.

<sup>77</sup> City of London Police data have been removed from the chart as they are not comparable with that of other forces, due to the force’s smaller size and wider national remit.

<sup>78</sup> Warwickshire Police and West Mercia Police have a combined total of OCGs in their force areas. OCGs per one million population rate is based upon their combined population figures.

Mapping has been developed over a number of years and has some limitations – for example it is better suited to traditional crime types than so-called ‘newer’ threats such as organised child sexual exploitation and cyber-crime. However, it does provide a standard method of threat assessment and is nonetheless important in enabling forces to understand organised crime groups. HMIC found that all forces are mapping organised crime groups using the correct national assessment process, and fulfilling their responsibilities to submit mapping data to regional organised crime units, where it is aggregated and analysed. Organised crime group mapping is generally well-understood by those in analytical, investigative and specialist roles.

However, despite the use of standard methods, Figure 5 shows that mapping is carried out inconsistently by forces, which adopt different approaches to mapping organised crime groups. Some forces map organised crime groups which others would classify as urban street gangs (and therefore not map them). ROCUs occasionally change the scores initially assigned to organised crime groups by forces if they have access to a greater volume or higher quality of intelligence than the originating force. In a small number of forces, HMIC found that not all organised crime groups which meet the definition are being mapped – for example, drug-dealing networks operating across force boundaries, or individuals connected to unknown organised crime groups. This means that these groups may not be managed appropriately, and increases the threat they pose to the public. Failing to map these groups also makes it more difficult for surrounding forces to understand the intent and capability of these groups, and act together in order to address their offending. Finally, it creates a risk that some organised criminal activity will be missed altogether, with no clear responsibilities assigned to any one force.

Several forces need to improve how they review organised crime groups and repeat the mapping process at regular intervals – for example if new intelligence is received which alters the threat posed by a particular group. This helps to ensure that the changing threats that these groups pose are thoroughly understood. It also means that decisions about which groups to pursue, how to deploy resources and which tactics to use can be informed by accurate and up-to-date information. The intent and capability of these groups can change rapidly, and forces need to ensure that they keep up with these changes in order to protect the public. In some instances, HMIC found that forces do not map organised crime groups until after enforcement activity has taken place. This increases the risk that operational decisions are not as informed by organised crime group mapping as they should be.

In the East Midlands, the regional organised crime unit carries out organised crime groups mapping on behalf of forces, but working closely with them to ensure that local intelligence is included in the assessment process. The mapping process is carried out by a specialist team of analysts, working alongside the regional GAIN co-ordinator and intelligence analysts with access to force IT systems as well as national and international intelligence sources. This approach helps to enhance the quality of organised crime group mapping, reduce inconsistency, increase objectivity

and ultimately improve collective understanding of the threat posed by organised crime groups among police forces and their partners. HMIC has recommended in a previous report that this model should be adopted across England and Wales. This report also states that both forces and ROCUs should do more to exploit mapping data as a way of understanding patterns and trends in serious and organised crime.<sup>79</sup>

## **Responding to serious and organised crime**

Forces need to be able to respond to serious and organised crime when it occurs. This could take the form of investigation and prosecution in some cases, or it may involve disrupting the activity of organised crime groups – for example by restricting their financial assets, limiting their movements using court orders or using other forms of intervention. As with threat assessment, it is essential that both investigation and disruption are carried out in conjunction with partner organisations, many of which have powers which can be brought to bear against organised criminals.

HMIC expects forces to demonstrate:

- a clear and objective means of prioritising organised crime groups for intervention, working closely with regional organised crime units;
- regular oversight and scrutiny of all investigations and disruptive activity against organised crime groups;
- routine engagement with partner organisations as well as neighbourhood policing teams as part of a cohesive response to serious and organised crime;
- appropriate use of specialist capabilities such as undercover policing and surveillance provided by regional organised crime units;
- a good understanding of the effects of their activity on serious and organised crime; and
- a commitment to continual learning from experience.

### **Management and prioritisation of activity**

Forces need to use their understanding of serious and organised criminal threats to inform decisions about how their activity is prioritised and how they deploy their resources. According to the *Serious and Organised Crime Strategy*, there are approximately 5,500 organised crime groups operating in the UK, comprising

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<sup>79</sup> *Regional Organised Crime Units: A review of capability and effectiveness*, HMIC, 2015. Available at [www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/wp-content/uploads/regional-organised-crime-units.pdf](http://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/wp-content/uploads/regional-organised-crime-units.pdf)

approximately 37,000 individual members<sup>80</sup> and these numbers may have increased since the strategy was published in 2013. Organised crime groups are not static – they may splinter, merge, evolve and grow on a regular basis. They may be active at different times, presenting changing threats to communities. The police need to be alive to these threats and, given the finite resources available to them, prioritise interventions in order to provide the best possible protection to the public.

Most forces manage and prioritise activity aimed at tackling OCGs effectively. There are regular meetings held to review operations and decide which organised crime groups should be investigated and disrupted. These decisions are generally informed appropriately by organised crime group mapping scores, which forces use to help them determine the most appropriate response to each group, although this is not the case in all forces.

### **Tackling organised crime**

Merseyside Police ran Operation Highgate to tackle an organised crime group which was dealing drugs, causing anti-social behaviour, intimidating communities and using firearms. The force's response encompassed elements of prevent, prepare, protect and pursue, in line with the Government strategy. The force worked with partners to determine a co-ordinated response. Residents were initially reluctant to provide evidence, but in the end, 45 witness statements were obtained. Witness care was a primary consideration and the force ensured that witnesses were contacted daily and provided with reassurance and support. The operation resulted in the dismantling of the OCG. Cash, drugs and firearms were seized, and a public house was closed down using closure order powers.

### **Oversight of investigations**

Most forces assign responsibility for managing organised crime groups to 'lead responsible officers' (LROs) in line with national guidance. Every mapped organised crime group should have a named LRO assigned to it. These officers make decisions about how to tackle specific organised crime groups over a period of time – often several months or even years. LROs should devise tailored plans for each organised crime group, explore suitable overt and covert policing tactics and bring the powers of partner agencies to bear against organised criminals when this is appropriate. LROs in most forces devise good management plans for organised crime groups, structured in a way which reflects the four elements of the Government's strategy (prevent, pursue, protect, prepare).

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<sup>80</sup> *Serious and Organised Crime Strategy*, HM Government, October 2013, para 2.11. Available at [www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/248645/Serious\\_and\\_Organised\\_Crime\\_Strategy.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/248645/Serious_and_Organised_Crime_Strategy.pdf)

However, in some forces, HMIC found that officers and staff do not understand who performs the LRO function or what the role should entail. In a number of cases, this is due to the LRO function being moved from one department to another as part of structural change initiatives. The LRO function can be performed by specialist detectives, neighbourhood officers or intelligence analysts, but it is vital that responsibilities are assigned and clearly understood. Failure to do so creates a risk that organised crime groups are not managed as actively as they should be, and opportunities are missed to disrupt their activity.

