



Promoting improvements  
in policing to make  
everyone safer

# PEEL: Police effectiveness 2016

An inspection of West Mercia Police



March 2017

© HMIC 2017

ISBN: 978-1-78655-376-8

[www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic](http://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic)

# Contents

<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Force in numbers .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Overview – How effective is the force at keeping people safe and reducing crime? .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>How effective is the force at preventing crime, tackling anti-social behaviour and keeping people safe? .....</b>	<b>9</b>
How much crime and anti-social behaviour is there in West Mercia? .....	9
How effectively does the force understand the threat or risk of harm within the communities it serves? .....	12
How effectively do force actions and activities prevent crime and anti-social behaviour? .....	13
Summary of findings .....	16
<b>How effective is the force at investigating crime and reducing re-offending? .</b>	<b>17</b>
How well does the force bring offenders to justice? .....	17
How effective is the force's initial investigative response? .....	19
How effective is the force's subsequent investigation? .....	20
How effectively does the force reduce re-offending? .....	24
Summary of findings .....	26
<b>How effective is the force at protecting those who are vulnerable from harm, and supporting victims? .....</b>	<b>28</b>
How effectively does the force identify those who are vulnerable and assess their level of risk and need? .....	29
How effectively does the force initially respond to vulnerable victims? .....	32
How effectively does the force investigate offences involving vulnerable victims and work with external partners to keep victims safe? .....	35
Summary of findings .....	38
<b>How effective is the force at tackling serious and organised crime? .....</b>	<b>41</b>

How effectively does the force understand the threat and risk posed by serious and organised crime? .....	41
How effectively does the force respond to serious and organised crime? .....	44
How effectively does the force prevent serious and organised crime? .....	47
Summary of findings .....	48
<b>How effective are the force's specialist capabilities?.....</b>	<b>50</b>
How effective are the force's arrangements to ensure that it can fulfil its national policing responsibilities? .....	50
How well prepared is the force to respond to a firearms attack? .....	51
Summary of findings .....	53
<b>Next steps .....</b>	<b>54</b>
<b>Annex A – About the data.....</b>	<b>55</b>

## Introduction

As part of our annual inspections of police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy (PEEL), Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) assesses the effectiveness of police forces across England and Wales.

### **What is police effectiveness and why is it important?**

An effective police force is one which keeps people safe and reduces crime. These are the most important responsibilities for a police force, and the principal measures by which the public judge the performance of their force and policing as a whole.

To reach a judgment on the extent of each force's effectiveness, our inspection answered the following overall question:

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

To answer this question HMIC explores five 'core' questions, which reflect those areas of policing that we consider to be of particular interest and concern to the public:<sup>1</sup>

1. How effective is the force at preventing crime, tackling anti-social behaviour and keeping people safe?
2. How effective is the force at investigating crime and reducing re-offending?
3. How effective is the force at protecting those who are vulnerable from harm, and supporting victims?
4. How effective is the force at tackling serious and organised crime?
5. How effective are the force's specialist capabilities?

HMIC's effectiveness inspection assessed all of these areas during 2016. More information on how we inspect and grade forces as part of this wide-ranging inspection is available on the HMIC website ([www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/peel-assessments/how-we-inspect/](http://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/peel-assessments/how-we-inspect/)). This report sets out our findings for West Mercia Police.

Reports on the force's efficiency, legitimacy and leadership inspections are available on the HMIC website ([www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/peel-assessments/peel-2016/west-mercias/](http://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/peel-assessments/peel-2016/west-mercias/)).

---

<sup>1</sup> HMIC assessed forces against these questions between September and December 2016, except for Kent Police – our pilot force – which we inspected in June 2016.

## Force in numbers



### Calls for assistance

Calls for assistance per 1,000 population 12 months to 30 June 2016

West Mercia Police

England and Wales

**234**

**240**



### Crime (excluding fraud)

Crimes recorded per 1,000 population 12 months to 30 June 2016

West Mercia Police

England and Wales

**59**

**68**

Change in recorded crime 12 months to 30 June 2015 against 12 months to 30 June 2016

West Mercia Police

England and Wales

**+13.4%**

**+7.8%**

Change in recorded crime for the 5 years to the 12 months to 30 June 2016

West Mercia Police

England and Wales

**+2.5%**

**-3.4%**



### Crime outcomes\*

Charged/summonsed

West Mercia Police

England and Wales

**13.2%**

**12.1%**

Evidential difficulties: suspect identified but victim does not support action

West Mercia Police

England and Wales

**16.3%**

**10.6%**

Investigation completed but no suspect identified

West Mercia Police

England and Wales

**41.4%**

**47.4%**

\*Figures are shown as proportions of outcomes assigned to offences recorded in the 12 months to 30 June 2016.



## Anti-social behaviour

Anti-social behaviour incidents per 1,000 population 12 months to 31 March 2016

West Mercia Police      England and Wales

**35**

**31**

Anti-social behaviour incidents per 1,000 population 12 months to 31 March 2015

West Mercia Police      England and Wales

**38**

**34**



## Domestic abuse

Domestic abuse calls for assistance per 1,000 population 12 months to 30 June 2016

West Mercia Police      England and Wales

**10**

**16**

Domestic abuse as a percentage of all recorded crime (excluding fraud) 12 months to 30 June 2016

West Mercia Police      England and Wales

**12.4%**

**11.1%**

Domestic abuse as a percentage of all recorded crime (excluding fraud) 12 months to 31 March 2015

West Mercia Police      England and Wales

**10.6%**

**10.0%**



## Organised crime groups

Organised crime groups per million population as at 1 July 2016

West Mercia Police      England and Wales

**23**

**46**



## Victim satisfaction rate

Victim satisfaction with the overall service provided by the police 12 months to 30 June 2016

West Mercia Police      England and Wales

**84.1%**

**83.3%**

For further information about the data in this graphic please see annex A

# Overview – How effective is the force at keeping people safe and reducing crime?

## Overall judgment<sup>2</sup>



West Mercia Police is good at keeping people safe and reducing crime. This is an improvement on last year's assessment, when we judged the force to require improvement. In particular, the standard of investigations has improved and vulnerable victims receive a better service. The force has also made improvements in the way it tackles serious and organised crime, although its approach to crime prevention requires improvement.

## Overall summary

How effective is the force at preventing crime, tackling anti-social behaviour and keeping people safe?



How effective is the force at investigating crime and reducing re-offending?



How effective is the force at protecting those who are vulnerable from harm, and supporting victims?



How effective is the force at tackling serious and organised crime?



How effective are the force's specialist capabilities?

Ungraded

West Mercia Police is good at keeping people safe and reducing crime.

The force operates on a solid foundation of local policing from which safer neighbourhood teams work well with local communities. As part of their day-to-day activity, officers and police community support officers (PCSOs) take time to find out what matters to local people; however, there remain areas where local policing could

<sup>2</sup> HMIC judgments are outstanding, good, requires improvement and inadequate.



be improved. If the force knew more about local demographics and population trends, then it would be in a better position to prioritise resources and plan for the future. Also, while there is no doubt that the force is committed to addressing problems in local communities, it does not evaluate its problem-solving initiatives properly. These are highlighted in this report as areas for improvement.

