

# **PEEL 2021/22**

## **Police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy**

An inspection of Suffolk Constabulary

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# Overall summary

## Our judgments

Our inspection assessed how good Suffolk Constabulary is in 12 areas of policing. We make graded judgments in 10 of these 12 as follows:

Outstanding	Good	Adequate	Requires improvement	Inadequate
	Preventing crime	Investigating crime	Supporting victims	
	Treatment of the public	Responding to the public		
	Disrupting serious organised crime	Protecting vulnerable people		
	Managing offenders			
	Developing a positive workplace			
	Good use of resources			

We also inspected how well Suffolk Constabulary meets its obligations under the [Strategic Policing Requirement](#), and how well it protects the public from armed threats. We do not make graded judgments in these areas.

We set out our detailed findings about things the force is doing well and where the force should improve in the rest of this report.

Three forces volunteered to pilot our new approach to PEEL. These forces were:

- Dyfed-Powys Police;
- Suffolk Constabulary; and
- Merseyside Police.

Because these forces had volunteered to pilot our new approach, we offered them a revisit, during which we reviewed any new evidence that might alter one of our judgments. We didn't fully inspect the force again; instead, we focused on the areas where we had assessed the force needed to improve during our initial inspection.

We made our initial judgments in May 2021 and our revisit judgments in May 2022.

### **Data in this report**

For more information, please [view this report on our website](#) and select the 'About the data' section.

### **Important changes to PEEL**

In 2014, we introduced our police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy (PEEL) inspections, which assess the performance of all 43 police forces in England and Wales. Since then, we have been continuously adapting our approach and this year has seen the most significant changes yet.

We are moving to a more intelligence-led, continual assessment approach, rather than the annual [PEEL inspections](#) we used in previous years. For instance, we have integrated our rolling crime data integrity inspections into these PEEL assessments. Our PEEL victim service assessment will now include a crime data integrity element in at least every other assessment. We have also changed our approach to graded judgments. We now assess forces against the characteristics of good performance, set out in the [PEEL Assessment Framework 2021/22](#), and we more clearly link our judgments to causes of concern and areas for improvement. We have also expanded our previous four-tier system of judgments to five tiers. As a result, we can state more precisely where we consider improvement is needed and highlight more effectively the best ways of doing things.

However, these changes mean that it isn't possible to make direct comparisons between the grades awarded this year with those from previous PEEL inspections. A reduction in grade, particularly from good to adequate, doesn't necessarily mean that there has been a reduction in performance, unless we say so in the report.

## HM Inspector's observations

I congratulate Suffolk Constabulary for the way in which it has responded to the challenges it has faced over the past year, and on its performance in keeping people safe and reducing crime. The force has improved in many areas since our last PEEL inspection in 2019, but there still areas where it needs to improve.

I consider the findings below the most significant from our assessment of the force over the last year.

The telephone is the primary route for the public to contact the police. Suffolk Constabulary needs to improve how well it answers [101](#) calls from the public. Too many 101 calls are not being answered and there are long wait times for many callers. The force has recognised the issue and has a recovery plan. It is important that it succeeds in its ambition to offer an excellent 101 call handling service.

The force has invested much time and effort in providing its staff with the skills and ambition to provide excellent crime investigations to victims. Improvements are evident and most investigations are now effective. However, there is still much scope for improvement in the way that supervisors oversee investigations. And officers need to ensure that they always take relevant investigative opportunities.

Neighbourhood policing is an area where the force is performing well and improving. Its problem-solving work is having some success. This is helping to build confidence in the force and reassurance among its communities. We are pleased to see that the force works together with partner organisations to identify vulnerable victims and takes actions to help keep them safe. However, the force still needs to improve how it protects [vulnerable people](#). In particular, it needs to improve how well staff identify vulnerable people when they contact the force.

Leadership of the force is strong and ethical. Staff feel valued and have a sense of belonging. Wellbeing is a central theme throughout the force. Its objective is to establish itself as a stigma-free, supportive, proactive service where people feel safe and well at work.

Historically, Suffolk Constabulary has been among the lowest-funded forces in the country. This remains the case. As such, its effectiveness at managing funding and resources is notable.

My report sets out the detailed findings of this inspection. While I congratulate the officers and [staff](#) of Suffolk Constabulary for their efforts in keeping the public safe, I will monitor progress towards addressing areas where the force can improve further.



**Roy Wilsher**

HM Inspector of Constabulary

## Reducing crime assessment

We have identified seven themes underpinning a force's ability to reduce crime effectively which, taken together, allow an assessment of the extent to which the force is doing all it can to reduce crime. This is a narrative assessment, as police recorded crime figures can be affected by variations and changes in recording policy and practice, making it difficult to make comparisons over time.

The force is focused on crime prevention and is developing its problem-solving ethos. We found good examples of analytical work being used to solve problems, and preventative tactics being used by local officers working with partner agencies.

Other factors contributing to the force's ability to reduce crime include:

- Its extensive range of methods used to engage with its communities. This is helping to build trust and encourage the sharing of information.
- Its use of a range of specialists to support crime prevention and assist its communities and partners in this. These include problem-solving tactical advisers, schools' officers, and a 'design out crime' role.
- Its performance arrangements (focused on crime reduction and prevention), and its strong partnership and collaboration work, including the [domestic abuse](#) perpetrator scheme and operational work to tackle and prevent crimes that affect vulnerable people.
- Its effective [integrated offender management](#) programme, which focuses on people who commit high levels of crime.
- Its use of an analytical tool that allows it to identify repeat and vulnerable victims by geographical area.

I am pleased that the force is addressing the right areas of policing to reduce crime.

But the following areas may negatively affect the force's ability to reduce crime:

- It doesn't consistently supervise its crime investigations to ensure a good standard of investigation, resulting in some offenders not being brought to justice.
- It doesn't always complete an initial assessment of victims' needs, which could lead to victims withdrawing their support for investigation.
- It doesn't always identify repeat or vulnerable victims at the first point of contact.

By continuing to develop and enhance the positive factors, and by addressing the problems listed above, the force will be better placed to effectively reduce crime.

# Providing a service to the victims of crime

Requires  
improvement

Suffolk Constabulary requires improvement at providing a service for victims of crime.

## Area for improvement

**The force should improve how well it answers calls from the public on the 101 number, and reduce the abandonment rate and wait times**

Force data we reviewed showed that every year, the force fails to answer about 32 percent (40,000) of 101 calls in the contact and control room (CCR). There are also very long wait times for less urgent calls. For example, people seeking advice and guidance can sometimes wait for more than an hour.

This means that:

- the public aren't able to easily contact the force; and
- the force is failing to provide the public with a good enough service.

## Innovative practice

### Call handing management

The force has a telephone system that allows switchboard staff to assess a call and drop it into a number of different call queues. These queues are risk-related. This means that a call to report a crime will be in a higher priority call queue than a call related to an advice and guidance request. The system places all calls into a single queue that the CCR call handlers work from. But the system makes sure that higher priority calls are at the top of the queue and lower risks at the bottom.



## Main findings

In this section, we set out our main findings that relate to how well the force provides a service to victims of crime.

### **The force is aware of the problems with its 101 call handling and is addressing them**

[Chief officers](#) have agreed a plan to help the force to improve its 101 call-handling performance and reduce the high number of members of the public abandoning calls. Chief officers have signed off the costs of the business case, and the plan is being implemented. The force is recruiting more staff and improving processes and policies.

A superintendent has been posted into the CCR to lead its work. A governance board, led by an assistant chief constable, has also been established to oversee the improvement work. This means that the force is likely to provide a better service over the next 12 months and beyond.

### **The force is good at answering 999 calls within the agreed time set, and is good at attending these emergency calls for service**

The force told us that in the year ending 31 March 2022, its CCR answered 85.2 percent of 999 emergency calls within 10 seconds. During the same period, it answered 96.1 percent (112,401) of all 999 calls.

The force told us that in the year ending 31 March 2022, it attended 90 percent of 26,346 Grade A incidents within the target attendance time (15 minutes in an urban area and 20 minutes in a rural area). This performance is within the national standard of 90 percent.

### **The force has reviewed the effectiveness of its response to Grade B non-emergency incidents and amended its policy**

Until recently, the force's policy didn't specify how quickly officers should attend Grade B incidents. Instead, the policy stated that attendance should be 'ASAP'. This led to some incidents being left unattended for considerable lengths of time. In May 2022, the force changed its Grade B incident policy to help it provide a more efficient and effective service that manages risk well for victims of crime. The updated policy also reflects the national grading policy.

The new policy splits Grade B priority incidents into two categories, each with different response time targets. These are:

- 60 minutes for the more urgent B1-graded incidents; and
- 24 hours for the less urgent B2 incidents.

The force has given staff training and guidance on the new policy and it has made frontline officers aware of it. As this change is recent, we haven't been able to assess how effective it is. We will monitor this area over the coming months.

## **The force deploys its resources to respond to victims and incidents appropriately**

The force is consistent and good at allocating incidents to the appropriate team that will be best able to assist the victim. This is predominantly the uniformed responses teams. When needed, criminal investigation department (CID) staff are expected to attend incidents wherever possible. This helps make sure that [golden hour principles](#), such as completing house-to-house enquires and taking statements, are followed in more serious cases. And it helps to ensure effective scene management and investigation progression. When CID staff can't attend, the duty detective sergeant is expected to offer support and guidance to attending officers. When needed (such as when there has been a sexual offence), specialist officers attend scenes quickly to support victims.

## **The force makes sure to consult victims before administering cautions, and has processes in place to check compliance and challenge officers who don't comply**

In response to our previous findings, the force has improved how it administers cautions. It has sent new guidance to all staff who administer and supervise cautions. The guidance states that all police-led cautions need an inspector's authority. This is to make sure victims are consulted regarding the proposed outcome (caution), auditable records are completed with evidential review officer decisions, and that a cautions checklist is completed and uploaded for every caution.

Early in 2022, a detective superintendent provided training to all sergeants and inspectors across the constabulary. The training included a presentation on requirements for the victim's voice to be heard in caution cases.

An audit process is in place for cautions. It includes checking for the victim's consent and where it has been recorded. The managing offenders inspector gives direct feedback to officers who fail to comply with this requirement. The force told us that in January 2022, it had a 98 percent compliance rate for victims' consent being sought and recorded.