All forces review their response to the most active or harmful organised crime groups on a regular basis and in some detail. This helps to ensure that clear objectives are set, and that progress towards these is monitored. The most effective forces have regular central oversight of all the organised crime groups for which they are responsible. This allows them to respond quickly if an organised crime group starts to commit more serious offences, or if a force realises that it has only a partial understanding of an organised crime group's activity. However, HMIC found that scrutiny of less active groups is infrequent in many forces. It is appropriate that organised crime groups which are not subject to a full police response are not reviewed as frequently or thoroughly as those which are under investigation or the target of specific operational activity. However, forces should ensure that they have regular oversight of all organised crime groups for which they are responsible.

### **Investigation and disruption**

Forces generally conduct good-quality investigations into serious and organised crime, particularly those involving drug dealing conspiracies. HMIC examined one drugs and money laundering investigation in detail from each force, and found these were generally of a high standard. HMIC found good use of specialist officers and capabilities, the investigations were well structured with most recorded on appropriate IT systems which provide case building capability. On nearly every occasion, clear objectives had been set as part of the investigation and decisions were recorded correctly.

The ability to conduct financial investigations is a vital tool in the fight against serious and organised crime. Many organised criminals are adept at laundering the proceeds of crime and evading justice – for example by corrupting officials. This aspect of the investigations examined was variable. Most forces pursue confiscation orders appropriately through the courts, helping to recover assets acquired through criminal means. However, HMIC found that financial investigators are not always involved in organised crime groups disruption from an early stage, which means that these opportunities are sometimes missed.

## **Regional collaboration**

In some cases, police forces need to use highly specialist approaches to tackling organised crime groups, such as surveillance or undercover policing methods. In recent years, specialist policing capabilities like these have been developed within ROCUs. This allows forces to pool resources, share intelligence and invest in specialist training and equipment. All forces have processes in place which allow them to draw on specialist capabilities held within ROCUs. Most forces request ROCU support when necessary, and assume responsibility for managing organised crime groups once disruption has taken place and regional activity is concluded. HMIC found some good examples of collaborative activity between forces, ROCUs and the NCA in order to investigate and disrupt the most harmful organised crime groups.

However, regional collaboration is not consistent across England and Wales and most forces could do more to exploit the specialist capabilities held within ROCUs. Some forces make very little use of ROCU resources, often citing differing priorities as the reason for this. Even in areas with relatively well-advanced collaborative arrangements, HMIC found that forces and ROCUs sometimes work in relative isolation, without taking opportunities to align their activity in order to maximise its effect. Some forces have been reluctant or slow to commit fully to the development of regionalised functions. In some regions, notably the West Midlands and Yorkshire and the Humber, forces have retained specialist capabilities 'in house', which has hampered the development of regional organised crime units and contributed to an inconsistent approach across the country. Some ROCUs are mature and well-established, while others do not provide the 13 capabilities which should be a minimum expectation. While the purpose, structure and maturity of ROCUs vary, it is important that all forces invest in these collaborative models and play an active part in their development.

## **Local response**

Responding to serious and organised crime cannot be the sole preserve of small teams of specialist detectives or regional units. To provide the most proactive and effective response, forces need to involve partner agencies and neighbourhood policing teams in disruptive activity as well as intelligence collection. It is not necessary (and indeed not always desirable) for neighbourhood teams to be familiar with the details of covert operations. Yet their knowledge of specific communities means that they are often best placed to spot potential organised criminal activity at an early stage, gather information and make it harder for organised criminals to operate freely. However, in 19 of the 43 forces in England and Wales, local officers are not sufficiently aware of organised crime groups operating in their area, not required to collect intelligence about organised crime groups and not engaged in local disruption activity against them. This means that important opportunities to tackle serious and organised crime are being missed.



## **Getting results and understanding effects**

Forces should have an understanding of the effect of their activity on serious and organised crime. This enables them to learn from experience, select the tactics which work best in any given situation and improve continually upon their approach to tackling serious and organised crime.

However, HMIC found that understanding among most forces of their effects on serious and organised crime is weak, with eight forces having a particularly poorly developed understanding. Although assessing the effect of enforcement activity on serious and organised crime is complex and difficult, this is an area where all forces should seek to improve. For example, when investigations into organised criminal activity are concluded, closing reports should be prepared to identify lessons learnt and ensure that effective tactics are shared internally and with partner organisations. However, HMIC found that these reports are not completed routinely, which makes it more difficult for forces to understand the effect of their activity and increase it over time by building on previous successes.

Several forces have adopted a new national measurement method for counting the number of occasions when organised crime groups have been disrupted. These are graded from 'major' (for example, if several principal members of an organised crime group are imprisoned) to 'negative' (such as if a police intelligence source is compromised, thereby strengthening the ability of an organised crime group to evade detection). Although it is basic, this measurement method should enable a national aggregation of disruptions if all forces were to implement it. However, HMIC found that the model is not yet well established; in those forces where it is used, it has only been introduced recently. We found that there is little independent verification of disruptions through formal panels as national guidelines propose. In some cases, this produces a tendency to grade disruptions too generously, leading to an inaccurate impression of the effect police activity has had.

All forces need to improve their understanding of how the investigations and disruptive activities which they carry out affect serious and organised crime. This means assessing the results that they have achieved in more detail, evaluating tactics and analysing data to identify trends and patterns. It also means developing ways of measuring the effect of police activity across all four elements of the government strategy; the current disruption model focuses on 'pursuit' outcomes but does little to help forces understand how their work has helped to prevent organised crime, protect victims and witnesses or prepare for serious incidents such as national cyber attacks. Yet very few forces do this, making it more difficult to measure success and enable further improvement.

## Preventing serious and organised crime

Although investigation and disruption form important parts of the police response to serious and organised crime, preventative activity alongside partner agencies should also be at the heart of their approach to tackling this type of offending.

Home Office guidance published in November 2014 emphasises the importance of preventing serious and organised crime,<sup>81</sup> identifies the police as one of several agencies with a part to play in this area. Fulfilling this role enables forces to understand the reasons how and why individuals become involved in serious and organised crime, spot those who are at risk of adopting an organised criminal lifestyle and intervene at an early stage to stop them from doing so.

This inspection focuses on the 'pursue' and 'prevent' elements of the Government's strategy for tackling serious and organised crime, which also includes 'protect' and 'prepare' strands. Through consultation with the police service, the Home Office and other interested parties, HMIC identified 'pursue' and 'prevent' as the areas where police forces have the most – and some of the most important – responsibilities. Police forces also have 'protect' and 'prepare' responsibilities, some of which are described in this report.

HMIC expects forces to demonstrate:

- a commitment to preventing serious and organised crime as part of a response to this type of offending which clearly encompasses all four strands of the government strategy (pursue, prevent, protect, prepare);
- tailored initiatives aimed at deterring people from becoming involved in serious and organised crime, co-ordinated with troubled families and similar programmes;
- the ability to monitor and manage those who commit serious and organised crime in order to minimise the risk that they pose to the public;
- use of interventions such as gang injunctions and serious crime prevention orders where appropriate, as part of a sustained commitment to preventing organised criminality; and
- regular communication with the public about serious and organised crime to promote successful prosecutions, provide reassurance, educate and discourage those at risk of being drawn into serious and organised crime from committing offences.