The force is changing operational practices for criminal investigations. Considerable investment is being made to accredit more of the workforce to specialist investigator standard in order to both increase its capacity to investigate crime and provide a better service to vulnerable victims. Standards of investigations are good and, following concerns we raised in 2015, the force has increased its ability to download evidence from smartphones, tablets and other devices. More investigations are reliant on digital evidence and the force has done well to make the retrieval of this evidence part of routine investigative practice.

The public can feel confident that West Mercia Police protects vulnerable people<sup>3</sup> and supports victims well. Since HMIC last examined this area in 2015, the force has improved the service it provides to domestic abuse victims and missing children.

HMIC also found some improvements in how the force tackles serious and organised crime. Local profiles of organised crime groups have been developed alongside structured action plans to limit the harm caused by organised criminals and reflect national good practice.

In addition, this inspection examined the force's specialist capabilities and found that West Mercia Police has good arrangements in place to respond to the national threats set out in the *Strategic Policing Requirement*.<sup>4</sup> It is well prepared to respond to an attack requiring an armed response, and regularly tests its firearms capability.

---

<sup>3</sup> A vulnerable person is someone who is in need of special care, support or protection through their age, disability, or because they have been subjected to repeated offences, or are at high risk of abuse, for example.

<sup>4</sup> The SPR is issued annually by the Home Secretary, setting out the latest national threats and the appropriate national policing capabilities required to counter those threats. National threats require a co-ordinated or aggregated response from a number of police forces. Forces often need to work collaboratively, and with other partner organisations, national agencies or national arrangements, to ensure such threats are tackled effectively. *Strategic Policing Requirement*, Home Office, March 2015. Available from:

[www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/417116/The\\_Strategic\\_Policing\\_Requirement.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/417116/The_Strategic_Policing_Requirement.pdf)



## **How effective is the force at preventing crime, tackling anti-social behaviour and keeping people safe?**

The police's ability to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour and to keep people safe is a principal measure of its effectiveness. Crime prevention is more effective than investigating crime, stops people being victims in the first place and makes society a safer place. The police cannot prevent crime on their own; other policing organisations and organisations such as health, housing and children's services have a vital role to play. Police effectiveness in this matter therefore depends on their ability to work closely with other policing organisations and other interested parties to understand local problems and to use a wide range of evidence-based interventions to resolve them.

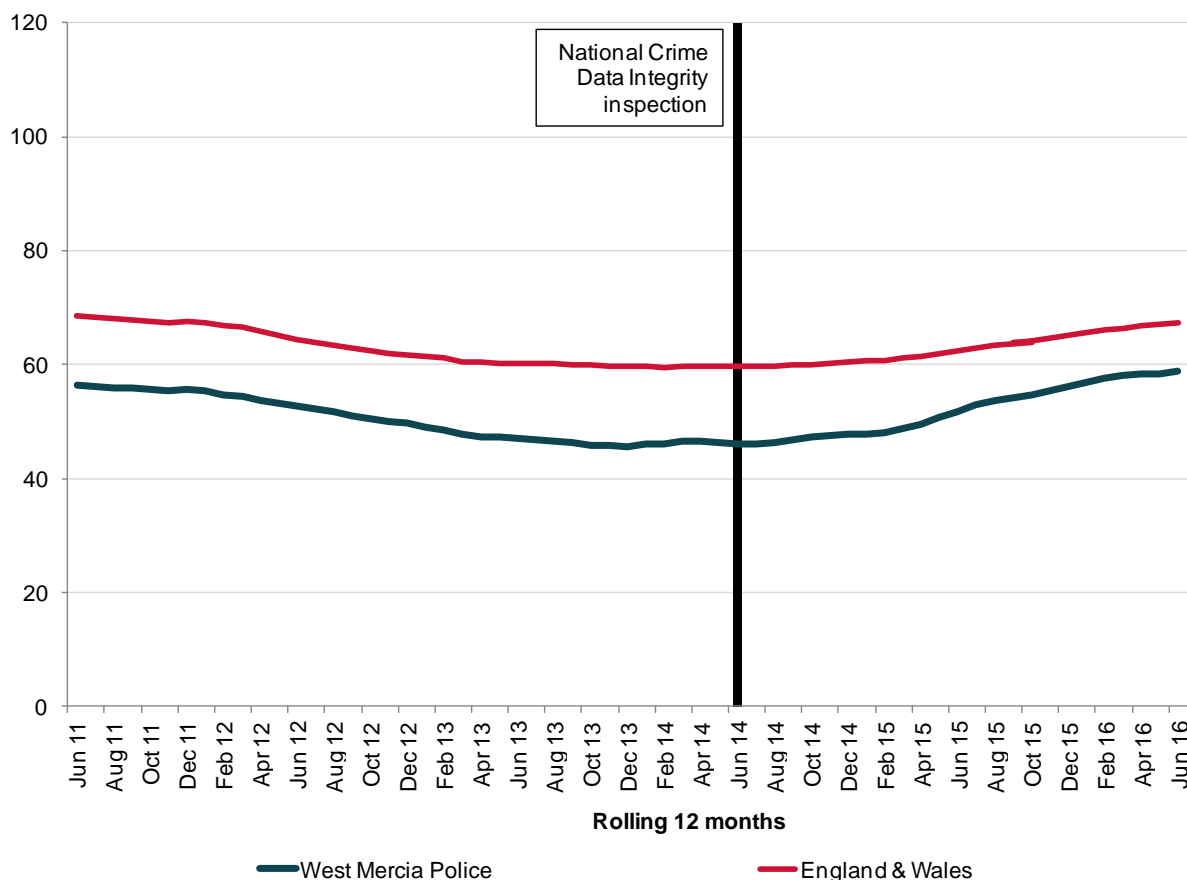
## **How much crime and anti-social behaviour is there in West Mercia?**

Although police-recorded crime is by no means a complete measure of the totality of demand for calls on its service that a force faces, it does provide a partial indication of performance across all forces. Crime rates are reported as the number of crimes per 1,000 population in each force area to enable comparison between areas. Total recorded crime is made up of victim-based crime (crimes involving a direct victim such as an individual, a group, or an organisation) and other crimes against society (e.g. possession of drugs). In the 12 months to 30 June 2016, the majority of forces (39 out of 43 forces) showed an annual increase in total police-recorded crime (excluding fraud). This increase in police-recorded crime may have been affected by the renewed focus on the quality and compliance of crime recording since HMIC's 2014 inspection of crime data in all forces across England and Wales.

In 2010 the Home Secretary set a clear priority for the police service to cut crime. Figure 1 shows how police-recorded crime has fluctuated over the longer term. When compared with the 12 months to 30 June 2011, police-recorded crime (excluding fraud) for the 12 months to 30 June 2016 has increased by 2.5 percent in West Mercia compared with a decrease of 3.4 percent across all forces in England and Wales.

Over this same period, victim-based crime increased by 2.7 percent in West Mercia, compared with a decrease of 0.5 percent for England and Wales as a whole.

**Figure 1: Police-recorded crime rates (per 1,000 population) in West Mercia, for the five year period to 30 June 2016**



**Source: Home Office data**

**For further information about these data, please see annex A**

More recently, when compared with the previous 12 month period, police-recorded crime (excluding fraud) in West Mercia increased by 13.4 percent for the year ending 30 June 2016. This is compared with an increase of 7.8 percent across all forces in England and Wales over the same period.