# Engaging with and treating the public with fairness and respect

Good

Suffolk Constabulary is good at treating people fairly and with respect.

## Main findings

In this section we set out our main findings that relate to treating people fairly and with respect.

### **The force actively seeks views from, and engages regularly with, its communities to find out about local problems and gather [intelligence](#)**

The force's engagement strategy includes a clear statement of intent to retain an accessible and visible local police presence. The force's community engagement officers work throughout the county. Their main responsibility is to engage with all communities, including those that are less likely to engage with the police. The information they gather helps influence and shape the force's short-term and long-term local policing work.

The force uses both digital and more traditional ways of keeping in touch with communities. Digital platforms include Facebook and Instagram. Non-digital communication includes:

- attending meetings;
- police surgeries;
- 'street meets' (crime prevention events where officers give advice, discuss local issues and provide cycle security marking); and
- articles in local newspapers and magazines.

### **The force empowers local people to get involved in local policing activity**

Suffolk Constabulary has a vibrant public volunteer structure. The Suffolk Special Constabulary had 121 officers as at 31 March 2021. In 2021, they completed 33,562 hours of duties. There is also a very successful volunteer police and emergency services cadet scheme. It has 158 cadets throughout the county and a waiting list of 11 potential new recruits.

The force has 119 volunteers in various roles and locations. During 2021, these volunteers completed 5,233 hours of work in support of the force. These people volunteer across a range of areas, including:

- Community Speedwatch – to monitor those breaking the speed limit in an effort to reduce the number of people killed or injured on roads;
- the Appropriate Adult Service – where volunteers offer support and advice to young people in custody; and
- Volunteer on Horseback scheme – providing a visible and accessible point of contact.

The force also works with Neighbourhood Watch schemes. This has been extended to include initiatives such as Rural Watch, Business Watch, Horse Watch and Marine Watch.

### **The force continues to improve how well it uses, and records, the grounds for stop and search**

During our inspection, we reviewed a sample of 220 stop and search records from 1 January 2020 to 31 December 2020. On the basis of this sample, we estimate that 89.5 percent (with a confidence interval of +/- 4.0 percent) of all stop and searches by the force during this period had reasonable grounds recorded. This is an increase compared to 2017/18, when we assessed 72.3 percent of stop and searches as having reasonable grounds. This shows the force is continuing to improve. Of the records we reviewed for stop and searches on people from ethnic minority backgrounds in 2020, 26 of 27 had reasonable grounds recorded.

### **Officers are using handcuffs during stop searches even when their use seems to be unjustified**

Our review of [body-worn video](#) recordings of officers stopping and searching people showed a tendency for officers to use handcuffing almost as a matter of course, even when people were compliant and offered no resistance. Handcuffs should only be used when proportionate and necessary. For example:

- if an officer feels that the subject poses a threat to themselves, the officer or others;
- to maintain control and prevent the subject from disposing of the object the officer was looking for; or
- to prevent the subject from escaping.

The force should consider reviewing its use of compliant handcuffing to make sure that officers use handcuffs only for stop searches when the risks justify it.

## **The force has made improvements to its understanding and governance of use of force**

The force has recently assessed how it trains officers in the application and recording of use of force. In 2021, it commissioned a [peer review](#) to help it gain a better understanding of this area. An independent external scrutiny panel is in place to help the force gather learning and record good practice. This process will help to make sure that the use of force by officers is justified and proportionate.

Following HMICFRS and peer review findings, the force changed its use-of-force training and guidance. Use-of-force forms should be submitted for every use of force. Suffolk Constabulary found that after these changes, the number of forms being submitted by officers increased. This means that it will have a better understanding of how it uses these powers.

# Preventing crime and anti-social behaviour

Good

Suffolk Constabulary is good at prevention and deterrence.

## Main findings

In this section we set out our main findings that relate to prevention and deterrence.

**The force has improved its workforce's understanding of [anti-social behaviour \(ASB\)](#), but it still needs to improve how it records ASB incidents and crimes**

The force has carried out significant work to improve its understanding and recording of ASB. This includes providing training, guidance and support for its workforce, to help it better understand ASB. Training has focused on new recruits, as well as CCR operators, to help them recognise the correct coding of incidents.

The force has developed training for all response staff, which it provides on their dedicated training day as part of the shift rota. The training combines presentations and facilitated discussions about a real-life case study. In the force's initial impact assessment, 83 percent of attendees found the training valuable to raise awareness and understanding. Problem-solving plans are often created in response to ASB issues and are well managed.

Suffolk Constabulary has created an ASB intranet page and introduced ASB champions, who specialise in giving advice and guidance to officers, throughout the force. It has also introduced a [neighbourhood policing team](#) bulletin, which includes ASB information, and amended guidance for supervisors to include direction on ASB.

The performance improvement unit has completed two ASB audits. It is now part of the ASB scrutiny panel. The panel seeks to identify, record and allocate, if appropriate, any crimes that have been missed.

Despite this, the force needs to improve its recording of ASB. In a sample of ASB personal incidents that we reviewed, we found several crimes that should have been recorded, but weren't. As a result of this, vulnerable victims, whose lives may be seriously affected by high levels of abuse and torment, might not receive the support they should from the force.

### **The force complies with the [College of Policing's](#) neighbourhood policing guidelines and with governance at a senior level**

The force's neighbourhood policing structure complies with the College of Policing's neighbourhood policing guidelines. This includes having police officers, staff and volunteers accessible, accountable to and responsible for communities. Governance is in place, and an assistant chief constable chairs a neighbourhood policing force-level meeting. We found evidence of a focus on prevention activity in performance and tactical tasking and co-ordinating group meetings.

Analytical support is available to staff taking part in problem-solving policing activities. Neighbourhood governance and performance meetings are focused on prevention. There is evidence of the force taking part in meetings and problem solving with other organisations. And there is an active volunteer network in place.

### **The force's county-wide co-ordinated approach to problem solving is improving its work in this important area**

The force is seeking to introduce a problem-solving approach across all its business areas over the next few years. This means that all officers taking part in problem-solving work are using the same model. Referred to as [SARA](#), the model uses four stages: scanning, analysis, response and assessment.

Problem-solving tactical advisors have been trained and deployed across the force area. And they are having a positive effect on the quality of problem-solving plans and results.

Safer neighbourhood teams understand the use of problem-solving work and plans, and are making good use of the systems that have been put in place to record and manage this area. All plans are held on the force's data platform, and the current and past plans cover a wide range of problems and are well managed. But the force should do more to make sure final assessments are carried out prior to closure, and that learning and good practice are better identified. Very few SARA plans have been subject to a full assessment at the point of closure by the tactical advisors. The final assessment process should assess how successful the plan has been. It should identify what works, and make sure that any learning is shared. By not always completing the final element of the SARA model, the force is missing opportunities to improve its problem-solving approach.

Despite the work completed so far, much more needs to be done before the force can say that it is using a problem-solving approach across all its areas.

### **The force identifies both high demand and vulnerable locations, groups and people, including repeat victims**

The force is good at identifying and supporting its communities and vulnerable people. It has 21 intelligence development officers. Their role involves engaging with communities to better understand them. This includes better understanding criminality within those communities.

Neighbourhood officers are aware of the areas where they are needed most, and those people and locations that are vulnerable.

An example of the force working with local organisations includes a project over the past three years to combat ASB in an urban estate. The force told us this project saw a reduction of 73 percent in ASB on the estate during the summer. Other examples include work with organisations to support vulnerable [missing](#) girls and young women at risk of exploitation, and working with housing partners to prevent the [cuckooing](#) of vulnerable people.

### **The force understands demand facing neighbourhood policing teams and is planning for the future**

Suffolk Constabulary operates to a 33 percent abstraction rate. Abstraction rate is the number of officers off work at any one time, and includes annual leave, overtime taken as time off, sickness, and other abstractions such as training and secondments.

The county policing command (CPC) deployment plan gives an oversight of the optimal staffing levels, roles, and abstraction rate for each department within CPC. The plan underpins resourcing decisions. Importantly, resource follows priority in line with the force's strategic work around future demand and finances. Because of these plans, demand and supply are mostly well aligned. Though some areas appear to be overstaffed, this is because extra staff are needed to cope with large geographic areas that some teams police.

Senior leaders in the force use a data platform to understand the levels of continuing demand. The amount and quality of the data is very good. It allows leaders, including neighbourhood policing leaders, to make informed decisions on how to allocate resources in the short term, within the parameters of the CPC deployment plan.

In the year ending 31 March 2021, Suffolk Constabulary spent 8.5 percent of its budget on neighbourhood policing. This is in line with the average for England and Wales.



# Responding to the public

Adequate

Suffolk Constabulary is adequate at responding to the public.

## Area for improvement

### **The force should improve how call handlers provide advice, including on preserving evidence**

Call handlers are polite, professional and show empathy to callers in almost all cases. Despite the force providing training and direction, in too many cases call handlers are missing the opportunity to provide advice to the caller. Such advice includes how to prevent crime and preserve evidence.

This could lead to evidence being lost or victims facing further harm.

## Main findings

In this section, we set out our main findings that relate to how well the force responds to the public.

### **The force has improved how well call handlers identify vulnerability, safeguarding needs and repeat victims, but it needs to do more**

Over the past 12 months, the force has improved how its call handlers identify risk, vulnerability, [safeguarding](#) needs and repeat victims.

But it needs to do more. In our review of 20 cases, we found several cases where it was evident that the caller was a repeat victim or had other vulnerability factors, but the call handler hadn't identified this. This means that vulnerable callers may not always be given appropriate safeguarding measures or get the level of initial response needed to keep them safe. It also means the force is missing opportunities to reduce repeat victimisation, and isn't always aware of what victims need.

## **The force seeks advice from experts to inform and help improve decision making and risk assessments when dealing with people who are vulnerable or in crisis**

There is an information-sharing agreement between Suffolk Constabulary and Norfolk & Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust. This means relevant information can be shared when dealing with incidents involving people with mental health problems. The agreement also allows for mental health nurses to be used in the CCR. And it allows them to go out with an officer in the triage car used to assess vulnerable people or people in crisis at the scene of an incident.

These mental health nurses offer good and professional advice to officers on patrol and staff in the CCR. This helps to ensure the best possible outcome for those who are vulnerable or in crisis.