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<sup>81</sup> Serious and Organised Crime Strategy, HM Government, October 2013, paragraph 5.1, [www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/248645/Serious\\_and\\_Organised\\_Crime\\_Strategy.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/248645/Serious_and_Organised_Crime_Strategy.pdf)

## **Deterrence**

Deterring people from being drawn into serious and organised crime is a critical part of any force's response to this type of offending. This means identifying those who are on the periphery of organised crime and therefore particularly at risk – for example, the younger siblings or partners of organised crime group members – and developing interventions which stop those individuals from following a path into gang activity, violent crime or drug dealing. However, HMIC found that prevention is a much less well-established part of the police response to serious and organised crime than the pursuit and prosecution of offenders. Some forces have yet to translate the 'prevent' strand of the government strategy into operational reality.

Although we found examples of effective projects in some areas, local approaches to preventing serious and organised crime with partner agencies are poorly developed in most forces, and are not well-understood by officers and staff. Few forces have schemes in place designed to educate people or raise awareness of the reality and consequences of organised crime. Only a handful of forces have extended more general preventative work to help prevent serious and organised crime – for example troubled families initiatives, integrated offender management programmes, out of court disposals and restorative justice. Although they are not suitable for many organised crime group members, these types of projects can be effective in deterring those who are at risk of being drawn into organised crime, or who are involved in lower-level offending.

Similarly, some forces offer advice and support to professional 'enablers' such as lawyers, estate agents or accountants who may be corrupted by organised criminals. However, these are isolated initiatives and do not form a central part of forces' response to serious and organised crime; most continue to rely heavily on pursuit techniques and prosecution. While this approach is appropriate for some offenders, an enhanced focus on prevention could provide greater protection for the public from serious and organised crime.

## **Managing offenders**

Deterrence can be effective for those who are on the periphery of organised crime groups, but forces also need to be able to manage offenders who continue to commit serious and organised crime. This might involve rehabilitative programmes, gang exit schemes or monitoring organised criminals serving prison sentences to restrict their ability to form networks and continue to commit or enable crime.

The government strategy envisages tracking arrangements for organised criminals into and beyond prison to assess continually the threat they pose, and to minimise re-offending. This is known as a 'lifetime' approach to offender management. However, HMIC found that lifetime offender management is not well-established in most forces, or well-understood by officers and staff who in some cases do not understand whether the force or the ROCU is responsible for lifetime management.

We also found poor co-ordination of intelligence gathering activity in prisons, with forces and ROCUs both attempting to carry out similar work.

Some forces are good at monitoring the movements of organised criminals within the prison estate, and maintain contact with them during their sentence to reinforce the message that they know where they are, and that a plan is in place for when they are released. Forces also pass information about convicted organised criminals to the prison service. This can also help to ensure that they are managed appropriately and are not held in the same cells or prison wings, which can encourage violence between rival groups or make it easier for criminal networks to form and develop. However, this approach is not evident in all forces, and information sharing with the prison service needs to improve to ensure that all organised criminals in prison are monitored closely and managed effectively.

Forces have a range of options available to them for managing offenders who are not in prison, for example Serious Crime Prevention Orders (SCPOs).<sup>82</sup> These are issued by courts and can be used to impose restrictions on criminals' activities or associations. However, forces have been slow to grasp opportunities in relation to these orders, and have applied for only a small number.

At the time of our inspection, several forces were in the process of making their first applications for an SCPO, or had been granted recently their first one. Courts will only approve applications for these orders if they are satisfied that they will be monitored correctly to ensure that offenders do not breach the conditions imposed. However, HMIC again found that there is a lack of clarity about who takes responsibility for this. For example, SCPOs are sometimes obtained by ROCUs with an expectation that these will be managed by forces, which are not necessarily aware or prepared to do so. This needs to improve if forces are fully to exploit the potential of SCPOs.

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<sup>82</sup> A Serious Crime Prevention Order (SCPO) is a court order that is used to protect the public by preventing, restricting or disrupting a person's involvement in serious crime; for example, restricting who he or she can associate with, restricting his or her travel, or placing an obligation to report his or her financial affairs to the police. Available from: [www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/415969/Fact\\_sheet\\_-\\_SCPOs\\_-\\_Act.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/415969/Fact_sheet_-_SCPOs_-_Act.pdf)

A small, specialist team within the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) is responsible for the lifetime management of offenders who are subject to Serious Crime Prevention Orders (SCPOs) issued upon their conviction. These orders apply restrictions on the activities an offender can undertake, such as owning multiple mobile telephones or frequenting certain venues, which if breached can result in an immediate recall to custody to serve an additional period in prison. When offenders subject to SCPOs are released from prison a team of five officers is responsible for co-ordinating police activity to monitor them in the form of a tailored plan which may involve periodic surveillance of the offender. The MPS submits the application for SCPOs in conjunction with the CPS, and the force's team has developed a good understanding of how to secure SCPOs. The force maintains a library of successfully used clauses which it has shared with other police forces to reduce the likelihood of orders being declined due to inappropriate clauses, and save duplication of research and drafting by other forces and their local CPS partners. HMIC considers this to be an example of best practice by the MPS.

## Communicating with the public

The *Serious and Organised Crime Strategy* encourages a philosophy of communicating with the public, in particular to publicise convictions and successful asset seizures.<sup>83</sup> An explicit aim of the strategy is 'more and better education and communications about organised crime', and it also contains an expectation that the police will keep the public informed of operational activity aimed at tackling serious and organised crime.<sup>84</sup> Communication needs to be linked to force activity aimed at preventing serious and organised crime, as public messages can be a means of achieving this aim as well as providing reassurance and improving trust.

HMIC found some examples of forces communicating well with the public about serious and organised crime. Many publicise successes in this area, particularly where organised criminals have received lengthy sentences following force investigations. Often these messages are conveyed to the public via traditional local print media, although some forces also use social media such as Twitter to inform communities of the outcomes of enforcement activity. Some are more innovative – for example, Dyfed-Powys Police invites television crews to film arrests, and consults local communities once an operation has been concluded to gauge its effect from their perspective.

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<sup>83</sup> *Serious and Organised Crime Strategy*, HM Government, October 2013, paragraph 1.17, [www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/248645/Serious\\_and\\_Organised\\_Crime\\_Strategy.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/248645/Serious_and_Organised_Crime_Strategy.pdf)

<sup>84</sup> *Serious and Organised Crime Strategy*, HM Government, October 2013, para 7.11, [www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/248645/Serious\\_and\\_Organised\\_Crime\\_Strategy.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/248645/Serious_and_Organised_Crime_Strategy.pdf)

The best forces have plans in place to ensure that local communities understand the risk posed by serious and organised crime, and are aware of police and partner agency activity aimed at tackling organised criminals. They do this continually in the most affected locations, not just in the aftermath of a large operation. This can make people feel safer but it also helps to ensure that communities adopt a hostile stance towards organised criminals rather than tolerating, harbouring or revering them. These forces take opportunities to supplement press stories about successful enforcement activity with targeted messages aimed at reassuring residents, but also warning those known to be associated with organised criminals that they should cease their involvement with them.