The rate of police-recorded crimes and incidents of anti-social behaviour per head of population indicates how safe it is for the public in that police area. Figures 2 and 3 show crime rates (per 1,000 population) and the change in the rate (per 1,000 population) of anti-social behaviour in West Mercia compared with England and Wales.

HMIC used a broad selection of crime types to indicate crime levels in the police force area during the inspection. We are not judging the effectiveness of the force on police-recorded crime rates only. The figure below shows police-recorded crime rates in the force area for a small selection of crime types.

**Figure 2: Police-recorded crime rates (per 1,000 population) in West Mercia, for the 12 months to 30 June 2016**

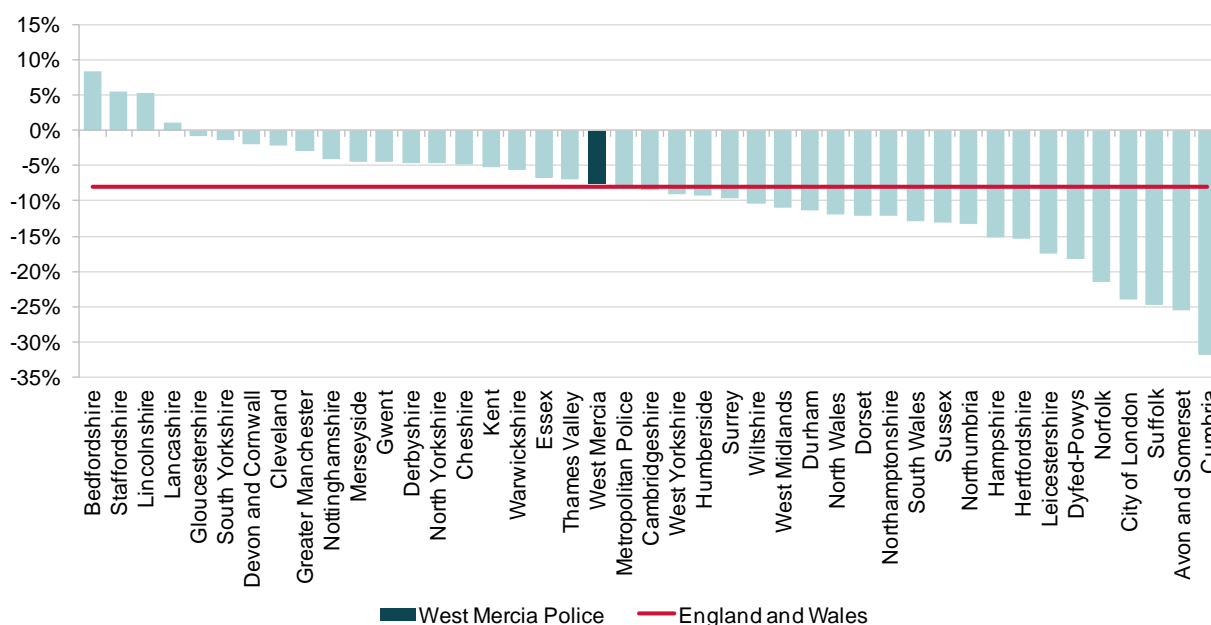
Rates per 1,000 population	West Mercia Police	England and Wales
Recorded crime (excluding fraud)	58.8	68.2
Victim-based crime	52.5	60.4
Sexual offences	2.2	1.9
Assault with injury	7.3	7.0
Burglary in a dwelling*	5.3	8.1

\* The rate of burglary in a dwelling is the rate for 1,000 households, rather than population

Source: Home Office data

For further information about these data, please see annex A

**Figure 3: Percentage change in the rate of anti-social behaviour incidents (per 1,000 population), by force, comparing the 12 months to 31 March 2016 with the 12 months to 31 March 2015**



Source: Home Office data

For further information about these data, please see annex A

In the 12 months to 31 March 2016, West Mercia Police recorded 35 incidents of anti-social behaviour per 1,000 population. This is 8 percent fewer incidents per 1,000 population than the force recorded during the previous 12 months. In England and Wales as a whole, there were 8 percent fewer incidents per 1,000 population in the 12 months to 31 March 2016, than were recorded during the previous 12 months.

## **How effectively does the force understand the threat or risk of harm within the communities it serves?**

It is vital that forces have a detailed understanding of the communities they serve in order to protect them from harm. This understanding should include those communities which may – for a variety of reasons – need the police to work differently to understand their requirements, for example migrant communities, elderly people or groups which might be mistrustful towards the police. A good understanding of what matters to these communities helps the police to gain their confidence and create safer neighbourhoods for citizens.

In order to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour, police forces need to understand the threat and risk faced by communities. Forces must also operate a model of local policing in which police officers and police community support officers (PCSOs) have sufficient time for community engagement, visible targeted foot patrols and working with other policing organisations and other interested parties to promote resolutions that protect communities and prevent crime. Successfully undertaking these three activities leads to crime reduction and increased public confidence.

### **Does West Mercia Police understand the risk posed to its communities?**

West Mercia Police recognises the value of having dedicated officers and staff working within neighbourhoods to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour. It ensures that each area has a designated safer neighbourhood team (SNT) consisting of neighbourhood police officers and PCSOs. Response officers who respond to emergencies work alongside safer neighbourhood teams.

HMIC has found that in the case of some forces, safer neighbourhood teams are sometimes taken away from their communities to cover staff shortages in other areas of the force, which can have a detrimental effect on community policing. In West Mercia Police, we found that staff in safer neighbourhood teams are sometimes moved away from their core roles, but this is not a frequent occurrence. This means they have enough time to work on problem solving<sup>5</sup> and preventative patrolling. However, their redeployment to cover staff shortages appears to be increasing, and this reduces staff involvement in their local communities.

In HMIC's 2015 effectiveness report, we commented on how neighbourhood officers and staff had access to different types of information to help them prevent crime and keep people safe, including crime and incident data. This year, we checked with safer neighbourhood staff to determine how effectively the force uses intelligence to identify the risk of harm within its communities. HMIC found that officers and staff use several different systems to identify and record activity relating to offenders,

---

<sup>5</sup> A term used in policing where forces systematically identify and analyse crime and disorder problems, develop specific responses to individual problems and subsequently assess whether the response has been successful.

crime and disorder ‘hot spots’ and vulnerable individuals. Although the force records information comprehensively, accessing the data can be awkward because it is stored in several different databases. However, we acknowledge that the force’s plans to introduce new IT systems are at an advanced stage and should lead to improvements in working practices.

We noted how the safer neighbourhood teams decide on local policing priorities. However, the force does not produce community profiles and HMIC saw limited evidence of any activity to identify which threats or risks are affecting vulnerable or emerging communities or those who are less likely to complain or take part in traditional forms of engagement. More positively, we found safer neighbourhood teams to be enthusiastic, committed to their roles and to have a clear understanding of the importance of protecting vulnerable people.

### **How does West Mercia Police engage with the public?**

The force uses a variety of methods to engage with the public, including community forums, police surgeries and electronic mail shots. Some officers and PCSOs use Twitter and Facebook. However, this is more a reflection of the localised efforts of individuals rather than a formal force-wide public engagement strategy.

The absence of an engagement strategy means that effective communication with newly settled groups or communities which have less trust and confidence in the police cannot be guaranteed. This may mean that policing priorities are not truly representative of the needs of all communities and instead rely on the professional judgment of officers and staff.