After its last inspection in 2022, the Care Quality Commission downgraded the Norfolk & Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust from requires improvement to inadequate. The CQC directed that the Trust must improve. The inability of the Trust to effectively manage its demand places additional demand on the force, whose officers are often the first responders to people in mental health crisis.

## **The public can contact the force through a range of channels to report a crime**

The public can report crime in various ways, other than by phone. These include completing an online form on the force's website. People can also report crime by email and at police station front counters.

The force recently improved the online forms to make them more user friendly. They have been categorised by report type and a member of the public can complete one in under ten minutes. They are easy to fill in on mobiles, laptops and tablets.

The force trialled a domestic abuse online chat function as a way for victims of low-risk domestic abuse to report incidents. The project was led by an assistant chief constable and ran for a four-week period through January and February 2022. The link to the service was on the force website, and it was available from 9am to 5pm on weekdays. A review of the service after the trial showed that the system worked well. Satisfaction rates from members of the public who had used the system were high, with 93 percent of users rating the service they received as excellent or good. The force is assessing how best to proceed with the initiative.

## **The force thoroughly assesses victims' vulnerability and risk at the initial response. And officers identify risks relating to other vulnerable people within a household, such as children and older people, to make sure there is effective safeguarding**

Officers complete [domestic abuse, stalking and harassment \(DASH\) forms](#) at incidents of domestic abuse, and these are reviewed by the shift sergeant. In some areas, the force is piloting the domestic abuse risk assessment (DARA) model. This model focuses on the perpetrator, where the DASH model focuses on the victim. It is expected that the DARA approach will better meet victims' needs by improving the workforce's understanding of the risks posed to a victim by the perpetrator.

Frontline officers have a good knowledge of safeguarding. And they are aware of the need to check for a range of potential vulnerabilities, such as:

- mental health problems;
- [county lines](#) cuckooing;
- financial dependencies;
- rural isolation; and
- the welfare of children.

In cases assessed as high or medium risk in a DASH assessment, the domestic abuse team carries out a second assessment. Cases assessed as being standard risk are subject to regular audit. And external and internal scrutiny panels offer further review and feedback on the quality of risk assessment.

### **The force understands the demand for its services**

The force regularly reviews and assesses demand. Most recently, in January 2021, it reviewed the demand its uniformed neighbourhood response teams (NRTs) and safer neighbourhood teams (SNTs) face.

The review was wide ranging and detailed. And it gives an excellent overview of current and predicted demand, and how the NRT and SNT resources are coping.

The review has 15 recommendations. Each is designed to improve the service to the public while maximising efficiency. The review concludes that, broadly, each policing area has the right proportion of officers. But the workforce shift pattern does not provide for resources to match demand.

Partly because of the improvements needed, there is a blurring of the line between NRT and SNT into a 'one team' ethic, meaning that the teams cover each other's incident work when needed. This means that incidents are well managed across the force, although other areas such as problem-solving and crime investigation may suffer.

# Investigating crime

## Adequate

Suffolk Constabulary is adequate at investigating crime.

### Areas for improvement

#### **The force should reassess the crime training it has provided to its workforce**

Despite the force's effort to improve the quality of supervisory oversight and investigations, supervision is still variable. And in too many cases, investigative opportunities aren't taken. These include significant lines of enquiry, and relate to crimes where witness statements weren't taken and named suspects weren't arrested or interviewed. This means that on some occasions, investigations may fail, victims will be let down and offenders may evade justice.

But it is clear that the force has responded positively to our critique of the quality of investigations after our last inspection in 2019. Investigations are now being carried out effectively in most cases.

Structured governance supports the force's efforts to improve its crime investigations. This governance considers and comments on areas such as investigation plans, supervisory reviews, victim safeguarding, and updates and lessons learned. As a result:

- officers are now routinely using an investigation plan to structure their work;
- investigations are conducted in good time; and
- supervisors mostly review progress when necessary.

#### **The force should review its practices to ensure that victim needs assessments are completed in all relevant cases**

There is good evidence that the force follows the [Code of Practice for Victims](#) and agreed levels of victim contact, with clear entries on the investigation logs. But in too many cases, there is no evidence of the victim needs assessment being completed, or enhanced services considered. And there are too many cases where a victim's personal statement is not being taken. This could lead to victims no longer engaging with investigations, not supporting prosecutions, and losing faith in the criminal justice process.

## Good practice

### **Digital support officers are adding significant support to officers and value to investigations**

The force has employed a number of digital support officers (DSOs). Their role is to support investigators by helping to triage devices at scenes (including with warrant activity), and downloading data from CCTV and phones. Officers are reporting very positively on the effect the DSOs are having. The force reviewed the posts after six months and concluded that the DSOs had completed a total of 3,340 digital enquiries. As a result, the force is now expanding the DSO team.

### **Community resolutions guidance document**

The force has published (on its intranet) a two-page [THRIVE](#)-linked guidance document on [community resolution](#). This is easy to understand and use. The document is intended to help officers make the right decisions and make sure they involve victims in decision-making.

## Main findings

In this section we set out our main findings that relate to how well the force investigates crime.

### **The force understands how to progress evidence-led prosecutions but could do more**

Officers understand how to progress a prosecution where the victim has stopped engaging with, or doesn't support, it. Officers can describe the process and what evidence they would need from victims.

In domestic violence and other cases, using body-worn video is often essential in evidence-led prosecutions. Officers are aware of this and switch it on as needed. Despite this, the force isn't taking every opportunity to pursue offenders when victims don't engage with, or support, prosecutions.

The force has improved its use of preventive measures, such as [domestic violence protection notices](#) and [orders](#), and [stalking protection orders](#).

### **The force's desk-based investigation unit, the crime coordination centre (CCC), is working well and providing a good service**

The CCC carries out desk-based investigations of high volume, lower-level crime (13 crime types) where there is no identified suspect.

The CCC replaced the former structure for this type of investigation, which didn't function effectively and resulted in crime backlogs.

Since the creation of the CCC, the previous backlogs have been cleared, with staff following the approach of 'today's business today'. The work is appointment-based, where the victim is offered a 45-minute telephone appointment. During this time, the crime is recorded, investigated and, if appropriate, closed. If, during the recording of the crime by the CCC, it transpires that there is a suspect, the crime is re-allocated to a neighbourhood, response or CID team for further investigation.

### **The force is improving its detective capacity and capability**

The force does not have enough [professionalising investigation programme](#) (PIP2) accredited detectives. PIP2 provides a structured development programme of registration, examination, training, workplace assessment and certification to a national standard at each level for police officers and police staff.

On 31 March 2022, 59 percent of Suffolk Constabulary's PIP2 posts were filled by qualified detectives (182 of 309). In response, the force is working hard to increase numbers and has worked to recruit direct entry detectives. To help recruit more detectives, the force offered more opportunities to join CID, removed unhelpful processes such as annual recruitment, and raised awareness of these changes. Seventy-six new detectives have been recruited as a result.

One senior Suffolk Constabulary officer is a member of the national detective resilience programme. As a result, the force is in a good position to be at the forefront of national themes of activity in this area of work.

# Protecting vulnerable people

Adequate

Suffolk Constabulary is adequate at [protecting vulnerable people](#).

## Main findings

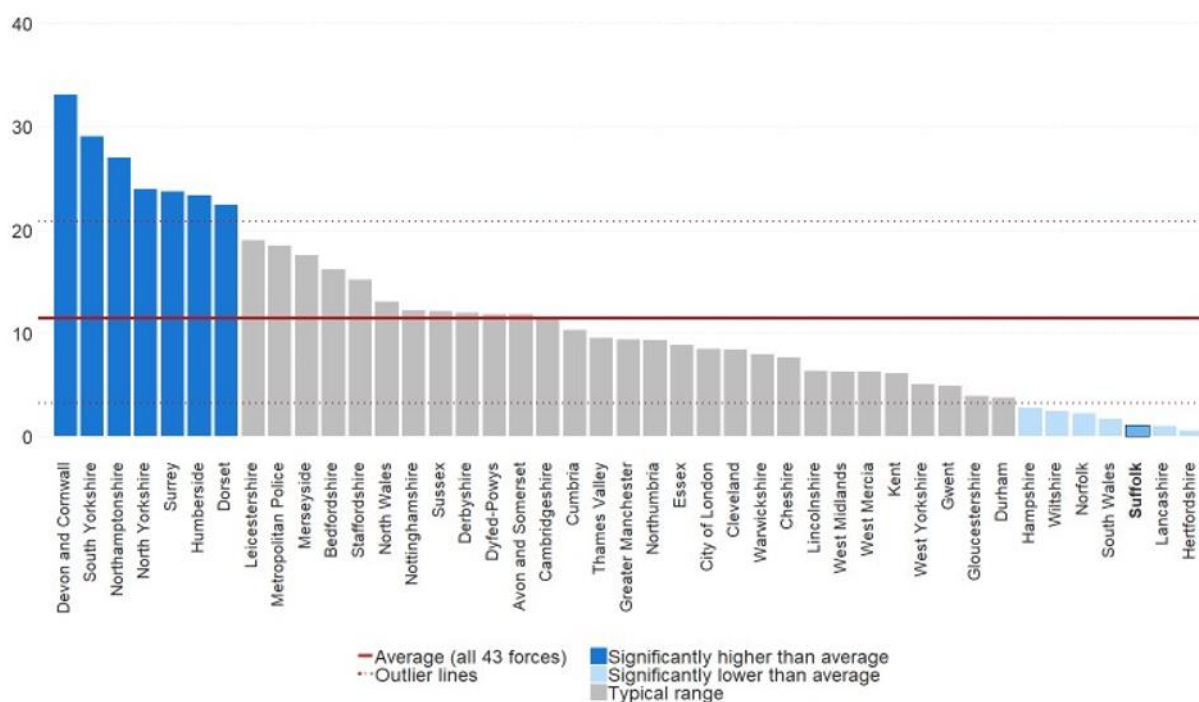
In this section we set out our main findings that relate to how well the force protects vulnerable people.