However, in general, external communication about serious and organised crime is not an area of strength for the police service and a culture of secrecy still pervades some forces. Some do not regard it as a suitable subject for public communication, while others have been slow to adapt their approach to become more open about policing activities which traditionally have been conducted out of the public eye.

Clearly, the need to inform communities needs to be balanced with the importance of both operational security and the avoidance of unnecessary scaremongering. Some forces have yet to strike this balance. This area for improvement relates to the earlier discussion of an unwillingness or failure to communicate internally about serious and organised crime, principally with neighbourhood policing teams. Fighting serious and organised crime cannot be the sole preserve of specialist detectives; it is essential to harness the capabilities of the whole force, the powers of partner agencies and the support of local communities. It is not yet evident that forces have achieved this.

## **National policing responsibilities**

All forces have local plans and priorities, set by police and crime commissioners in consultation with the public. Alongside these, police and crime commissioners and chief constables have a legal obligation to have regard to *The Strategic Policing Requirement*.<sup>85</sup> This is a document first issued by the Home Secretary in 2012, and updated in 2015. The Strategic Policing Requirement (SPR) sets out six national threats which demand a co-ordinated response from police forces.

These six threats are: terrorism; serious and organised crime; a national cyber security incident; threats to public order or public safety which cannot be managed by a single police force acting alone; civil emergencies; and child sexual abuse.

It is beyond the scope of this inspection to assess in detail whether forces are capable of responding to these national threats, either individually or collectively.

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<sup>85</sup> *The Strategic Policing Requirement*, Home Office, March 2015. Available at [www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/417116/The\\_Strategic\\_Policing\\_Requirement.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/417116/The_Strategic_Policing_Requirement.pdf)

Instead, HMIC has checked whether forces have the necessary arrangements in place to test their own preparedness for dealing with these threats, should they materialise. These arrangements include threat assessment, the assignment of responsibilities to senior officers and procedures for conducting exercises with other forces and partner organisations. It is not possible to conclude on the basis of the evidence collected whether forces would be capable of responding effectively in the event of a civil emergency, cyber incident or terrorist attack, for example. Counter-terrorism has been proposed as the subject of a thematic inspection by HMIC in 2016.

HMIC found that all forces have the basic necessary arrangements in place to test their ability to respond to SPR threats. They assess the threats specified in the SPR on a regular basis to ensure that they understand them. There are good leadership arrangements in place, with named chief officers taking responsibility for how forces prepare for specific threats – often as part of regional collaborations. Collaborative arrangements are in place in the East Midlands and Eastern regions.

Forces conduct regular exercises to test their ability to respond to SPR threats, frequently with other forces, law enforcement agencies and other partner organisations. These are often tailored to the local area to ensure that they are relevant – for example forces responsible for policing major roads, nuclear installations or air shows make these the focus of exercises. These activities allow forces to test how well prepared they are to work with one another as well as external organisations. Several forces have responded to real events as well as scenarios in the last year – for example, Gwent Police worked with a number of other forces to ensure that the 2014 NATO summit passed without incident. Exercises are reviewed to identify and act upon opportunities for learning and improvement.

## Conclusion and recommendations

As we set out in the preceding chapters:

- HMIC has graded most forces as good (35) or outstanding (3) in relation to the effectiveness with which they **prevent crime and anti-social behaviour** and keep people safe. These are the principal objectives of policing; and almost all forces are meeting the standard.
- Most are also either good (32) or outstanding (3) in how they **tackle the most serious crimes**. The public can therefore have confidence that the police are generally working well to keep them safe in these respects.
- However, we are concerned that 16 forces require improvement in how they **investigate crime**, in particular in relation to their ability to access digital evidence quickly, and to show that investigations are adequately supervised. This is a broadly similar picture to last year; we hope to see improvements in 2016.

These findings, combined with the relatively poor performance regarding the support of **vulnerable victims** (in which 27 forces were judged as requires improvement, and 4 as inadequate), result in 18 forces being assessed as requiring improvement in their overall effectiveness:

Outstanding	Good	Requires improvement	Inadequate
1	24	18	0

One force (Durham Constabulary) was judged to be outstanding.

In addition to these findings and conclusions at question level, some overarching themes are apparent:

### Capabilities

In launching last year's annual assessment of the state of policing in England and Wales, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary stated: "Although performing well in many respects, the police are falling behind the curve of rapidly changing



criminality, policing the crimes of today with the methods of yesterday and insufficiently prepared for the crimes of the future”.<sup>86</sup> This year’s effectiveness inspection found a similar picture.

Forces need to increase the level and capability of specialist support available to undertake the specialist and time-consuming work in areas such as digital evidence-recovery, and protecting vulnerable people. Many forces are beginning to adapt to these growing demands, for example by increasing the number of detectives in specialist policing roles. However, all forces need to be able to anticipate these demands and develop their workforce plans accordingly.

### **Evidence-based policing**

In the 2014 effectiveness inspection, HMIC found that forces’ ability to learn from what works, and evaluate their own practice, was limited. This year, while HMIC found impressive examples of this working well, this is still generally the case. This absence of systematic understanding, learning and sharing of evidence of what works (both within the service, and with partner organisations) has implications for police effectiveness at a local and national level, across all four areas of our inspection, and should be addressed.

### **Neighbourhood policing**

While most forces remain good at preventing crime and anti-social behaviour, and keeping people safe, the broadening of neighbourhood functions and the increase of abstractions has potential implications for all areas of police effectiveness. For instance:

- it can reduce the amount of protected time available for preventative activity, including early intervention to protect vulnerable people from harm, and to manage offenders in order to help prevent further offending;
- it can damage the quality of volume crime investigation; and
- it can limit the ability of these teams to play their part in identifying and disrupting threats such as organised crime and terrorism.

It is crucial that forces undertake a proper analysis of the implications of changes they have made to neighbourhood models, and the work of their neighbourhood teams, so they can assure themselves that their core functions are not being eroded.

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<sup>86</sup> Statement made by HM Chief Inspector of Constabulary Sir Thomas Winsor at the launch of his annual assessment of policing in England and Wales 2013/14. Text available at [www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/news/news-feed/policing-the-crimes-of-today-with-the-methods-of-yesterday/](http://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/news/news-feed/policing-the-crimes-of-today-with-the-methods-of-yesterday/)

## Recommendations

### Recommendation 1

There continue to be significant delays in digital evidence-recovery, with few plans to tackle this in the long term, or nationally.

**By 1 December 2016**, the NPCC, working with the College of Policing, should have developed and begun to implement an adequate national plan to:

- reduce delays in the examination of digital devices to ensure that these do not have a detrimental effect on the timeliness of investigations; and
- bring together expertise and innovation in digital examination from forces across England and Wales, to ensure a co-ordinated and informed national response.

### Recommendation 2

Vulnerable victims have to be identified as such in order to receive the extra support they need (and to which they are entitled under the provisions of the *Code of Practice for Victims of Crime*). Accurate and consistent identification is therefore both the first step and crucial to the police's ability to assess the risks which victims face, to respond and investigate appropriately, and to keep them safe.