HMIC commissioned Ipsos MORI to conduct a survey of attitudes towards policing between July and August 2016. The survey indicated that there has been a decrease in public satisfaction with West Mercia Police. Some 403 people were interviewed and 48 percent were very or fairly satisfied with local policing in their area. This is a 4 percent decrease on 2015.<sup>6</sup>

### **How effectively do force actions and activities prevent crime and anti-social behaviour?**

Effective forces use a range of options to prevent crime, tackle anti-social behaviour and keep people safe. They use structured approaches to solving local problems which aim to rid communities of criminal and anti-social behaviour. They also use a range of legal powers and specific tactics which vary depending on the situation. HMIC expects forces to review their activity as well as other sources of evidence in order to improve their ability to protect people over the long term.

---

<sup>6</sup> For further details, see annex A.

## **Does the force have a problem-solving approach?**

West Mercia Police demonstrates a strong commitment to protecting people from harm. During our inspection, we scrutinised how the force's use of tactics and interventions prevents crime and anti-social behaviour. The force states that its officers and staff use the SARA<sup>7</sup> and PIER<sup>8</sup> problem-solving models. However, we found inconsistent use of them; some officers were using different problem-solving models and others did not use a structured model at all.

In HMIC's 2015 effectiveness report, we found that the force's general approach to problem solving was dependent on knowledgeable individuals, as the force did not provide any problem-solving training. Although problem-solving activity continues to form part of the safer neighbourhood teams' work, staff have not yet been trained in problem-solving techniques.

## **Does the force use effective approaches and tactics to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour?**

HMIC found evidence of problem-solving activity taking place at a local level, including the use of powers to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour. The force makes good use of Criminal Behaviour Orders but its use of other measures was more limited, including dispersal powers and Community Protection Notices. Some 34 percent of the members of the public surveyed by Ipsos MORI thought that West Mercia Police was effective in tackling anti-social behaviour, and only 48 percent were very or fairly satisfied with local policing.

West Mercia Police has formed a formal alliance with Warwickshire Police, and both forces collaborate and share resources extensively. This is a mature arrangement and its programme of change is known as StraDA (strengthening and deepening the alliance). Daily management meetings in both the force and the alliance are based on an assessment of threats and risk known as THRIVE.<sup>9</sup> THRIVE ensures the force provides the most appropriate response to incidents and events, relative to the level of threat or risk of harm involved. We saw that particular attention is given to incidents involving missing or vulnerable people or wanted individuals who are likely to re-offend. Our observations of the daily management meetings confirmed that the transfer of resources across alliance boundaries is seamless and takes into consideration the type of specialist support available from partner organisations,

---

<sup>7</sup> SARA stands for scanning, analysis, response, and assess. The SARA process is aimed at identifying legal and ethical solutions to policing problems, such as anti-social behaviour.

<sup>8</sup> A multi-agency, crime-reduction initiative which is tailored to deal with local issues.

<sup>9</sup> THRIVE is a structured assessment based on the levels of threat, harm, risk and vulnerability faced by the victim, rather than simply by the type of incident or crime being reported, in order to help staff determine the appropriate level of response to a call.

including local authorities and organisations that support victims. The process is managed well, ensuring that resources are allocated where they are most needed.

We found examples of effective joint working among several local organisations, much of which is organised by community safety partnerships (CSPs).<sup>10</sup> The force also routinely shares information with partner organisations, a good example being the Integrated Community Model (ICM) in Shrewsbury. ICM brings a range of public sector services together at weekly tactical meetings to address neighbourhood concerns. It supports a range of service providers by responding jointly to community-based problems. We learned how the ICM is being used to tackle the problem of rough sleepers using a combination of housing charity, health and police resources. Working with the local authority, it has also engaged with community members in the Telford and Wrekin area to ensure migrant workers are provided with suitable accommodation, and has supplied practical information to new workers to guide them on subjects such as legislation, recycling, and support networks. We learned of other instances where it has collaborated with different agencies to tackle problems involving fly-tipping and other criminal behaviour that could affect public health. The force does not rely on enforcement activity, but uses engagement, education and engineering opportunities to work with partner organisations.

### **Does the force use evidence of best practice and its own learning to improve the service to the public?**

The public can remain confident that West Mercia Police is continuing to work well to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour. However, there is still room for improvement in the way the force formally evaluates its problem-solving activities and uses sources of evidence and good practice to improve the way it works.

HMIC does not doubt that problem solving is an important part of local policing in West Mercia, but the force does not currently evaluate the effectiveness and success of local projects. This can be explained in part by the fact that different approaches are taken in different council areas. Nonetheless, in other forces an evaluation of the best tactics to use in any given circumstances is more of a mainstream activity. The force should introduce a formal evaluation process of its problem-solving projects and ensure the results are shared and accessible to the rest of the workforce.

---

<sup>10</sup> CSPs were set up as statutory bodies under Sections 5–7 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. Each CSP is made up of representatives from the police and police authority, the local council, and the fire, health and probation services (the 'responsible authorities'). Their mandate is to enable organisations to work together to resolve instance of crime and anti-social behaviour.



## Summary of findings



**Requires improvement**

The manner in which West Mercia Police prevents crime, tackles anti-social behaviour and keeps people safe requires improvement.

Community policing is the foundation of the force's operating model; safer neighbourhood teams generally engage well with local people and listen to their concerns and priorities. However, the force must do more to understand the changing nature of its local communities. This would help support future planning, assist with resourcing decisions and lead to better communication with communities which have less trust and confidence in the police.

Working alongside partner organisations, West Mercia Police is committed to helping find solutions to problems in local communities. However, its problem-solving initiatives would benefit from better evaluation. This would help ensure best use of resources and identify whether these tactics could address similar problems elsewhere.

### **Areas for improvement**

- The force should work with local people and partner organisations to improve its understanding of local communities, including those which are less likely to take part in traditional forms of engagement, such as migrant communities or elderly people.
- The force should evaluate and share effective practice routinely, both internally and with partner organisations, to continually improve its problem-solving approach to the prevention of crime and anti-social behaviour.

## How effective is the force at investigating crime and reducing re-offending?

When a crime occurs, the public must have confidence that the police will investigate it effectively, take seriously their concerns as victims, and bring offenders to justice. To be effective, investigations should be well planned and supervised, based on approved practice, and carried out by appropriately-trained staff. In co-operation with other organisations, forces must also manage the risk posed by those who are identified as being the most prolific or dangerous offenders, to minimise the chances of continued harm to individuals and communities.

## How well does the force bring offenders to justice?

Since April 2014, police forces in England and Wales have been required to record how investigations are concluded in a new way, known as 'outcomes'. Replacing what was known as 'detections', the outcomes framework gives a fuller picture of the work the police do to investigate and resolve crime and over time all crimes will be assigned an outcome. The broader outcomes framework (currently containing 21 different types of outcomes) is designed to support police officers in using their professional judgment to ensure a just and timely resolution. The resolution should reflect the harm caused to the victim, the seriousness of the offending behaviour, the impact on the community and deter future offending.

Outcomes are likely to differ from force to force for various reasons. Forces face a different mix of crime types in their policing areas, so the outcomes they assign will also vary depending on the nature of the crime. Certain offences are more likely to be concluded without offenders being prosecuted; typically these include types of crime such as cannabis misuse. If this type of crime is particularly prevalent in the force then it is likely that the level of 'cannabis/khat<sup>11</sup> warning' outcomes would be greater. Other offences such as those involving domestic abuse or serious sexual offences, are unlikely to result in a high usage of the 'cautions' outcome.