### **The force has improved its use of preventive powers and its workforce's knowledge of [stalking](#) legislation**

The force has increased its use of preventive orders. Governance of the use of domestic violence protection notices and orders, and stalking protection orders, is in place. The use of all preventative orders is monitored. Every time any type of order is used, this use is recorded on a detailed list. The force told us that before April 2021 it hadn't made applications for any stalking protection orders, but in the year ending 30 April 2022 it obtained four interim and ten full stalking protection orders.

In the year ending 30 September 2021, Suffolk Constabulary applied for 1.1 domestic violence protection orders for every 1,000 domestic abuse-related crimes. This was lower than the England and Wales rate of 11.4, and made it the third-lowest ranking force. But this is an improvement on the year ending December 2020, when the force made 0.8 applications per 1,000 domestic abuse-related crimes. The force has reviewed its preventative powers and is showing improvements in their use across the force.

## Domestic violence protection orders applied for per 1,000 domestic abuse-related crimes in the year ending 30 September 2021, across all forces in England and Wales



Access to guidance is readily available on the force’s intranet. The officers we spoke to had a good working understanding of preventative powers, when and why they should be considered, and how to obtain orders.

### The force has reviewed how it allocates crimes with identified high-risk factors for victims

In 2021, the force was allocating [high-risk domestic abuse](#) investigations to response officers whose primary function was responding to incidents. Many of these officers hadn’t been in the service for long, and so may have lacked knowledge of investigative opportunities, and of stalking offences. Since then, the force has amended its policies and processes to reflect that high-risk domestic abuse cases should always be allocated to CID officers, unless there are exceptional reasons not to do so. In our 2022 inspection, we found no response officers who had been allocated high-risk domestic abuse investigations, although some still held legacy investigations.



## **The force has a strategic and operational governance structure to set objectives and monitor effectiveness. Internal and partnership meetings and boards give oversight, scrutiny and assurance**

The College of Policing has designated 13 main disciplines of public protection.<sup>1</sup> These are known as the 13 strands of vulnerability that are addressed in the National Vulnerability Action Plan. The force's own plan reflects the National Vulnerability Action Plan.

The force has several plans designed to direct activities to protect vulnerable people, including a vulnerability strategy and the Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy 2020–25, which follows on from the previous three-year strategy. This refreshed strategy focuses on women and girls because of the gendered nature of the crime. But the force will also carry out work and projects to support men and boys, as well as transgender, non-binary and gender non-conforming people. The strategy includes several important definitions of offences such as domestic abuse and violence, [controlling and coercive behaviour](#), and stalking.

Several external and internal boards enable appropriate governance of the force's response to protecting vulnerable people. In late 2020, the force set up a vulnerability board which oversees how the force reacts to and deals with vulnerability. The board has already considered, and given direction on, future resourcing and training.

Representatives of the force attend various partnership boards including the children and young people's mental health and wellbeing steering group. Partner agencies at these boards include the NHS and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner. The children and young people's mental health and wellbeing steering group covers a wide range of issues, including custody, children in care, data protection, youth offending and criminalisation. Activities are recorded and followed up via the children and young people's action plan.

Performance monitoring is an essential part of the force's response to vulnerability, and it uses bespoke analysis. For example, the Suffolk Domestic Abuse Performance Report provides detailed data and analysis of domestic abuse in the county. And internal and external domestic abuse panels offer focused review and critical assessment of strategic issues and individual cases where appropriate.

## **The force provides ongoing safeguarding and support for vulnerable people, including those at risk of criminal exploitation**

The force recognises the need for effective and ongoing safeguarding of vulnerable victims. And it is taking positive action to meet its responsibilities.

There are clear procedures in place. And frontline staff are aware of the need to complete a DASH form in all domestic abuse cases, and to consider children and other vulnerable people at the scene.

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<sup>1</sup> The 13 disciplines of public protection as identified by the College of Policing are adults at risk, child abuse, child [sexual exploitation](#), domestic abuse, [female genital mutilation](#), [forced marriage](#), honour-based violence, human trafficking, managing violent offenders, missing persons, prostitution, serious sexual offences, stalking and [harassment](#).

The domestic abuse team, located within the [multi-agency safeguarding hub \(MASH\)](#), carries out secondary DASH assessments to ensure the correct grading: high, medium, or standard. Officers mostly use police [bail](#) in domestic abuse cases rather than [releasing suspects under investigation](#). This allows for police set bail conditions to provide the victim with extra protection.

The force uses the [domestic violence disclosure scheme \(Clare's Law\)](#) extensively, which is the 'right to ask' and 'right to know' if your partner is known for domestic abuse. In June 2021, the force opened its website for online 'right to ask' applications. In the year ending September 2021, it had the fourth highest number of 'right to know' applications per 1,000 population compared to other forces. During this period, the force had 111 'right to know' applications and made disclosure in 36 cases. It also received 58 'right to ask' applications and made 23 disclosures. All disclosures were made in good time.

There are many examples of bespoke operations that are designed to safeguard vulnerable people. These include:

- Operation Velocity, the force's response to county lines;
- Operation Ascent, its response to the safeguarding of sex workers;
- Operation Culworth, a child sexual exploitation operation based around a group of young girls who were regularly going missing from home and at risk of exploitation; and
- Operation Eagle, a good example of positive partnership working to support victims of modern slavery.

### **The force is good at working with other organisations to keep vulnerable people safe**

The force has a single MASH. While it covers both adults and children, the focus is on children. Adult referrals account for approximately 70 a month, with the total number of referrals amounting to approximately 1,000 a month.

The MASH has continued to work during the pandemic, with staff working remotely where possible. MASH referrals are categorised as red, amber, or green. There is now a blue category, which includes police referrals that should not have been made. There are around 400 blue referrals a month.

The reason for so many blue referrals is because the force shares the referral pathway with Norfolk Constabulary. The needs for the forces are different, but the pathway errs to the Norfolk Constabulary requirements whereby referrals are required for all contacts with a child. By contrast, Suffolk requires a referral only if vulnerability is identified. The team responsible for the pathway is working to make changes which reflect the differences in approach and requirements. The objective is for both forces to have a pathway that works for them.

To reduce this unnecessary extra demand on the MASH, a police advice line operates from Monday to Friday, 8am to 4pm. But officers don't use it much. In 2019, the MASH created a mental health police co-ordinator post, and this is working well. The co-ordinator advises on suicide prevention and has been building relationships

with mental health organisations, with the aim of improving the partnership service to those in mental health crisis.

The force has an effective [multi-agency risk assessment conference \(MARAC\)](#) process in place. This ensures opportunities are taken, across the agencies, to safeguard vulnerable victims of high-risk domestic abuse and manage the behaviour of perpetrators. There is good attendance by representatives of the main organisations, referrals from a range of agencies, and excellent input for relevant cases with good outcomes for victims.

The fact that MARAC is online and no longer a face-to-face meeting means agencies can dial in for relevant cases, maximising attendance. Cases referred to MARAC are appropriate, being either high-risk, frequent repeat or complex needs. And there is evidence of good problem-solving by partners, with options to support victims or control perpetrators being discussed. The needs of children within the family feature prominently in the meetings, with their needs being prioritised. And the consideration of perpetrator intervention is evident, including Operation Comfort and domestic abuse perpetrator unit referrals.

### **The force seeks feedback from victims of domestic abuse. And it uses internal and external scrutiny, and audit, well to improve services to the public**

The force seeks feedback from victims of domestic abuse, but the numbers engaging are lower than expected. The force is reviewing how best to improve this.

There are several internal and external scrutiny panels and audits. These include the domestic abuse scrutiny panel, which brings together external expertise to review high-risk domestic abuse cases where the decision was for the police to take no further action. The panel is made up of independent representatives from:

- the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS);
- Leeway independent domestic abuse advocacy service; and
- local charities.

Together, they review randomly selected cases. They assess whether the decisions that were made were appropriate and offer advice to help improve the quality of service to victims.

The CPS reviews the validity of the decision-making and the other organisations identify problems with quality of service, opportunities for improvement and areas of good practice.

The rape scrutiny panel uses feedback from victims and voluntary and community organisations to improve procedures. For example, it made changes to improve the language and quality of the letters it sent to victims.

Each local policing command has a domestic abuse and rape scrutiny panel, which meets quarterly. The panel consists of the local inspector, staff from the domestic abuse team, and independent officers and staff. The aim of the panel is to assess whether the correct action was taken by the attending officers, review the subsequent investigation quality and outcome, and establish any learning points for sharing.

# Managing offenders and suspects

Good

Suffolk Constabulary is good at managing offenders and suspects.

## Main findings

In this section we set out our main findings that relate to how well the force manages offenders and suspects.

### **There is clear policy and process for managing suspects who are yet to be detained. This is subject to effective governance and is understood by frontline staff and supervisors**

The force has a clear and robust process in place to manage outstanding suspects (suspects who are yet to be detained). For example, it has clear guidelines on how and when to circulate suspects' details on the [Police National Computer](#), and how the force manages this while it works to locate suspects.

Outstanding suspects are risk assessed. Details of those considered to be high risk are brought to the force daily management meeting. Daily priorities and resource allocation are then agreed.

Lower-risk outstanding suspects are managed in the policing areas. This includes sending on a monthly basis, to operational inspectors and above, the details of all outstanding suspects throughout the force. The details are accompanied with guidance on how to manage outstanding suspects and contains links to policy and process. This process is designed to make sure there is sufficient ownership to investigate and locate the outstanding suspects, and that suitable supervisory direction is recorded.

### **Pre-charge bail is well managed through the force's bail [Authorised Professional Practice \(APP\)](#)**

All pre-charge bail is managed and monitored through the force's bail APP.

Whether to use bail is decided on a case-by-case basis. It involves regular conversations between the officer leading the case, the custody officer and the authorising inspectors.

Bail conditions are used to support the safeguarding of vulnerable victims and witnesses. Frontline officers noted a move away, in recent months, from using released under investigation, and more towards pre-charge bail. This means they can manage suspects' behaviour via conditions imposed with bail.

### **The force effectively manages the risk posed to the public by registered sex offenders**

The force is effective in managing the risk posed by registered sex offenders (RSOs).

All staff working directly with RSOs are trained in [active risk management system \(ARMS\)](#) procedures and understand the processes. They have also been trained in the new risk tool, the sexual reoffending predictor (OSP), and are confident using it.

The force has a good working relationship with probation teams, with evidence of joint working.