**By 1 September 2016**, the College of Policing, working with the NPCC, should have established consistent approaches to defining when a person is vulnerable, and to collecting data on how effectively vulnerable people are identified. These processes should be adopted no later than 31 December 2016, so that more vulnerable victims are identified effectively and consistently.

In addition to these recommendations, and those set out in the domestic abuse and the ROCU thematic reports, there are several areas where we found unacceptable inconsistency in practice between forces. These areas for improvement are detailed in the relevant force reports. We summarise the major themes here, as they are areas in which progress should be established when we inspect forces in autumn 2016, as part of the next cycle of PEEL assessments.

There should be materially greater consistency in:

- use of integrated offender management teams: Forces which are using IOM teams solely to deal with prolific acquisitive crime offenders should establish whether more use could be made of the teams to tackle those offenders who cause the greatest harm, threat and risk to local communities;
-

- implementation of the Government's Serious and Organised Crime Strategy. In particular:
  - the further development of serious and organised crime local profiles in conjunction with other relevant agencies, with local partnership structures in place with responsibility for tackling serious and organised crime; and
  - an enhanced focus on preventing serious and organised crime through deterrence initiatives, serious crime prevention orders and lifetime offender management; and
- awareness of organised crime groups among neighbourhood teams, to ensure that they are in the best positions to be able to identify these groups, collect intelligence and disrupt their activities.

## **Next steps**

Findings and judgments from this year's PEEL inspection are being used in the design of the next cycle of effectiveness assessments. The detail of this is still to be confirmed; but given our concerns over neighbourhood policing, it will include a fuller analysis of the work of neighbourhood teams.

The four forces which were judged to be inadequate in how they support vulnerable victims are subject to revisits, to check on progress against recommendations. The results will be published in early summer 2016.

## Glossary

anti-social behaviour	conduct that has caused, or is likely to cause, harassment, alarm or distress to any person; conduct capable of causing nuisance or annoyance to a person in relation to that person's occupation of residential premises
capability	the ability to carry out a particular function
capacity	the resources available to carry out a particular function
central government funding	amount of money police forces receive from the government
chief officer	in police forces outside London: assistant chief constable, deputy chief constable and chief constable; in the Metropolitan Police Service: commander, deputy assistant commissioner, assistant commissioner, deputy commissioner and commissioner; in the City of London Police: commander, assistant commissioner and commissioner; includes a member of staff who holds equivalent status to an officer of these ranks
child sexual exploitation	sexual exploitation of children and young people under 18 involving exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where the young person receives something (e.g. food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, affection, gifts or money) as a result of them performing, and/or others performing on them, sexual acts
Code of Ethics	written guide to the principles that every member of the policing profession of England and Wales is expected to uphold and the standards of behaviour they are expected to meet
collaboration	arrangement under which two or more parties work together in the interests of their greater efficiency or effectiveness in order to achieve common or complementary objectives; collaboration arrangements extend to co-operation between police

forces and with other entities in the public, private and voluntary sectors

College of Policing

professional body for policing in England and Wales, established to set standards of professional practice, accredit training providers, promote good practice based on evidence, provide support to police forces and others in connection with the protection of the public and the prevention of crime, and promote ethics, values and standards of integrity in policing; its powers to set standards were conferred by the Police Act 1996 as amended by the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014; under section 40C, Police Act 1996, the Home Secretary has power to direct the College, requiring it to exercise any statutory function vested in the College, and to carry out such other duties for the purpose of furthering the efficiency, effectiveness or integrity of the police as the Home Secretary specifies

cyber-crime

offences committed by means of communications technology; these fall into one of two categories: new offences such as offences against computer systems and data, dealt with in the Computer Misuse Act 1990 (for example breaking into computer systems to steal data); and old offences committed using new technology, where networked computers and other devices are used to facilitate the commission of an offence (for example, the transfer of illegal images)

demand

the amount and type of service that the public and other organisations require of the police

emerging crime

crimes that are being identified more regularly, and are rising in prominence and public awareness; the crimes often involve exploiting modern technology and include cyber-crime, child sexual exploitation and identity-related theft

front line

those members of police forces who are in everyday contact with the public and who directly intervene to keep people safe and enforce the law

governance	the method by which the structures and processes of a force relate to its efficiency and effectiveness, including how well the outcomes of the force's goals are met and overseen
intelligence gathering	actions that provide support to officers, PCSOs and staff in relation to the prevention and investigation of crime; the information in question includes information in relation to the people who are committing crimes and information about premises and vehicles linked to crimes
local policing	approach taken by a team of officers, PCSOs, and staff working in neighbourhoods to keep local communities safe; the teams often comprise neighbourhood policing teams and response teams, and sometimes investigation teams
missing person	anyone whose whereabouts cannot be established where the circumstances are out of character or the context suggests the person may be the victim of a crime or at risk of harm to themselves or another
neighbourhood policing	activities carried out by neighbourhood teams primarily focused on a community or a particular neighbourhood area, also known as community policing
organised crime	serious crime that is planned, co-ordinated and conducted by people working together on a continuing basis; often motivated by financial gain and characterised by violence or the threat of violence
partner organisations	public sector entities, such as those concerned with health, education, social services and the management of offenders, which from time to time work with the police to attain their common or complementary objectives
partnership	co-operative arrangement between two or more organisations, from any sector, who share responsibility and undertake to use their respective powers and resources to try to achieve a specified common objective

PCSO	see Police Community Support Officer
PEEL efficiency inspection	HMIC's all-force inspection examining efficiency; part of the PEEL programme
PEEL programme	HMIC's police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy (PEEL) assessment; an annual programme of all-force inspections that reports on how well each force in England and Wales cuts crime (effectiveness), provides value for money (efficiency), and provides a service that is legitimate in the eyes of the public (legitimacy)
police and crime commissioner	elected entity for a police area, established under section 1, Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011, responsible for securing the maintenance of the police force for that area and securing that the police force is efficient and effective; holds the relevant chief constable to account for the policing of the area; establishes the budget and police and crime plan for the police force; appoints and may, after due process, remove the chief constable from office
police and crime plan	plan prepared by the police and crime commissioner which sets out the police and crime objectives, the policing which the police force is to provide, the financial and other resources which the police and crime commissioner will provide to the chief constable, the means by which the chief constable will report to the police and crime commissioner on the provision of policing, the means by which the chief constable's performance will be measured, the crime and disorder reduction grants which the police and crime commissioner is to make, and the conditions to which such grants are to be made; the police and crime commissioner's police and crime objectives are the objectives for the policing of the area, the reduction of crime and disorder in the area, and the discharge by the police force of its national or international functions
Police Community Support Officer	uniformed non-warranted officer employed by a territorial police force or the British Transport Police in England; established by the Police Reform Act 2002

police officer	individual with warranted powers of arrest, search and detention who, under the direction of the chief constable, is deployed to uphold the law, protect life and property, maintain and restore the Queen's peace, and pursue and bring offenders to justice
police station	police building which is wholly or mainly for the use of officers, PCSOs and staff
public protection	section of a police force dedicated to ensuring the safety of members of the public who are in danger of becoming a victim of crimes such as child sexual exploitation, domestic abuse or stalking and harassment
response function	uniformed police patrol officers whose primary role is to attend incidents when first reported to the police, are in everyday contact with the public and who intervene directly to keep people safe and uphold the law
spending review	process by which HM Treasury sets the expenditure of government departments
threat, harm and risk	as part of the second stage of the national decision model, police officers are expected to apply a judgment around the threat of risk and harm to the public, during spontaneous incidents or planned operations
Valuing the Police	annual HMIC inspection programme which tracked how police forces had planned to reduce their expenditure; forerunner to PEEL inspections
vulnerable	condition of a person who is in need of special care, support or protection because of age, disability or risk of abuse and neglect
workforce	the people employed by an organisation; in the case of the police, it includes officers, even though they are holders of the office of constable and therefore not employees of their police forces; it also includes police community support officers and staff



## Annex A: About the data

The information presented in this report comes from a range of sources, including published data, inspection fieldwork and data collected from all 43 geographic police forces in England and Wales.