The frequency of outcomes may also reflect the force's policing priorities. For example, some forces work hard with partners to ensure that first time and low-level offenders are channelled away from the criminal justice system. In these areas locally-based community resolutions are likely to be more prevalent than elsewhere.

It is also important to understand that not all of the crimes recorded in the year will have been assigned an outcome as some will still be under investigation. For some crime types such as sexual offences, the delay between a crime being recorded and

---

<sup>11</sup> A plant native to Africa and the Arabian Peninsula, the leaves of which are frequently chewed as a stimulant. The possession and supply of khat became a criminal offence in England and Wales in 2014.

an outcome being assigned may be particularly pronounced, as these may involve complex and lengthy investigations.

**Figure 4: Proportion of outcomes assigned to offences recorded in West Mercia Police, in 12 months to 30 June 2016, by outcome type<sup>12,13</sup>**

Outcome number	Outcome type / group	West Mercia Police	England and Wales
1	Charged/Summoned	13.2	12.1
4	Taken into consideration	0.1	0.2
	<b>Out-of-court (formal)</b>	<b>4.0</b>	<b>3.2</b>
2	Caution - youths	0.6	0.4
3	Caution - adults	3.0	2.3
6	Penalty Notices for Disorder	0.4	0.6
	<b>Out-of-court (informal)</b>	<b>4.3</b>	<b>3.6</b>
7	Cannabis/Khat warning	0.9	0.9
8	Community Resolution	3.3	2.8
*	<b>Prosecution prevented or not in the public interest</b>	<b>0.8</b>	<b>1.8</b>
	<b>Evidential difficulties (victim supports police action)</b>		
15	Suspect identified	9.5	8.3
	<b>Evidential difficulties (victim does not support police action)</b>	<b>18.9</b>	<b>13.8</b>
16	Suspect identified	16.3	10.6
14	Suspect not identified	2.6	3.2
18	<b>Investigation complete – no suspect identified</b>	<b>41.4</b>	<b>47.4</b>
20	<b>Action undertaken by another body / agency</b>	<b>1.4</b>	<b>0.6</b>
21	<b>Further investigation to support formal action not in the public interest</b>	<b>0.6</b>	<b>0.1</b>
	<b>Total offences assigned an outcome</b>	<b>94.0</b>	<b>91.3</b>
	<b>Not yet assigned an outcome</b>	<b>6.0</b>	<b>8.7</b>
	<b>Total</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>100.00</b>

\*Includes the following outcome types: Offender died, Not in public interest (CPS), Prosecution prevented – suspect under age, Prosecution prevented – suspect too ill, Prosecution prevented – victim/key witness dead/too ill, Prosecution time limit expired

Source: Home Office crime outcomes data

For further information about these data, please see annex A

<sup>12</sup> Dorset Police is excluded from the table. Therefore figures for England and Wales will differ from those published by the Home Office. For further details see annex A.

<sup>13</sup> 'Taken into consideration' is when an offender admits committing other offences in the course of sentencing proceedings and requests those other offences to be taken into consideration.

In the 12 months to 30 June 2016, West Mercia Police's use of 'further investigation to support formal action not in the public interest' was among the highest in England and Wales. However, any interpretation of outcomes should take into account that outcomes will vary dependent on the crime types that occur in each force area, and how it deals with offenders for different crimes.

## **How effective is the force's initial investigative response?**

The initial investigative response is critical for an effective investigation. From the moment victims and witnesses make contact with the police the investigative process should start, so that accurate information and evidence can be gathered. It is important that forces record evidence as soon as possible after a crime. The longer it takes for evidence-recording to begin, the more likely it is that evidence will be destroyed, damaged or lost. Recording this evidence is usually the responsibility of the first officer who attends the scene. After the officer has completed this initial investigation the case may be handed over to a different police officer or team in the force. This process must ensure that the right people with the right skills investigate the right crimes.

### **Control room response**

West Mercia Police evaluates incidents thoroughly using the THRIVE process, which considers the needs of callers and the harm they may be exposed to. Staff working through the THRIVE process will also identify the needs of victims and other persons affected by the incident in addition to the caller and ensure that their immediate needs are met and that the right levels of support are provided through the course of any investigations.

HMIC examined how the force's control room practices support prompt identification of repeat victimisation or other forms of vulnerability. There are clear procedures for staff to follow, and inspectors found that call handlers were skilled in gathering evidence when people reported crime. There are also procedures in place to allow some reports of crime to be handled over the phone when appropriate. The force has an effective quality assurance process in place to support learning among staff involved in call-handling and despatch roles, and it is evident that the alliance is now benefiting from its investments in this area.

The initial investigation of crime is overseen by operational sergeants and inspectors who are supported by control room supervisors. Advice from specialists is also available. The force clearly identifies and prioritises crime scenes; however, crime scene investigators (CSIs) are not always used in the most effective way. This is because under the force's current policies, the deployment of CSIs is prioritised by the type of crime committed rather than either the vulnerability of the victim or the likelihood of forensic evidence being found. This policy appears to be at odds with

the force's commitment to victims under THRIVE assessments. It also puts pressure on CSIs to attend scenes where forensic opportunities might be limited.

### **How well do response officers investigate?**

We found that officers provide an initial response that is of an appropriate standard, but there are some concerns about workloads.

HMIC reviewed 60 police case files across crime types for: robbery, common assault (flagged as domestic abuse), grievous bodily harm (GBH), stalking, harassment, rape and domestic burglary. Files were randomly selected from crimes recorded between 1 January 2016 and 31 March 2016 and were assessed against several criteria. Due to the small sample size of cases selected, we have not used results from the file review as the sole basis for assessing individual force performance but alongside other evidence gathered.

During our fieldwork, we also examined other crime reports. We found the standard of investigation at the first point of contact with victims to be of a consistently good standard. This is important as securing evidence at the time or soon after a crime has been committed is vital to ensure that the investigation is brought to a successful conclusion. It also means that victims are more likely to retain confidence in the police service.

HMIC did, however, note that some officers we spoke with felt they were regularly under pressure to attend other emergency calls, which could result in initial enquiries not being completed properly.

### **How effective is the force's subsequent investigation?**

Every day police forces across England and Wales investigate a wide range of crimes. These range from non-complex crimes such as some burglary and assault cases through to complex and sensitive investigations such as rape and murder. HMIC referred to national standards and best practice in examining how well forces allocate and investigate the full range of crimes, including how officers and staff can gather evidence to support investigations. These include the more traditional forensics, such as taking fingerprints, as well as more recently developed techniques like gathering digital evidence from mobile telephones or computers to find evidence of online abuse.

#### **Quality of the investigation**

West Mercia Police generally conducts investigations to a good standard and they lead to successful outcomes. The force's proportion of cases resulting in the charging of offenders and the use of out-of-court outcomes are slightly above the England and Wales rate. However, there is scope for improvement to ensure that all evidential opportunities are exploited. We found that both emergency response and neighbourhood officers are under greater pressure and dealing with increased

workloads. This is due to new working arrangements, which are a consequence of the implementation of a new operating model known as the 'Pathfinder'.

The Pathfinder model, in line with the principles of THRIVE, is designed to channel the majority of its investigations involving vulnerable people to specialist investigators. This is a departure from established practice in West Mercia Police. Historically, the type of crime has determined the level of investigation and less attention has been paid to the needs of the victim.