The force has stepped outside national policy by allowing some RSOs with civil orders to be placed on [reactive management](#). This decision was made because demand outstripped capacity. Two nationally accredited polygraphers are now employed, who help to risk assess RSOs. There are plans to require those being placed on reactive, or requesting to come off the register, to take a polygraph test.

Staff and officers understand [multi-agency public protection arrangements](#) and make referrals where appropriate. Preventative or ancillary orders to protect the public from registered sex offenders are considered, breaches are monitored, and action taken.

In the year ending 31 March 2021, there were 102 [sexual harm prevention orders](#) issued in Suffolk, with 15 breaches recorded.

The force also uses ancillary orders and [lifetime offender management](#) to prevent reoffending. But, as stated earlier, it could use prevention orders more, such as stalking prevention orders, and domestic violence protection notices and orders.

### **The force has systems in place to proactively identify from all sources the sharing of indecent images of children. But these systems are under pressure**

The force has systems in place to proactively identify from all sources the sharing of indecent images of children. But the internet child abuse investigation team (ICAIT) lacks digital support and triage capability. It has Spektor, a digital triage technology that allows frontline officers and staff to quickly preserve and automatically examine data stored on computers, servers, and mass storage devices. However, only one person is trained to use it.

Workloads are high, at 30 to 40 cases per officer. And investigations that don't need immediate action can take six weeks before any progress is made.

All staff in the ICAIT are trained in National Crime Agency (NCA) image grading and can grade images. The ICAIT has strong links with social care and the [local authority designated officer](#). The team makes sure referrals are made before a warrant is executed, and social services are offered the option to attend. Performance data is kept and made available to senior managers.

The force had recognised the pressures within the ICAIT. To address this, it commissioned a review of the demand and working practices and is progressing the recommendations from this review.

**The force's integrated offender management (IOM) programme and domestic abuse perpetrator scheme are effective**

The force has a detailed policy for managing people that are on the IOM scheme. The force works with Norfolk Constabulary to manage all those on the IOM programme. This is known as the '180 Scheme' in Norfolk and Suffolk.

All people on the IOM are discussed at the regular panel meetings. There are three panel meetings across the county. Suffolk Constabulary manages over 100 people. A large percentage of them are in prison, so don't need active monitoring.

The IOM team works closely with the probation provider, sharing office space. Members of the IOM team are appropriately trained. As well as making sure officers have had all the appropriate and mandated police training, they also take part in joint training with the probation service.

The force is struggling to understand the costs versus benefits of the IOM scheme. Despite this, it is clearly working hard in the area of repeat offenders. This includes local police commanders receiving regular data on repeat offenders, to help them allocate tasks.

The force has recently developed a domestic abuse perpetrator scheme. The force had considered such a scheme for some time, with a view to reduce reoffending and protecting victims. The team works on a one-to-one basis, with perpetrators completing different modules over five to six months.

The aim is for those taking part to learn to understand their behaviour and trigger points, and learn how to manage their behaviours to prevent repeat incidents. There are currently 16 people taking part. The ideal number of people on the scheme at any one time is 20. To date, 42 people have been involved in the scheme and 396 individual one-hour sessions have been completed.

The scheme is due for an assessment review in 2022.

# Disrupting serious organised crime

Good

Suffolk Constabulary is good at managing [serious and organised crime \(SOC\)](#).

## Main findings

In this section we set out our main findings that relate to how well the force manages SOC.

### **The force is good at using all available intelligence to identify, understand and prioritise SOC. This helps inform effective decision making**

Strategic analysis directs and prioritises SOC intelligence collection. A [SOC local profile](#) has been completed and was published in January 2021. Suffolk is the force least affected by SOC in the region, at just 5 percent of [mapped organised crime groups \(OCGs\)](#). The force told us that, as of 31 March 2022, ten OCGs had been identified.

The force works well and strategically with other organisations. These include the Safer & Stronger Communities Group and the Suffolk Safeguarding Partnership. As a result, there is a partnership-led response to county lines and youth gang violence.

The force has a well-established process for managing organised crime. There is a monthly OCG management meeting. This is chaired by a designated lead for SOC, and those attending include intelligence analysts with good links into regional tasking processes where additional assets are available. With relatively low numbers of identified OCGs in the county, they are all reviewed at each monthly meeting.

### **The force has an excellent working relationship with the [regional organised crime unit \(ROCU\)](#)**

The joint force intelligence unit supports the force by providing it with intelligence. This helps the force identify, understand and tackle the threats created by SOC.

The force works with specialists within the ROCU, such as the sensitive intelligence unit (which has intelligence on a wider scale), prison intelligence officers, and the regional organised crime threat assessment (ROCTA) team.

The ROCTA scores potential new OCGs that the force has identified. ROCTA has access to more data, which helps improve the threat assessment of these new OCGs. All OCGs are assessed using [MoRiLE](#) 2020, in line with national practices.

## **The force is good at managing and co-ordinating its response to SOC threats**

Each identified OCG is allocated a local responsible officer (LRO), as well as a lead analyst and intelligence development officer. The LRO produces a disruption plan for their OCG. The force has developed, and circulated to LROs, a series of templates and example documents to help them produce their plans.

There was good evidence that the force is identifying opportunities to prevent, protect and prepare, in line with the national SOC strategy. For example, Operation Broom and Operation Eagle ensured that children and communities were supported and safeguarded. However, some specialist SOC investigations remain pursue-focused; we encourage the force to ensure all elements of the [4Ps](#) are considered for SOC investigations.

LROs also use ancillary orders. But they showed some frustration at the penalty for breaches, and gave examples of breaches where those prosecuted faced little in the way of sanctions.

The force has retained covert operational capacity. And a SOC team provides surveillance – made up of officers from both Suffolk and Norfolk Constabularies. The force has increased the number of officers allocated to its SOC disruption team, that deals with OCGs, to two. It has dealt with increased demand as a result of an NCA-led proactive operation called Venetic, and recognises that this has revealed the hidden picture around SOC nationally.

The force has invested time and resources to ensure that frontline staff are targeting SOC subjects. Intelligence products are available on the intelligence system. All officers are told about relevant training courses, to make sure they understand their roles and responsibilities in tackling SOC. The planned increase in officer numbers over the next few years will increase the amount of intelligence submissions, putting the force's analytical support under pressure. The force is conducting a review to make sure it is able to meet this increase in demand.

## **The force is good at preventing people from engaging or re-engaging in organised crime**

There are examples of the force preventing people from engaging or re-engaging in organised crime.

Operation Colworth is an initiative involving several vulnerable young females, many of whom are in care. These young females are susceptible to exploitation and often go missing from home. Working with other organisations, the force has provided support. As a result, there are now far fewer occasions where these young females go missing from home. This has reduced the risk of exploitation.



There has also been successful work in and around Jubilee Park in Ipswich. This is an area of deprivation, with a significant immigrant population and evidence of young people being susceptible to criminal exploitation. The local LRO works closely with specialists and other organisations to tackle problems in the area.

For example, the force works with educational and other organisations to encourage young people in the area to take part in sport and other activities to divert them away from crime. Improvements such as CCTV, lighting and a children's play park also aims to reduce SOC activity in the area. The force proactively targets those individuals whose lives are rooted in organised crime. The aim is to stop them influencing other young people.

The force also works closely with housing providers, public and private, to identify and target 'cuckooed' addresses. When appropriate, it uses eviction orders. It is also working with the local authority to issue 'I cards' to local young people. These cards give them free access to services and activities, such as summer events in open spaces.

### **The force is good at working with other organisations and agencies to reduce risk and vulnerability in local communities**

In Suffolk, the impact of SOC is felt mainly in Ipswich, with other parts of the county suffering much less. There are county lines across the force.

The force works closely with other organisations to reduce the risk and vulnerabilities in local communities. The main strategic forum for managing SOC is the safer stronger community meeting. This is attended by county, district and borough councils, and clinical commissioning groups, among others. Operation Eagle is a successful partnership that tackles modern slavery and exploitation across the county.

More locally, there are local community safety partnerships, attended by local authority members, the fire and rescue service, and public health, which also work to reduce and prevent SOC. More tactically, there is a criminal exploitation steering group.

The force's 'design out crime' officer carries out free surveys for local business premises. The SOC local profile reports the findings of a survey of partners that was conducted in its preparation.

But the force could be better at sharing more information and resources with other organisations.

# Meeting the Strategic Policing Requirement

We don't grade forces on this question.

## Main findings

In this section we set out our main findings for how well the force meets the [Strategic Policing Requirement \(SPR\)](#).

### **The force understands the contribution it is expected to make to the SPR threats and plans accordingly**

The responsibility for SPR threats is spread across several commands across the two forces of Norfolk and Suffolk. A single assistant chief constable holds overall responsibility across both forces. They must provide a report to the [police and crime commissioner \(PCC\)](#) every six months on the force's ability to meet the requirements of the SPR.

The Suffolk PCC's police and crime plan aims to work closely with other organisations "to deliver more effective, co-ordinated solutions, which are fundamental to making Suffolk a safer place in which to live, work, travel and invest".

It is evident that the force understands the contribution it is expected to make in response to the SPR threats. It also considers the SPR within its risk management processes.

Plans are in place to tackle the SPR threats. This includes firearms, public order, and wider multi-agency pandemic and civil emergency plans.

Suffolk Constabulary contributes effectively to the [local resilience forum \(LRF\)](#)'s community risk register. The LRF has developed multi-agency plans for identified risk, some of which are the highest risks facing the east coast on the National Risk Register.

## **The force works effectively with neighbouring forces, blue light services and other organisations to address SPR threats**

The force has sizeable and mature collaboration arrangements with Norfolk Constabulary and the Seven Force Strategic Collaboration. These arrangements include planning and responding to the SPR, including the terrorist threat. These arrangements also include a long-standing firearms capability collaboration with Norfolk, which is both productive and efficient.

Suffolk Constabulary is an engaged and active member of the Suffolk LRF. Published meeting minutes of the Suffolk LRF note that during the pandemic, the force representative took over the chair of the resilience forum's strategic co-ordination group, taking over from Suffolk County Council's public health team.

The force is also active within the Suffolk Joint Emergency Planning Unit (JEPU). JEPU is a shared service owned by all six local authorities in Suffolk. Its purpose is to support each Suffolk local authority in their planning for emergencies, and to help with their internal business continuity.