Where HMIC has collected data directly from police forces, we have taken reasonable steps to agree with forces the design of the data collection, and to verify the data that we have collected.

### Data from HMIC-designed collections

Data	Timings	Provided by
ASB incidents	12 months to 30 June 2015	All forces
Vulnerable victims	12 months to 31 March 2015	35 forces
Domestic abuse offences	12 months to 31 March 2015	All forces
Organised Criminal Gangs (OCGs)	As at 30 June 2015	All forces (breakdown not provided by MPS)
GAIN referrals	12 months to 30 June 2015	39 forces

The data were verified in the following ways:

- HMIC carried out checks on the data forces submitted and raised queries with forces where figures were notably different from other forces or were internally inconsistent.
- All forces were asked to check the final data used to support the report and correct any errors identified.

## **Additional data collected by HMIC**

### **File review**

HMIC reviewed a sample of rape, burglary, offences of serious violence and actual bodily harm cases. In most forces the review consisted of 10 cases from each crime category but in some larger forces the sample was increased to 15. In total, 1784 files were reviewed. The file review was designed to provide a broad overview of the identification of vulnerability and the effectiveness of the investigation.

### **Online Survey of Community Safety Partners**

HMIC carried out a non-statistical online survey of other agencies involved in community safety partnerships. The purpose of this survey was to gather information from community safety partners to find out what their thoughts were about how police forces were working with them to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour and keep people safe.

A total of 461 surveys were completed between 3 June 2015 and 15 August 2015. A variety of organisations participated including representatives from Local Authorities, voluntary sector organisations and the Fire and Rescue Authority, to name some specific examples.

## **Data from other sources**

### **Recorded crime data**

Published by Office for National statistics (ONS) - Heading 4

[www.ons.gov.uk/ons/publications/re-reference-tables.html?edition=tcm%3A77-388796](http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/publications/re-reference-tables.html?edition=tcm%3A77-388796)

### **Crime outcomes**

Published by the Home Office

[www.gov.uk/government/statistics/crime-outcomes-in-england-and-wales-year-to-june-2015-data-tables](http://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/crime-outcomes-in-england-and-wales-year-to-june-2015-data-tables)

### **Police budgets**

Data provided by Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) Police Objective Analysis (POA) data. Data were collected from forces in summer 2014.

## **Population estimates**

Mid year 2014 estimates, published by Office for National statistics (ONS)

[www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/pop-estimate/population-estimates-for-uk--england-and-wales--scotland-and-northern-ireland/mid-2014/stb---mid-2014-uk-population-estimates.html](http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/pop-estimate/population-estimates-for-uk--england-and-wales--scotland-and-northern-ireland/mid-2014/stb---mid-2014-uk-population-estimates.html)

## **Victim satisfaction data**

The Victim Satisfaction Survey covers victims of four offence types:

- domestic burglary
- violent crime
- vehicle crime
- racist incidents

The survey identifies the victim's satisfaction with their whole experience, initial contact, police actions, follow-up and treatment.

## **Confidence intervals**

Results from surveys are estimates and not precise figures. Confidence intervals help to interpret the certainty of these estimates, by showing the range of values around the estimate that the true result is likely to be within. In general terms, the smaller the sample size, the larger the uncertainty. It is important to bear in mind that confidence intervals are only a guide for the size of sampling error.

## Annex B: Graded judgments

HMIC has graded every force on each of the four effectiveness questions:

1. How effective is the force at preventing crime and anti-social behaviour, and keeping people safe?
2. How effective is the force at investigating crime and managing offenders?
3. How effective is the force at protecting from harm those who are vulnerable, and supporting victims?
4. How effective is the force at tackling serious and organised crime, including its arrangement for fulfilling its national policing responsibilities?

These four grades were then combined in an overall grade, which provides the force-by-force answers to the overarching effectiveness inspection question:

- How effective is the force at keeping people safe and reducing crime?

### Judgments

The judgments are:

- outstanding;
- good;
- requires improvement; and
- inadequate.

Judgment is made against how effective the force is at keeping people safe and reducing crime, it is not an assessment of the overall legitimacy of policing. In applying the categories HMIC considers whether:

- the effectiveness of the force is achieving is good, or exceeds this standard sufficiently to be judged as outstanding;
- the effectiveness of the force requires improvement, and/or there are some weaknesses; or
- the effectiveness of the force is inadequate because it is considerably lower than is expected.

Our judgments for each force are set out in the table below.

## Effectiveness judgments

Force	Q1. Preventing crime and anti-social behaviour	Q2. Investigating crime and managing offenders	Q3. Protecting vulnerable people	Q4. Tackling serious and organised crime	Overall effectiveness judgment
<b>Avon and Somerset</b>	Good	Requires improvement	Requires improvement	Good	Requires improvement
<b>Bedfordshire</b>	Requires improvement	Good	Inadequate	Requires improvement	Requires improvement
<b>Cambridgeshire</b>	Good	Requires improvement	Requires improvement	Good	Requires improvement
<b>Cheshire</b>	Outstanding	Good	Good	Requires improvement	Good
<b>City of London</b>	Good	Good	Requires improvement	Good	Good
<b>Cleveland</b>	Requires improvement	Good	Requires improvement	Good	Requires improvement
<b>Cumbria</b>	Good	Requires improvement	Requires improvement	Requires improvement	Requires improvement
<b>Derbyshire</b>	Good	Good	Good	Outstanding	Good
<b>Devon and Cornwall</b>	Good	Good	Requires improvement	Good	Good
<b>Dorset</b>	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good
<b>Durham</b>	Outstanding	Outstanding	Good	Outstanding	Outstanding
<b>Dyfed-Powys</b>	Good	Requires improvement	Requires improvement	Good	Requires improvement
<b>Essex</b>	Requires improvement	Requires improvement	Inadequate	Good	Requires improvement
<b>Gloucestershire</b>	Good	Requires improvement	Requires improvement	Requires improvement	Requires improvement
<b>Greater Manchester</b>	Good	Requires improvement	Good	Good	Good
<b>Gwent</b>	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good