The force has expanded the use of this model across two counties, with investigations allocated to specialist officers based on an assessment of the level of threat or risk of harm involved. This means that less complex cases are generally dealt with by response units, neighbourhood officers and police staff investigators, which has led to the increase in workloads.

Our observations of the force's daily management meetings confirmed that allegations of crime are properly allocated for investigation. However, we also noted concerns about the viability of the new model among staff and partner organisations, particularly in relation to the skill sets of officers and clear responsibility for investigations. This is because partner organisations have become accustomed to working with investigators who are experts in certain fields, for example child abuse and sexual offences. The Pathfinder model is designed to ensure that specialist officers are now responsible for a broader range of investigations, which goes beyond their area of specialism. One drawback of this model is that childcare and sexual offences professionals in other organisations now have to work with different officers. An advantage for West Mercia Police is greater capacity within its workforce to deal with sensitive enquiries involving vulnerable victims.

Another benefit was brought to our attention by a group of response officers, who were positive about the increased availability of specialist investigators to take responsibility for investigations.

HMIC recognises the efforts made by the force to ensure that specialist investigative departments are responsible for the investigation of all offences associated with vulnerable victims. This demonstrates the force's commitment to provide a better service to victims. However, a consequence of this may be that non-specialist investigators, including response and neighbourhood officers, will have an increased workload. It will also mean that partner organisations need time to adjust to these new working practices. This will need to be kept under review.

During our inspection, we looked at how the force responds to incidents out of hours and at weekends. The force operates on-call arrangements for its specialist functions, with increased specialist investigator availability provided by the new operating model. The force also has adequate intelligence and forensic capabilities to support investigations, while the 'i24' team, based in one of the alliance's control rooms, provides 24-hour intelligence-handling capabilities.

## Support to investigations

In HMIC's 2015 effectiveness report, we recommended that the force improve its ability to retrieve evidence from mobile phones, computers and other electronic devices to prevent investigations from being delayed. This year, we noted that the force has taken positive steps to ensure it has sufficient capacity to manage digital device examination. The strategic alliance has used an independent contractor to review its approach and has introduced both a triage system and ten forensic kiosks for forensic examination of SIM cards.

The alliance told us that 50 officers have now been trained to use the kiosks, with an additional 150 officers being trained over the longer term. It also stated that it had reduced its backlog of digital forensic items during 2016, from 520 in January to 380 in October. The alliance predicts that there will be increased pressure in this area, particularly in relation to investigations involving indecent images of children. In response, the alliance's serious and organised crime unit (SOCU) has boosted its capacity to provide forensic examination of digital devices.

## Supporting victims

West Mercia Police understands the importance of keeping victims at the centre of its investigations. We found that officers understood the requirements of the *Code of Practice for Victims of Crime*,<sup>14</sup> which sets out the service victims should receive from all organisations that have a role in the criminal justice system, including police forces.

The force's crime-management system automatically reminds the investigator and supervisors when a victim is due to be informed about the progress of an investigation. The force's performance management framework is being developed to provide an overview of compliance with the *Code of Practice for Victims of Crime*. This should provide a valuable addition to the good use the force already makes of survey data to understand the overall experience of the victim.

Of those who have been the victim of a crime in West Mercia in the 12 months to 30 June 2016, 84.1 per cent were satisfied with their whole experience with the police. This is similar to the England and Wales victim satisfaction rate of 83.3 per cent over the same time period.

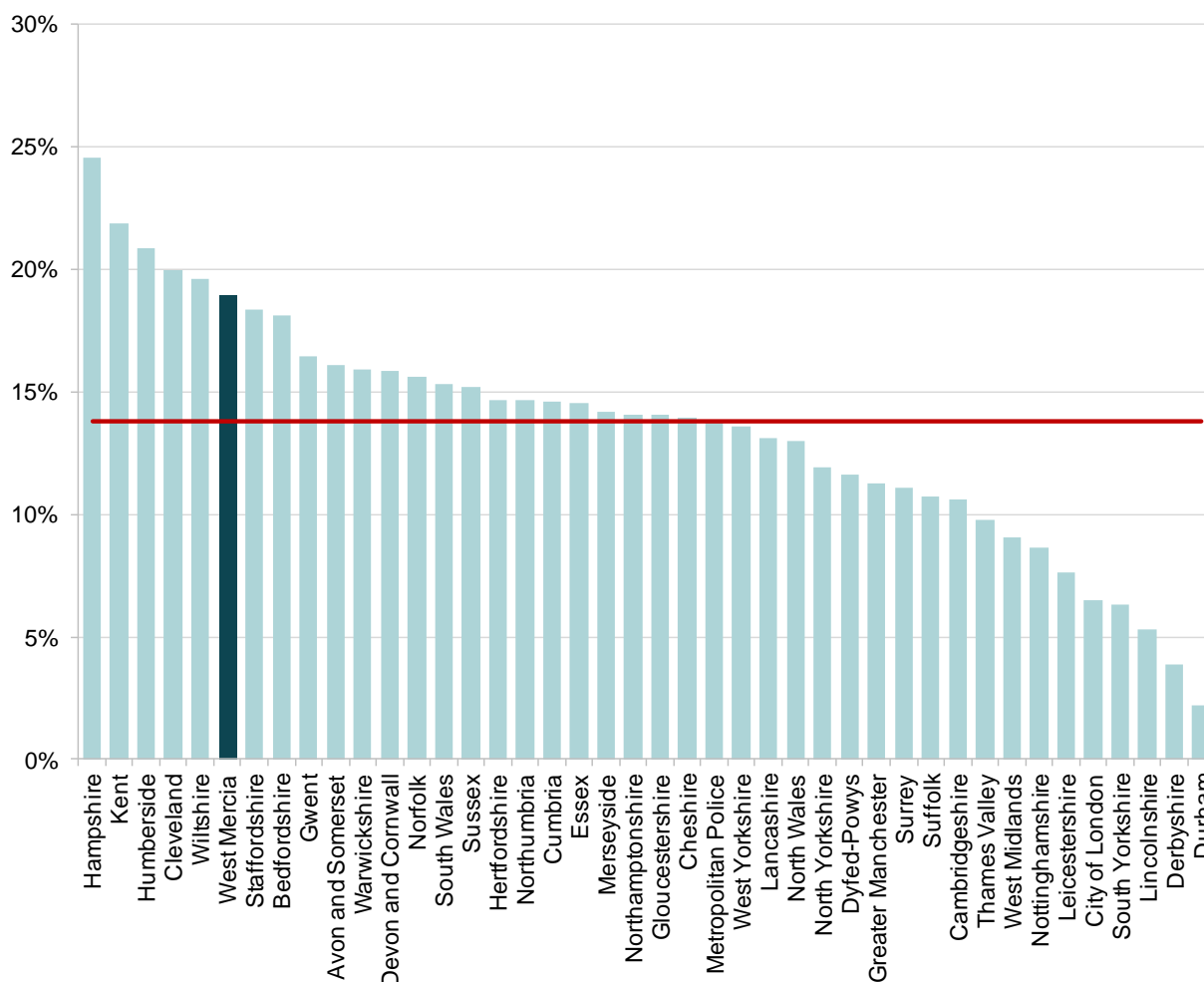
---

<sup>14</sup> All police forces have a statutory duty to comply with the *Code of Practice for Victims of Crime*, which sets out the service victims of crime can expect from all parts of the criminal justice system. The code states that all victims of crime should be able to make a personal statement, which they can use to explain how the crime has affected them. Victims should also be kept updated about the progress of their case. [www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/254459/code-of-practice-victims-of-crime.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/254459/code-of-practice-victims-of-crime.pdf)



The new outcomes framework introduced in 2014 includes some outcomes where there were evidential difficulties,<sup>15</sup> which had not previously been recorded. This was to gain an insight into the scale of crimes that the police could not progress further through the criminal justice process due to limited evidence. Furthermore, these outcomes can be thought of as an indicator for how effective the police are at working with victims and supporting them through investigative and judicial processes, as they record when victims are unwilling or unable to support continued investigations or when they have withdrawn their support for police action.