The force routinely works with organisations to reduce SPR risks. For example, it works with the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority in relation to modern day slavery. The force is also a member of the East Coast Flood Group. The group brings together emergency responders and other organisations along the east coast of England to improve plans for mass evacuation. It also works to improve the co-ordination of the emergency response by sharing best practices and improving [mutual aid](#).

## **The force routinely assesses its capacity and capabilities to address the SPR threats and adjusts accordingly**

Senior leaders work with other organisations to develop plans to address SPR threats, which are reasonably predictable and foreseeable. These include plans relating to flooding, civil emergency and mass fatalities.

In partnership with Norfolk Constabulary, the force recently reviewed its public order capacity and capabilities. As a result, it decided to increase the numbers of public order trained officers. This was to ensure that it could retain public order capacity in the county in the event of a national call-out. The review was generated, in part, after the force tested its ability to deploy the number of officers needed to a national call-out and found that it struggled to meet the requirements.

Testing plans either by desktop exercises and/or 'real time' simulation is a normal part of the force's SPR business processes. Plans relating to firearms and terrorist threats have been regularly tested. This includes how well the force's [control room](#) fallback facilities operate under these types of incidents. These exercises all involve the force testing its joint response with other blue light services and organisations.

## **Workforce development programmes include measures to build capacity and capability to address the SPR threats**

The force's workforce development plans include monitoring current and increasing capacity and capability, to address a range of SPR threats. This means firearms and public order training is continuous.

Following recent reviews, the force has allocated more resources to the SOC and cyber crime areas, and in data communication single points of contact. This will help it respond to anticipated SPR threats.

Within the public order area, the force, working with Norfolk Constabulary, has increased the number of public order units. With more trained public order officers, the force now needs more equipment for them, such as vans and personal protective equipment.

Another public order risk the force has identified relates to the development and building of the new Sizewell C nuclear power station. A public order intelligence team has been set up to properly manage this risk.

## **The force plans effectively to meet changing future demands posed by the six SPR threats**

Norfolk and Suffolk Constabularies work effectively together to plan for civil emergencies. This includes:

- strategic priority setting;
- planning (including contingency planning);
- workforce development;
- exercising and training; and
- organisational improvement.

The forces maintain an extensive joint business continuity plan. This plan covers maintaining core services in the event of a major event, such as a civil emergency. This plan was used during the recent pandemic. It meant the forces could effectively manage their response to it, continuing to carry out their 'business as usual' services.

When the force plans for civil emergencies, it doesn't do this in isolation. Its planning includes arrangements to promote [Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles \(JESIP\)](#). Between January 2020 and February 2021, the force held 16 JESIP courses.

The force is part of the Suffolk Resilience Forum (SRF). The SRF is a statutory partnership where agencies involved in civil contingencies routinely work together to prepare Suffolk for emergencies. This includes planning, testing and learning.

The SRF provides a mechanism for chief officers of responder agencies to agree on the co-ordination, information sharing and co-operation of individual areas and risks. The forum manages a variety of plans. These includes site plans (for example gas installations and hazard-specific) and plans for a pandemic. It was this SRF pandemic and influenza plan that was used during the recent pandemic.

The hazard-specific plans also include the Suffolk Flood Plan. This details how the multi-agency response to a large-scale flood event in Suffolk should be managed. The force, alongside others in SRF, continues to refine the flood plan. This includes better understanding of which postcodes are more likely to flood. This is important given the sometimes very localised nature of flooding on the east coast. The flood plan has been used several times recently, due to flooding threats along the coast and rivers.

During the pandemic, Suffolk Constabulary has worked closely with regional forces and other local, regional and national organisations to plan and carry out its response.

The force adopted the CPS protocol and communicated this to the other organisations. This included providing all solicitor firms in Norfolk and Suffolk with information which included:

- the use of social distancing in interview;
- access to sanitisers; and
- the proposal to increase the use of pre-charge bail.

The force also notified the firms about its intent to follow the custody protocol agreed between the CPS, [National Police Chiefs' Council \(NPCC\)](#) and representative solicitors' professional bodies.

Norfolk and Suffolk Constabularies carried out several reviews of their responses to the pandemic. These included a commission to research and identify patterns and trends of sudden deaths. The aim was to identify pinch points and find solutions to those identified areas, to support their own and other organisations' work.

Norfolk and Suffolk Constabularies also commissioned an early independent review of their response to the pandemic. The aim was to learn and share the lessons learned as soon as possible. The review was completed after the first wave and before the second wave. It was in-depth and highlighted differences in the way Norfolk and Suffolk forces responded, even though they were under the same command structure. The review made 24 recommendations, which the forces responded to immediately.

### **The force, with other organisations and neighbouring police forces, regularly exercises and tests how prepared it is for large-scale, cross-border civil emergencies**

Plans are regularly tested, either by desktop exercises and/or 'real time' simulations. This includes firearms, terrorist and civil emergency situations. Other organisations are involved in some of the exercises.

The pandemic has had a significant impact on the ability of the force to exercise its plans. But some plans have been tested, including those related to the impact of the UK's exit from the European Union and its effect on the port of Felixstowe.

The situation other organisations are facing is also affecting the force's ability to carry out some testing. For example, the East of England Ambulance Service is currently not able to take part in exercises.

The military can, however, offer support when needed during local emergencies. For example, in the early stages of the pandemic the force trained military staff to drive ambulances. This took pressure off the East of England Ambulance Service. The military is represented at SRF meetings, and always takes part in table-top training and exercises.

The force learns from exercises and real deployments to improve its work during civil emergencies.

The JESIP principles are clearly central in its civil emergency work and there are no problems at a tactical level. But the force feels that it could improve on a strategic level. For example, it is moving towards single thematic-based plans. This is a move away from separate plans for police, the fire service and the local authority for each thematic area.

# Protecting the public against armed threats

We don't grade forces on this question.

## Main findings

In this section, we set out our main findings that relate to how well the force protects communities from armed threats.

### **Suffolk and Norfolk Constabularies respond jointly to armed incidents**

The constabularies train specialist officers to respond to armed incidents and serious collisions. Switching between the two skill sets, the officers have a remit to respond to incidents in both counties. This brings resilience and we are satisfied that there are sufficient resources to protect Suffolk's communities from armed threats.

### **Regional support is available if the force needs specialist capabilities**

If specialist firearms officers are needed, the force uses regionally based counter terrorist specialist firearms officers. This is a relatively new arrangement and responds to concerns we have raised in previous inspections.

### **The force has an adequate understanding of threats, but it needs to improve**

The threats are set out in its [armed policing strategic threat and risk assessment \(APSTRA\)](#). An assistant chief constable (ACC) publishes this annually.

The APSTRA has been effective in addressing shortfalls in armed officers. But more needs to be done to comply with the NPCC's standards.

The APSTRA does not include a comprehensive forecast of demand over the next four years. We also found that more checks and balances are needed to make sure officers do not work excessive hours.

### **Firearms commanders are properly trained and standards of accreditation are clear**

Strategic and tactical firearms commanders must be both occupationally and operationally competent. After examining governance procedures and interviewing firearms commanders, we were assured that commanders in Suffolk:

- are properly trained;
- have their performance monitored; and
- are fit to discharge their responsibilities effectively.

The ACC takes personal responsibility for the competence of firearms commanders.

### **The force supports national approval procedures for acquiring weapons and specialist munitions**

We reviewed the force's procedures should it need to acquire new weapon systems or specialist munitions. The force has a good understanding of how to document any such consideration, and it is the responsibility of the designated ACC to review it.

It is also familiar with its responsibilities to the NPCC armed policing lead and the Home Office. The force has not considered acquiring new weapons systems since revised national procedures were introduced late in 2019.

### **The force could do more to ensure that firearms commanders are familiar with using specialist munitions**

As part of firearms operations, firearms commanders are responsible for authorising and tactically deploying specialist munitions.

It is important that they are familiar with the benefits, risks and physical effects of these devices on individuals. While this forms part of firearms training and development, the force could do more to ensure commanders observe practical training scenarios to improve their knowledge.

### **Suffolk Constabulary has plans in place to address foreseeable threats**

To test its plans, the force co-ordinates a programme of table-top and practical exercises. The programme includes involving external organisations.

The force has also examined the resilience of its call handling arrangements. In an exercise to simulate a terrorist attack, the force flooded the control room with 999 calls to assess the capabilities of call handlers.

### **The force has found innovative ways to maintain training during COVID-19**

The National Counter Terrorism Police Headquarters provides guidance on the role of unarmed officers. It sets out their main responsibilities, recognising they are likely to be the first to respond to incidents of this nature. Because of the pandemic, training in new procedures is being rolled out to frontline officers digitally.

### **Suffolk Constabulary has improved its debriefing procedures**

In our last inspection, we were critical of debriefing procedures. In response, a [senior officer](#) (representing the Seven Force Strategic Collaboration) introduced systems to make sure armed operations debriefs were routinely completed in good time. Areas where improvements can be made, and where good practice is identified, are passed on. These are included in the training curriculum when necessary.



# Building, supporting and protecting the workforce

Good

Suffolk Constabulary is good at building and developing its workforce.

## Good practice

### **The force is good at how it recruits and deploys its direct entry detectives**

The force is making extensive use of direct entry detectives. Due to a shortage in detectives, it completed a rigorous recruitment process for direct entry detective constables. An initial recruitment process brought 24 successful candidates with further recruitment campaigns planned for. The force noted that the candidates that it attracted to the scheme would likely not have applied to join the force if they had to complete the normal uniformed probationary period.

Each direct entry detective has a mentor and completes initial training alongside uniformed colleagues. Officers describe the direct entry course as being intensive, but manageable. Participants must pass the detectives exam and meet other requirements, whilst managing their day-to-day workloads. Many of the direct entry detectives are working in the safeguarding units dealing with abuse and sexual offences. They would benefit from a more obvious welfare support network, given that they are new to policing and managing difficult, impactful and complex cases at an early stage in their careers.

The approach taken by the force means that it is quickly building up a core of detectives whose career pathway is defined and whose skill set is matched to their role. This is likely to benefit victims.