<b>Hampshire</b>	Good	Good	Requires improvement	Good	<b>Good</b>
<b>Hertfordshire</b>	Good	Good	Requires improvement	Good	<b>Good</b>
<b>Humberside</b>	Requires improvement	Requires improvement	Requires improvement	Good	<b>Requires improvement</b>
<b>Kent</b>	Good	Good	Requires improvement	Good	<b>Good</b>
<b>Lancashire</b>	Good	Good	Good	Good	<b>Good</b>
<b>Leicestershire</b>	Good	Good	Requires improvement	Good	<b>Good</b>
<b>Lincolnshire</b>	Good	Requires improvement	Requires improvement	Good	<b>Requires improvement</b>
<b>Merseyside</b>	Good	Good	Good	Outstanding	<b>Good</b>
<b>Metropolitan</b>	Good	Requires improvement	Requires improvement	Good	<b>Requires improvement</b>
<b>Norfolk</b>	Outstanding	Good	Good	Good	<b>Good</b>
<b>North Wales</b>	Good	Requires improvement	Requires improvement	Good	<b>Requires improvement</b>
<b>North Yorkshire</b>	Good	Good	Requires improvement	Good	<b>Good</b>
<b>Northamptonshire</b>	Requires improvement	Requires improvement	Requires improvement	Requires improvement	<b>Requires improvement</b>
<b>Northumbria</b>	Good	Good	Good	Good	<b>Good</b>
<b>Nottinghamshire</b>	Good	Good	Requires improvement	Good	<b>Good</b>
<b>South Wales</b>	Good	Good	Requires improvement	Good	<b>Good</b>
<b>South Yorkshire</b>	Good	Requires improvement	Requires improvement	Good	<b>Requires improvement</b>
<b>Staffordshire</b>	Good	Requires improvement	Inadequate	Good	<b>Requires improvement</b>
<b>Suffolk</b>	Good	Good	Requires improvement	Good	<b>Good</b>

<b>Surrey</b>	Good	Requires improvement	Inadequate	Requires improvement	<b>Requires improvement</b>
<b>Sussex</b>	Good	Good	Good	Good	<b>Good</b>
<b>Thames Valley</b>	Good	Good	Good	Good	<b>Good</b>
<b>Warwickshire</b>	Good	Good	Requires improvement	Requires improvement	<b>Requires improvement</b>
<b>West Mercia</b>	Good	Good	Requires improvement	Requires improvement	<b>Requires improvement</b>
<b>West Midlands</b>	Good	Good	Requires improvement	Good	<b>Good</b>
<b>West Yorkshire</b>	Good	Requires improvement	Requires improvement	Good	<b>Good</b>
<b>Wiltshire</b>	Good	Good	Requires improvement	Good	<b>Good</b>

## Annex C: ROCU recommendations<sup>87</sup>

### Recommendation 1

By 1 April 2016, all regional organised crime units (ROCUs) - except London - should have in place the '13 capabilities' identified within the ROCU development programme.

### Recommendation 2

By 30 June 2016, the constituent forces of the London ROCU should ensure that they have reliable access to the '13 capabilities' identified within the ROCU development programme.

### Recommendation 3

By 30 June 2016, every police force in England and Wales should publish an action plan that sets out in detail what steps it will take to make maximum use of the ROCU capabilities, minimise duplication at force level, and ensure that the use of shared ROCU resources are prioritised between regional forces. This action plan should be developed:

- in consultation with police and crime commissioners, ROCUs and the ROCU executive board;
- with regard to both local force priorities (in particular, as specified in the relevant police and crime plan) and National Crime Agency (NCA) priorities; and
- with regard to the other recommendations contained in this report.

### Recommendation 4

By 30 June 2016, the ROCU executive board – working with forces, the NCA and the Home Office – should produce a plan for the development of ROCUs, which includes a clear statement of shared purpose, and ROCUs should thereafter implement it.

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<sup>87</sup> These are repeated in full from HMIC's December 2015 ROCU report. See *Regional Organised Crime Units: A review of capability and effectiveness*, HMIC, 2015. Available at [www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/wp-content/uploads/regional-organised-crime-units.pdf](http://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/wp-content/uploads/regional-organised-crime-units.pdf)



## **Recommendation 5**

By 30 June 2016, the national police lead for serious and organised crime should work with the Assistant Commissioner with national counter-terrorist responsibilities to produce a plan for introducing joint regional management arrangements where this is appropriate and applicable, with the designated assistant or deputy chief constable for each ROCU taking management responsibility for both serious and organised crime and counter-terrorist policing.

## **Recommendation 6**

By 30 June 2016, ROCUs, counter-terrorist units (CTUs), counter-terrorist intelligence units (CTIUs) and the NCA should produce a long term plan for ensuring they are co-located wherever possible, and thereafter implement it.

## **Recommendation 7**

By 31 March 2016, the Home Office – working with the ROCU executive board – should have assessed the benefits and viability of providing ROCUs with a three to five-year funding settlement that puts them in a position to make long-term investment decisions which support the development of efficient and effective regional capabilities.

## **Recommendation 8**

By 30 June 2016, all ROCUs, forces and the NCA should adopt a common approach to the assessment of serious and organised criminal threats.

## **Recommendation 9**

By 30 June 2016, the ROCU executive board should produce a plan for improving the Government Agency Intelligence Network (GAIN) operating model to enable large scale intelligence-sharing between government departments, agencies and the private sector, and this plan should thereafter be implemented.

## **Recommendation 10**

Beginning immediately, ROCUs, the NCA, National Offender Management Service and the national counter-terrorism network should exchange information routinely about all organised crime group members serving prison sentences to ensure the risks they pose are properly managed.

## **Recommendation 11**

By 30 June 2016, ROCUs should assume responsibility for organised crime group mapping on behalf of their constituent forces, working closely with their constituent forces to ensure that this process is informed by local intelligence.

## Annex D: Domestic abuse recommendations<sup>88</sup>

### Recommendation 1: National Oversight Group

The National Oversight Group, chaired by the Home Secretary, has played a vitally important and successful role in improving the police response to domestic abuse through its public scrutiny of progress against each of HMIC's original national recommendations. The National Oversight Group should continue its work and its membership should be reviewed and updated to reflect the wide-ranging effort that is required beyond policing and across the broader public services to tackle domestic abuse. The current group should be enlarged so as to include membership from the Department of Health and NHS England, the Department for Education, local government and social care organisations.

The National Oversight Group should continue to monitor and report on the progress made in implementing this further set of recommendations as well as the original recommendations that are outstanding. There should be a renewed focus on the importance of joint multi-agency working on preventative approaches and early intervention with perpetrators.

### Recommendation 2: National domestic abuse data monitoring

The national Rape Monitoring Group has developed a range of statistics that help forces analyse their responses to rape and serious sexual offences. The Home Office, the Ministry of Justice, the National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC), the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners (APCC), the College of Policing, HMIC and domestic abuse organisations should work together to develop a data set relating to domestic abuse which will enable more thorough analysis of how domestic abuse is dealt with in a force area. As for the Rape Monitoring Group, a process should be put in place to publish this data set periodically.