**Figure 5: Percentage of ‘Evidential difficulties; victim does not support action’ outcomes assigned to offences recorded in the 12 months to 30 June 2016, by force<sup>16,17</sup>**



**Source: Home Office crime outcomes data**

**For further information about these data, please see annex A**

<sup>15</sup> Evidential difficulties also includes where a suspect has been identified and the victim supports police action, but evidential difficulties prevent further action being taken.

<sup>16</sup> Percentages of evidential difficulties can be affected by the level of certain types of crime within a force, such as domestic abuse related offences.

<sup>17</sup> Dorset Police is excluded from the graph. Therefore, figures for England and Wales will differ from those published by the Home Office. For further details see annex A.

For all offences recorded in the 12 months to 30 June 2016, West Mercia Police recorded 18.9 percent as 'Evidential difficulties; victim does not support police action'. This compares with 13.8 percent for England and Wales over the same period. However, it should be noted that not all of the offences committed in the 12 months to 30 June 2016 were assigned an outcome and consequently, these figures are subject to change over time.

## **How effectively does the force reduce re-offending?**

We assessed how well the force works with other policing authorities and other interested parties to identify vulnerable offenders and prevent them from re-offending, and how well it identifies and manages repeat, dangerous or sexual offenders.

## **How well does the force pursue suspects and offenders?**

West Mercia Police actively manages offenders who pose a risk to the public. It uses the THRIVE model to prioritise its responses and reviews its activities at local and alliance-wide levels. Information about people wanted by the police is updated and circulated daily throughout the force. Identification of offenders using forensics is managed through the force's forensic management system.

The public can have confidence that West Mercia Police pursues known suspects and identifies arrested foreign national offenders. The force makes good use of the ACRO Criminal Records Office (ACRO).<sup>18</sup> ACRO was founded in 2006 and enables the exchange of criminal records with European and other signatory nations. It is important that forces make use of this facility when foreign nationals are arrested. This is because where an individual's overseas offending history is not known to police forces in England and Wales, it is difficult to assess accurately the likelihood of them re-offending or the level of harm they might present to the public.

The force has previously seconded an officer to ACRO to develop a process for checking all arrested foreign nationals against the database. HMIC saw a number of good case studies where the use of ACRO had led to the deportation of foreign nationals on conviction for offences. The force's rate of arrest of foreign nationals is lower than the rest of England and Wales, but nevertheless it is reassuring that the force is protecting its communities from this type of harm.

---

<sup>18</sup> ACRO Criminal Records Office manages criminal record information and is able to receive/share information with foreign countries in relation to foreign offenders arrested within the United Kingdom.

## **How well does the force protect the public from the most harmful offenders?**

In relation to the most prolific offenders, the force understands the importance of a joined-up approach between all organisations involved in criminal justice. The force has established integrated offender management (IOM)<sup>19</sup> arrangements with the probation service, housing providers, local councils and other criminal justice professionals to address the needs of the offenders who present the most harm to society. IOM brings together the work of these professionals to discourage offenders from committing crime and support them in re-building their lives. These arrangements vary slightly in different council areas but there are core themes in place throughout which ensure effective offender management.

In particular, the force has a broad range of offenders in IOM programmes, reflecting its vision that the prevention of re-offending is ‘everyone’s business’ and not just the responsibility of specialist officers. HMIC found that in many IOM units across England and Wales the offender cohort mainly includes individuals who have committed acquisitive crimes. These offences include the theft of property, for example burglary, robbery and shoplifting. West Mercia Police, by contrast, has worked hard with partner organisations to include more offenders of violent or organised crimes. HMIC found the workload of specialist officers and members of staff who are responsible for individual offenders to be manageable.

During our inspection, we saw how neighbourhood officers update relevant risk-management plans with details of their activity and officers are clearly directed to make the arrest of dangerous offenders quickly. Re-offending being ‘everyone’s business’ is also reinforced by the involvement of community safety partnership (CSP) managers in selecting offenders for the IOM programmes. Their perspectives on which types of offenders should be included in these programmes ensure that the interests of local communities are more likely to be reflected in the work of offender management. The force is also taking steps to evaluate the success of IOM programmes, but this work is not yet finished.

West Mercia Police is equally well prepared to manage the risk posed by dangerous and sexual offenders, with clear and effective governance arrangements in place. Its management plans are based on formal risk-assessment procedures that use established national tools. The force works well with partner agencies through the multi-agency public protection arrangements (MAPPA)<sup>20</sup> process. The number of

---

<sup>19</sup> Integrated offender management brings a multi-agency response to the crime and re-offending threats faced by local communities. The most persistent and problematic offenders are identified and managed jointly by partner agencies working together.

<sup>20</sup> Multi-agency public protection arrangements (MAPPAs) are in place to ensure the successful management of violent and sexual offenders. Agencies involved include as responsible bodies the police, probation trusts and prison service. Other agencies may become involved, for example the Youth Justice Board will be responsible for the care of young offenders.

offenders managed through these arrangements has increased over the last 12 months; however, it is acknowledged that West Mercia Police is not the lead organisation for all of these offenders. The number of offenders monitored by specialist officers and staff in the force is marginally above the England and Wales figure.

Additionally, the force makes use of sexual offences prevention orders (SOPOs)<sup>21</sup> and sexual harm prevention orders (SHPOs).<sup>22</sup> Both of these are prohibition orders, issued by the courts on application by the police. The police can apply for conditions to be placed on individuals, for restriction of movements or to limit their contact with people potentially at risk, to prevent predatory sexual behaviour. 188 orders have been issued in the last 12 months, and investigative work by the force has led to a further 21 individuals being taken back to court for breaching conditions of orders..

Prohibition orders are managed by registered sex offender (RSO) teams. Specialist officers within these teams are supported by frontline neighbourhood teams to help manage the risk of an individual re-offending. The force is also exploring how information regarding sex offenders and other violent individuals can be shared more readily with frontline staff. This should help local officers and PCSOs play a full role in reducing the risk of harm posed to the public by these offenders.

## Summary of findings



**Good**

West Mercia Police concludes more investigations successfully than many other forces in England and Wales. In particular, it makes more use of its facilities to conclude cases without taking the offenders to court.

The force's initial assessment of allegations of crime is good. Call handlers accurately assess the level of harm that callers may be exposed to and the service provided aligns well to each caller's individual needs.