## **The force works with the families of new officers to help them understand the issues of living with a police officer**

The force is working with the families of new officers to help them understand what it is like living with, or being a family member of, a police officer. And it helps them understand the pressures that this can cause to both the officer and their family. Currently, family members are invited to attend online evening sessions where the issues of living with a police officer are discussed. This means that new officers are more likely to be positively supported at home, with reduced stress for them and their families.

## **Main findings**

In this section we set out our main findings that relate to how well the force builds and develops its workforce.

### **The force promotes an ethical and inclusive culture at all levels**

The force has an ethical culture and environment. The workforce understands what is expected of it, the force is reflective, and the public are treated fairly. The force's meetings and seminars refer to ethical culture and environment. The chief constable is very clear on his vision for the force, which is based on ethics and 'being the best that you can'. The workforce believes the force is ethical and that the chief constable and chief officer group model good ethical behaviour. The [Code of Ethics](#) is well understood by the workforce, who felt that if they made an honest mistake they would be supported by the chief officer team. Most of the workforce we spoke to said they felt included, valued, and had a sense of belonging. Training on the Code of Ethics features in all recruit training, and the force has a 'leading with care' programme which supports the development of the workforce in acquiring leadership skills. Inclusivity is a key component of this programme, with a dedicated group considering underrepresentation.

The force has a good understanding of the culture and views of its workforce and uses this information to promote organisational change. However, most of the workforce aren't aware of the existence of either the ethics board or the 'ideas drop' initiative. The idea drop initiative allows the workforce to submit ideas for improvements to be considered by the 2025 project team, which leads on strategic improvements. Those ideas which the 2025 team consider to have merit are taken to the quarterly Kesgrave Days, which are strategic development days led by the chief constable. All staff who drop an idea into the system get a response from the 2025 team.

## **The force is good at understanding the wellbeing of its workforce and uses this understanding to develop effective plans for improving workforce wellbeing**

The force's wellbeing plan's stated vision is to ensure a stigma-free, supportive, proactive service where people feel safe and well at work. The four themes of the plan are workplace health, health and safety, provision of [TRiM](#), and wellbeing. The force uses a variety of methods to identify, inform and understand risks and threats to workforce wellbeing and their underlying causes. These include the staff survey, the Police Federation pay and morale survey 2020, and the work of the Joint Modern Workplace programme with Norfolk Constabulary. This programme is reviewing flexible working arrangements as compared to permanent on-site working. It builds on the findings from a recovery and reform programme in response to the impact of COVID-19 on the two forces.

There is a network of wellbeing champions (who are officers on the ground) and wellbeing advisors who all report into the centre. The force, in collaboration with Norfolk, has two full-time wellbeing advisors. The force promotes peer support groups covering several topics, including maternity and cancer support. The workforce is positive about the provisions it has in place for its employees' wellbeing. This includes the support it has in place for employee return to work, as well as the assistance line that staff can self-refer to.

There have been bespoke campaigns to support women's health, mindfulness and nutrition. The force is continuing to make efforts to improve in these areas. And an initiative to recruit wellbeing champions and mental health first aiders has only recently concluded. There is an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) to assist in supporting staff wellbeing. The EAP is run by an external company and provides a 24/7 telephone advice service for staff. The programme also provides advice and guidance to line managers to assist them when dealing with their staff. It offers support and advice on mental health issues and financial and legal support. The service can be accessed by the individual affected or anyone else looking for advice on how to support the individual. The force has engaged an external provider of counselling welfare support, to which the workforce can self-refer.

The force supports the welfare and wellbeing of volunteers. The Special Constabulary has the same access to welfare services as regular officers. Police support volunteers don't have access to the external counselling welfare support, but the force assists where it can. There is a Suffolk Constabulary welfare fund that supports specials who are injured on duty and as result can't do their day job.

## **The force is effective building its workforce for the future**

The force is working to ensure that it can effectively build its workforce for the future. And it understands its recruitment needs and has an effective plan to meet them. It actively seeks opportunities for collaboration in line with its statutory responsibilities. The collaborated recruitment function (with Norfolk Constabulary) has been restructured to centralise recruitment of police officers and police staff. The function deals with all recruitment requirements, then progresses the new employee to the 'on-boarding' process into the organisation. This workstream helps to support the national Uplift programme. The force has a three-year forecasting plan for recruitment that considers uplift and attritions through leavers and retirement. It considers which areas of recruitment to prioritise; for example, the shortage in CID applicants. In response, the force continues to run a highly successful direct entry detective route.

The force understands the importance of workforce data and gathering relevant information to inform its equality, diversity and inclusion strategy. As of 31 March 2021, Suffolk Constabulary recorded that 3.1 percent of its officers are from ethnic minority backgrounds, compared to 4.8 percent of people in the local population. Across all forces in England and Wales, officers from ethnic minority backgrounds make up 7.6 percent of the workforce. The force's efforts to improve representation in the workforce have included the use of positive-action recruiters, who work with ethnic minority candidates to support them through the process. Those candidates who are successful are offered a buddy and mentor when they join the police.

## **The force is making progress in its plan to achieve the requirements of the policing education qualifications framework (PEQF) initial entry routes**

The force has reassessed its recruitment processes to meet the needs of PEQF. Following due diligence, Anglia Ruskin University was selected as the preferred higher education institute. The pandemic delayed the contract from being enacted, which in turn delayed the start of PEQF to April 2022. Locally, work continued on the programme, and workstreams progressed well in all areas to meet the starting date. This was successful, with the force started as planned in April 2022.

The force is making good use of external marketers to help with concepts for marketing and recruitment. This includes the use of focus groups with external contributors to understand people's views and perceptions of policing in Suffolk. The idea is to shape recruitment campaigns to meet the candidate requirements of the future. There are two positive action recruiters targeting black, Asian and minority ethnic and underrepresented groups; much of their work is currently online. They work closely with the community engagement officers to reach out to harder-to-hear groups.

Applicants to join Suffolk Constabulary have three routes available to them. The degree-level apprenticeship allows an applicant to obtain a degree apprenticeship in professional police practice over a three-year programme. Degree-holder entry allows a candidate who already has a degree to follow a two-year work-based programme. At the conclusion they receive a graduate diploma in professional policing practice. And those wishing to join Suffolk Constabulary in the future can study for a pre-join degree. This is a three-year course (at the candidate's expense) followed by a shorter training programme. Being a special constable can be included in this route.

## **The force manages the vetting of its workforce effectively**

All staff have current vetting and are periodically re-vetted in line with APP. The force vetting unit (FVU) is aware of what level of vetting is required for each established role in the force. Staff are contacted 60 days before their vetting expires so that the renewal process can begin. This is good practice. There are enough staff in place to manage the vetting workload, and the unit is notified of any recruitment campaigns, allowing time to plan for the increase in their workload. There is, however, no resilience for absence within the unit.

The FVU has identified 24 employees overdue for renewal. It believes that these people have left the organisation, and this has been confirmed in some but not all cases. The way in which changes in circumstances for staff are recorded and passed to the FVU needs to improve, to ensure all risks are considered with the individuals' level of vetting. Information has been published and the [performance development review](#) process includes questions on change of circumstances.

The force gives consideration to disproportionality in vetting decisions. The unit manager reviews all vetting rejections for applicants with [protected characteristics](#). They can make a further consideration and, if necessary, consult with a panel to assess whether the protected characteristic had any bearing on the rejection. The panel can include diversity and inclusion professionals relevant to the protected characteristic of the applicant. This process started on 1 April 2020, and there is one case currently subject to the panel process.

## **The force is good at proactive and disruptive action taken to reduce the threat and risk posed by police corruption, but improvements should be made**

Norfolk Constabulary and Suffolk Constabulary have a collaborated counter-corruption unit (CCU) which includes the proactive [anti-corruption unit \(ACU\)](#), with the main base in Norfolk and a satellite office in Suffolk. The force has a strategic threat assessment (STA) which, along with other force threat assessments across the region, informs the annual national threat assessment. There is a control strategy that underpins the force STA, but the associated control strategy delivery plan lacks detail, ownership, and accountability. There is no formal structure through which the force manages the plan. It doesn't hold a meeting with the [professional standards department \(PSD\)](#) to discuss what actions need to be taken and who is responsible for them. This has led to the ACU conducting misconduct investigations which should have been carried out by the PSD and supported, if required, by the ACU maintaining oversight of any intelligence requirements alongside the investigation.

The force can monitor most but not all of its IT systems. It is working with IT suppliers to address this, although no firm timescale for full function has been identified. The force mitigates this risk as best it can through less efficient and effective technology. It conducts daily database checks, including keyword searches, against data associated with vulnerable victims and OCGs. Emails, and any file attachments sent to external addresses, are also checked for keywords linked to [abuse of position for a sexual purpose](#). The force recognises the risks associated with the use of encrypted apps on force devices, but it allows a small number of staff members to have access to WhatsApp. However, the ACU is not aware of who has this access, and this remains a risk.

Overall, the force is good at reactively managing potential corruption intelligence, but there are areas where this could be improved. It could do more to delineate between intelligence development and investigation. This would help it to maintain confidentiality and improve decision making for IOPC referrals. Investigation logs don't always record decisions or rationale. In some cases, no decision or rationale was recorded to explain why the case wasn't referred to the IOPC in accordance with the guidance.

Through an extensive awareness programme, the force has developed effective working relationships with external agencies that support vulnerable people. This has led to intelligence being reported in relation to staff who may be abusing their position for a sexual purpose. The force is looking for opportunities to extend this programme. It is currently in consultation with East Anglian Ambulance Services to deliver this awareness training to their staff.

# Strategic planning, organisational management and value for money

Good

Suffolk Constabulary is good at operating efficiently.

## Good practice

### **The force's Continuous Improvement and Innovation Strategy to 2025 Project (Project 2025) provides the basis for excellent governance and leadership**

Project 2025 sets out the high-level principles for how the force intends to operate. A transformational change team ensures that innovation is embraced and that the focus remains on the PCC and force strategic plans and priorities as regards investment.

Current and planned workstreams of the project include redesigning the performance framework, and bespoke pieces of work on increasing productivity, prevention, investigation standards and better use of technology. The force benefits manager is closely linked to the project to advise and oversee the identification and recording of benefits and drawbacks. The project has already completed much work, including writing the force's newest three-year plan, the digital support officer project, and design of the neighbourhood policing partnership teams, commercial roads team and overall neighbourhood policing structure.