Using these data, police and crime commissioners, police, prosecutors and agencies within the criminal justice system will have an enhanced view of how domestic abuse is dealt with in their local area. For chief constables, the data will assist with an improved understanding of force performance on domestic abuse. For police and crime commissioners, the data will assist in setting force priorities and holding the force to account in respect of its response to victims of domestic abuse.

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<sup>88</sup> These are repeated in full from HMIC's December 2015 domestic abuse report. See *Increasingly Everyone's Business: A progress report on the police response to domestic abuse*, HMIC, December 2015. Available at [www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/wp-content/uploads/increasingly-everyones-business-domestic-abuse-progress-report.pdf](http://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/wp-content/uploads/increasingly-everyones-business-domestic-abuse-progress-report.pdf)

The work to establish the data set relating to domestic abuse should be completed by March 2016. The new arrangements for collecting this data should be in place by June 2016 and the first publication of the national data set should take place before the end of the 2016/17 financial year.

### **Recommendation 3: Update of forces' domestic abuse action plans**

By March 2016, every police force in England and Wales should update its domestic abuse action plan; determine what more it can do to address the areas for further improvement highlighted in this report and specified below; and publish its revised action plan accordingly:

- Understanding and identifying risk: Pending completion of the College of Policing's review of the evidence base for risk assessment in cases of domestic abuse (Recommendation 6 in *Everyone's business*), forces should ensure that their arrangements for assessing and managing risk are well understood and appropriately used by officers and staff across the force, are being put into practice and are supervised effectively. Once the College of Policing research is published in early 2016, forces should further review their guidance to officers and staff.
- Prioritising and allocating domestic abuse investigations: Domestic abuse cases should be prioritised and allocated for investigation on the basis of risk and there should be a clear allocation and prioritisation policy for high, medium and standard risk cases. Forces should ensure their arrangements for doing so are effective.
- Safeguarding victims at medium and standard risk: Recognising the dynamic nature of risk in domestic abuse situations, forces should ensure that there is appropriate safeguarding in place for victims at medium and standard risk throughout their involvement with the police with referral routes to partner organisations and early access to specialised support and advice where appropriate.
- Views of victims: Forces should have in place processes to seek regularly the views of victims of domestic abuse and to act on this feedback by incorporating changes into policy, practice and learning and development activities. These approaches should be reconsidered when the Home Office issues its guidance on obtaining the views of victims.
- Training: It is important that officers and staff understand the dynamics of domestic abuse and that their attitudes and behaviours reflect their knowledge. Forces should consider how best to ensure that officers and staff are able to identify and understand the wide range of violence, behaviours

and different perpetrators that fall under the definition of domestic abuse through training, learning and development activities. They should also ensure that their officers and staff demonstrate understanding and supportive attitudes and behaviours towards victims. In particular, forces should improve understanding and appreciation of the dynamics of domestic abuse, particularly in relation to coercive control. These activities should include the personal experiences of victims and the participation of local specialist domestic abuse organisations wherever possible. Training should be face-to-face (supported by but not substituted by e-learning). The College of Policing is researching approaches to training that support improvement in attitudes and behaviours. Once this research is complete and training developed as a result, forces should specify how it will be given priority and/or incorporated into their existing training programmes.

To ensure consistency, the College of Policing and the national policing lead on domestic abuse have agreed to provide further advice on the revisions to the existing action plans as soon as possible. The College of Policing and the national policing lead on domestic abuse should provide feedback on this work to the National Oversight Group.

Chief officers in each police force should continue to oversee and ensure full implementation of these action plans and offer regular feedback on progress to their police and crime commissioner. This should be a personal responsibility of the chief constable in each case.

## **Recommendation 4: Force progress reviews**

By June 2016, chief constables should review the progress made by their forces in giving full effect to their forces' stated priorities on domestic abuse. Every force in England and Wales should undertake a clear and specific assessment of its own progress in respect of domestic abuse, potentially through peer review, which should include reference to the following:

- the force's updated action plan on domestic abuse;
- the force's culture and values;
- the force's performance management framework;
- the force's approach to the use of data and evidence of what works in support of the development of a learning organisation;
- the reward and recognition policy in the force and the roles and behaviours that this rewards currently;
- the selection and promotion processes in the force;

- the messages and communications sent by the senior leadership team to the rest of the force about tackling domestic abuse;
- the development opportunities for officers and staff in the force; and
- force policy on how perpetrators and victims of domestic abuse who are employed by the force are managed.

To ensure consistency, the College of Policing and the national policing lead on domestic abuse have agreed to provide advice on the form and content of the assessment of progress by March 2016.

HMIC will draw on forces' assessment of progress on domestic abuse as part of its annual PEEL inspection in 2016.

Chief constables should as soon as practicable take whatever further action is necessary to build on the progress made in giving effect to their forces' stated priorities on domestic abuse. This should include action to raise awareness of domestic abuse to instil a deeper understanding of and commitment to addressing the often complex needs of victims of domestic abuse. Chief constables should also take steps to support, encourage and conspicuously value officers and staff who exemplify this understanding and commitment.

## **Recommendation 5: Innovation and establishing evidence-based good practice**

- Innovative practice in forces to tackle domestic abuse should be encouraged but it should be informed by robust, independent evaluation which demonstrates the effectiveness of that practice, particularly in terms of safeguarding people at risk of harm. Working in consultation with partners, forces should assess the available evidence that supports innovative practice before it is implemented and ensure that safety planning is built into any new practice from the outset. Where there is little or no available evidence, forces should be clear about the thinking behind the innovative practice and should carry out a thorough evaluation of the practice, ideally supported by the College of Policing, as quickly as possible.
- Multi-agency safeguarding hubs and central referral units: In the next six months, the National Oversight Group should commission a 'task and finish group' to evaluate the effectiveness of the various models in place for MASHs and CRUs in terms of the outcomes achieved for victims of domestic abuse. By Spring 2017, this task and finish group should provide forces with guidance and examples of good practice to illustrate how multi-agency arrangements most effectively share information, assess risk and undertake joint safeguarding activities to protect victims of domestic abuse. The group

should involve representatives from the Home Office, Department of Health, Department for Education and relevant inspectorates, as well as practitioners within forces and academics.

- Perpetrator programmes including integrated offender management: Reducing offending by perpetrators will save potential victims from abuse and help to reduce the demand on forces. As part of updating their action plans, forces should use the soon to be published research carried out by the College of Policing on perpetrator programmes and summary of existing initiatives to inform the development of their own programmes.
- Domestic Violence Protection Orders (DVPOs): The National Oversight Group should ensure that, by April 2016, further consideration is given to increasing the use and effectiveness of DVPOs. The Ministry of Justice should provide clear guidance on the DVPO process and sentencing guidelines for breaches of these orders.

## **Recommendation 6: Learning from domestic abuse homicides**

By September 2016, the Home Office should ensure that conclusions from domestic homicide reviews are shared swiftly and effectively with police forces, police and crime commissioners and domestic abuse practitioners. With the assistance of the College of Policing, the national policing lead on domestic abuse and domestic abuse practitioners from the voluntary sector, a system should be developed and implemented to collate learning from domestic homicides and to disseminate this learning on an annual basis to forces. They should also consider how forces can contribute effectively to and access the information held within the Femicide Census.