Project 2025 uses an internship scheme. This will bring in 12 people to complete projects for the force over the next 12 months at the cost of £30,000.

The workforce can put forward their ideas to the Project 2025 team. These are considered, with the best being taken to the quarterly Kesgrave Day strategic innovation seminars led by the chief constable.

The Project 2025 team provides the force with an excellent innovation hub. It helps to ensure that focus and funding follow priorities and that tangible improvements are made to how it provides services.

### **The force's development and use of data visualisation software and its use of partner data is resulting in increased excellence in its understanding and management of its overall performance**

The force is making excellent use of data from its own systems and from partners, via the county data warehouse.

Using the data visualisation software, the force presents detailed data to its senior and operational leaders in a way that allows them to comprehensively understand demand, risks and opportunities. Display screens show 12 months of rolling data gathered from numerous sources in a clear and detailed way, and specific datasets can be easily linked to.

Other enhancements include working with partner organisations such as local authorities to better manage the collected data.

## **Main findings**

In this section we set out our main findings that relate to how well the force operates efficiently.

### **The force has an effective strategic planning and performance framework, making sure it tackles what is important locally and nationally**

The force's strategic plan 2020–25 considers the PCC's plan 2023–25, and the [force management statement \(FMS\)](#). The focus on shared priorities is clear in the force business plan and departmental plans. The PCC's and the force's own performance boards provide governance.

We saw substantial evidence that the PCC and force work with the public. The force interacts with the public in several ways, including using community engagement officers, who work with communities to understand their expectations and needs.

Effective analysis of information and data by the strategic, business, and operational service department (SBOS) helps the force to make sure it operates as effectively and efficiently as it can. SBOS offers a range of services designed to support policing across all areas. The department offers analysis and research, programme and project management, data insight, evidence-based policing and broader governance and change management. This means that the data underpinning the force's decisions can be trusted.



## **The force has a good understanding of and manages current demand well**

The draft FMS outlines the main issues, threats and gaps in terms of demand and resourcing within the force over the next four years. Partner organisations are now involved in the early stages of developing the FMS. The document is built on substantial demand data and forecasting modelling. There are elements of professional judgment to help quantify and interpret current and future demand. The force has also engaged CREST, a private company that offers consultancy with a crime and justice focus. It researches an organisation's data and provides clarity, assesses their demand and understands the policies, and then helps define strategy.

Documents and interviews help senior leaders to have a comprehensive understanding of current and future demand and pressure points, as the force comes out of the pandemic restrictions. The force recognises that there will be a series of abstractions to manage, following the backlogs created by response to the pandemic. Training for staff and delayed court cases will pose a significant challenge. As lockdown restrictions continue to ease over the coming months, the force expects a higher demand for service from the public. At the same time, the workforce will seek to take periods of leave. The force recognises that the need to balance capacity and abstraction management against staff wellbeing will be difficult.

## **The force has an operating model that supports it to respond to priorities and meet demands**

The current local policing model has been in place for a few years. While it is enabling the force to meet its demand, there are tensions within it. Consequently, it was reviewed in the summer of 2021 and some amendments were made. It was recognised that the review needed to consider supervision ratios and the use of acting sergeants. The force has a system in which constables 'act up' to sergeant if there are no substantive sergeants available on a given day. Many of these ad hoc and often very short-term acting sergeants are not qualified or trained for the role, are very young in service, and are 'acting up' on their own shift. There is particular risk regarding the tasking and supervision of crime in this system.

The force currently assesses that its resourcing against demand is sufficient, and the additional officer numbers due to be received through Uplift will help it to meet expected demand. The force's share of the Uplift grant was £1.5m in the first year of the programme (to 31 March 2021). This provided funding for 54 additional officers and the associated infrastructure.

The response (NRT) and neighbourhood (SNT) officers work very closely together, supporting each other as demand dictates. This works well.

Digital case file preparation is a growing demand for all officers. They are required to complete case files, which reduces their capacity to respond to investigations. Pre-charge case file preparation is the same for all cases, regardless of whether a charge is likely to be approved. This means that the same effort is required for a simple case as it is for a complex case.

The national shortage of detectives has put strain upon existing resilience. Although resource numbers have been adjusted to demand, there is still a gap in

capability in the force’s detective cohort. It is acknowledged that it will take time to upskill the workforce.

**The force is developing a skills database that will allow ready access to the skills and capabilities of its staff**

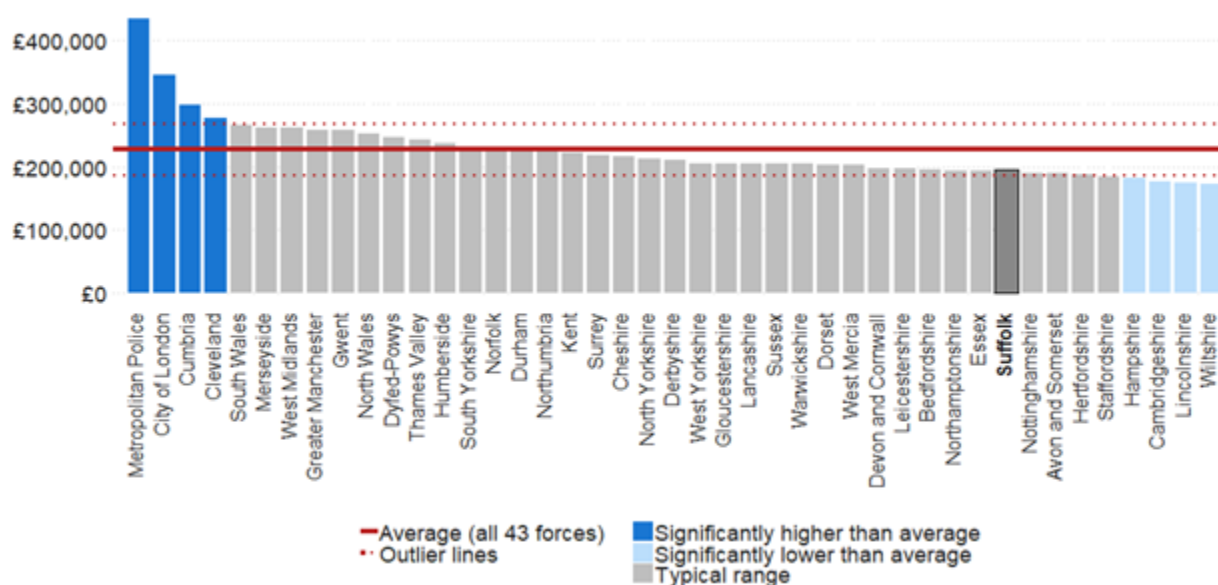
In a 2018/19 report on the effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy of Suffolk Constabulary, we found that it had not fully evaluated its workforce capacity and capability. And it was moving officers between teams without considering or mapping their current skillsets and capabilities.

In response to this area for improvement, the force sought to implement a skills database alongside other regional forces. Unfortunately, this approach has not proved successful. The force is now in the process of developing a bespoke skills database, which will allow it to make properly informed decisions on training, deployments and recruitment.

**The force makes the best use of the finance it has available, and its plans are both ambitious and sustainable**

Historically, Suffolk Constabulary has been at the lower end of the funding scale. This is still the case. In the year ending 31 March 2021, Suffolk received £148.3 million in funding. This is equivalent to £195,000 per 1,000 population, which is lower than the England and Wales rate of around £250,000 per 1,000 population. The force makes the best use of the finance it has available, and its financial plans are both ambitious and sustainable.

**Total funding per 1,000 population in year ending 31 March 2021, across all forces in England and Wales**



The force has provided a [medium-term financial plan](#) (MTFS) covering the period 2020 to 2024. This document is clear and makes sensible assumptions. The force budget for 2020/21 stands at £148.3m after several years of council tax increases. The precept was increased by 4.69 percent in 2020/21. The additional funding was directed at force priorities, including county lines, domestic abuse, sexual offences,

modern slavery, rural crime and robbery. Funding was also allocated to a new commercial vehicle enforcement unit.

The force committed to making £1.3m of savings in 2020/21. The force needs to make savings of £6.36m by 2023/24 to balance the books. Some savings are identified in the MTFS as 'challenge panel savings', but there is little detail on how the over £6m will be achieved yet. However, the MTFP for future years is based on prudent assumptions. Given the force's track record, the required savings should be achievable.

The estates strategy sets a target to reduce estates costs by £1.5m and avoid planned maintenance costs of £6.7m by completing the planned changes. Progress is overseen by the Suffolk estates group, chaired by the PCC. Among the premises under review are the headquarters at Martlesham along with several operational bases.

Planned capital expenditure for Suffolk-only projects amounts to around £3m per year in 2020/21 and 2021/22. And joint projects with Norfolk Constabulary are expected to cost £4m in 2020/21 and £2m in 2021/22. The capital programme is mainly funded by contributions from the revenue budget. The programme shows significant investment in digital and mobile technologies.

The force holds [reserves](#) of nearly 3 percent, which is considered prudent.

### **The force is engaged in ambitious and effective collaborations with partner organisations, demonstrably leading to better value for money**

The force has a good track record of achieving savings from both the Suffolk-only cost centres and the collaborated space. Savings of £40m have accrued from the Norfolk Constabulary and Suffolk Constabulary collaboration, of which £20m is attributable to Suffolk. A further £3m of savings from this collaboration is budgeted in 2021/22, of which £1.5 relates to Suffolk.

In addition to the financial element of collaboration, the force has worked with Norfolk Constabulary to develop its environment strategy, estates strategy, and outcome-based budgeting. The force is also part of a seven-force strategic collaboration programme with Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Essex, Hertfordshire, Kent and Norfolk police forces, all of which are considering ways of pooling resources to save money. Current workstreams include work on procurement, forensic case management and vetting. In addition, a business case has been developed to bring together an enterprise resource system across all the forces. But funding for this hasn't yet been identified.

With Leicestershire Police, the force has recently established a joint virtual team under the banner of Project Sodium. This is to facilitate the exchange of innovation and development across mutual areas of priority, exchange perspectives in support of each force, and, where requested, co-ordinate peer review between the two forces. The first areas of review conducted by the project were opportunities to improve the forces' approach to workforce development and build public confidence in both force areas.

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