The standard of crime investigation is also good. Investigators routinely pursue all lines of enquiry and supervision is supportive and effective. The force has responded

---

<sup>21</sup> Sexual Offences Prevention Orders (SOPOs) were introduced by the Sexual Offences Act 2003 and are designed to protect the public or any particular members of the public from serious sexual harm from an offender. As of March 2015, SOPOs were re-named Sexual Harm Prevention Orders (SHPOs).

<sup>22</sup> Sexual Harm Prevention Orders (SHPOs) can be applied to anyone convicted or cautioned for a sexual or violent offence. They can place a range of restrictions on individuals depending on the nature of the case, such as limiting their internet use, preventing them from being alone with a child under 16, or preventing travel abroad.

well to comments made by HMIC in 2015 regarding the retrieval of digital evidence to support investigations. Delays in the examination of SIM cards had slowed down the conclusion of enquiries and undermined the service provided to victims. Effective measures have been put in place to rectify this.

HMIC considers the new investigative model to be well founded. It is designed to increase the force's capacity to investigate crime and provide a better service to victims. Many officers and staff were positive about its development. By contrast, a number of representatives from other organisations and some of the workforce expressed reservations. It would be advisable for the force to increase its efforts to assess and communicate the benefits of the model to those who are affected by the change.

Offender management is one of the force's strengths. HMIC found evidence of the force's belief that this should be 'everyone's business'. There are clear signs that it is becoming part of the force's operational activities.

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

Protecting the public, particularly those who are most vulnerable, is one of the most important duties placed on police forces. People can be vulnerable for many reasons and the extent of their vulnerability can change during the time they are in contact with the police. Last year HMIC had concerns about how well many forces were protecting those who were vulnerable. In this section of the report we set out how the force's performance has changed since last year.

### Has the force improved since HMIC's 2015 vulnerability inspection?

In 2015, we examined how effective West Mercia Police was in protecting from harm those who are vulnerable, and supporting victims. In HMIC's 2015 effectiveness (vulnerability) report, we found several areas where West Mercia Police needed to improve. This year, we examined how the force's performance has changed, paying particular attention to those aspects we identified as problematic during our previous inspection.

HMIC found that the force has addressed our concerns about its response to missing and absent children. It has removed the category of 'absent' in its description of missing children and now categorises episodes as either 'medium' or 'high' risk. We also found that the force's day-to-day practices reflect a greater understanding of the factors that increase the risk of harm to children. Changes to call-handling and incident management within the control room are supported by the daily management meeting (DMM) process. They include an appropriate level of oversight of missing persons investigations, in accordance with the level of threat or risk of harm posed to a child. West Mercia Police has responded well to HMIC's recommendations; its action plan is thorough and it has worked with care homes and different agencies to improve its response to persistent and repeatedly missing children. It is using peer assessment to evaluate its processes and performance, and four missing persons co-ordinators have also been appointed across the strategic alliance, who work with partner agencies to reduce the number of incidents involving missing people.

Our previous inspection also identified how West Mercia Police needed to improve its response to vulnerable victims by reviewing the behaviour of its staff towards vulnerable people, and evaluating the effectiveness of its training, learning and development. This year, we noted that the force has provided training to its staff and changed its processes for investigating domestic abuse. We were pleased to find a real depth of understanding among officers and staff of the importance of responding appropriately to incidents involving vulnerability, including compliance with the *Code of Practice for Victims of Crime* and use of domestic abuse risk assessments. Officers and staff have a greater understanding of the force's approach to vulnerability and consistently demonstrate positive actions in relation to vulnerable victims.

## **How effectively does the force identify those who are vulnerable and assess their level of risk and need?**

In order to protect those who are vulnerable effectively forces need to understand comprehensively the scale of vulnerability in the communities they police. This requires forces to work with a range of communities, including those whose voices may not often be heard. It is important that forces understand fully what it means to be vulnerable, what might make someone vulnerable and that officers and staff who come into contact with the public can recognise this vulnerability. This means that forces can identify vulnerable people early on and can provide them with an appropriate service.

### **Understanding the risk**

Within the West Mercia and Warwickshire alliance, the protection of people from harm is a strategic priority for both forces. Together they aspire 'to be great at protecting the most vulnerable'. We saw that the chief constables of both forces take the lead in communicating this across the workforce.

Both forces have a good understanding of the nature and scale of vulnerability in their local areas. West Mercia Police has developed several problem profiles for vulnerable people such as those at risk of child sexual exploitation (CSE), human trafficking and domestic abuse. A problem profile uses intelligence and information to understand better specific crime types or emerging issues. Bringing together data and intelligence in a problem profile can help the force to identify possible victims, address intelligence gaps and spot prevention or reassurance opportunities. The force's problem profiles are good, the data they hold is broken down by ethnicity and location and they are used frequently in the development of operations to protect vulnerable people.

HMIC also examined how the force has made progress in improving its response to the victims of domestic abuse. Among the measures it has taken, training has been introduced for officers and staff to help ensure they understand the nature of domestic abuse and know how to complete thorough risk assessments. This is complemented by a domestic abuse investigation toolkit that is available on the force's intranet. Multi-agency safeguarding hubs (MASHs)<sup>23</sup> are now in place to oversee the measures that are taken to safeguard victims. Information about the measures taken to support repeat victims is circulated on a monthly basis to managers, and reviewed at performance meetings.

---

<sup>23</sup> A multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH) brings together into a single location key safeguarding agencies to better identify risks to children (and in some areas, vulnerable adults), and improve decision making, interventions, and outcomes. The MASH enables the multi-agency team to share all appropriate information in a secure environment, and ensure that the most appropriate response is provided to effectively safeguard and protect the individual.



Across the strategic alliance, we found that the THRIVE principles are now embedded well. Both forces have acted positively to improve their practices at an operational level; for example, there is a 'threat, harm and risk' manager within the control room, who is responsible for ensuring all incidents are responded to appropriately.

As part of this inspection, HMIC examined how well the force identifies repeat victims. This is important because it is not uncommon for individuals who are repeatedly victimised to experience escalating levels of intimidation or violence, and they can become psychologically traumatised as a consequence. HMIC found that the structured questioning of all callers is designed to assess whether the individual has previously been victimised.

In addition to careful, sensitive questioning by call handlers, most forces are developing technological solutions to identify the caller's historical information, where they are calling from and the type of service they have previously required. The aim is to ensure that their needs are understood more quickly by call handlers and that the service provided addresses their immediate circumstances.

As part of the strategic alliance, the force shares control room functions with Warwickshire Police. Currently, however, the systems that support command and control in both forces are different. The control room software used by West Mercia Police has limited functionality for identifying repeat victims. It does not automatically link current calls to previous incidents, nor does it automatically search other databases to establish what other information is known about the caller. To overcome these limitations, the force has developed procedures that enable call handlers to search databases manually.

HMIC acknowledges that, as part of a major IT transformation programme across the alliance, new control rooms will be introduced which have the same technology and common operating practices. This should help to overcome these limitations.

HMIC is reassured that control room staff development is a priority for the force. New control room staff receive dedicated mentoring and support for two months, and vulnerability is an important theme within the training programme.

We reviewed different types of incidents involving vulnerable people. This showed the identification of risk at the initial point of contact to be much improved in cases involving missing children since we last inspected this area. However, we also found a small number of examples of other incidents involving vulnerable people being downgraded without the rationale for this being recorded. This tended to happen when there were not enough officers available to respond effectively and the incidents related to concerns for welfare. Although the force has introduced 'threat, harm and risk managers' to oversee the initial response to incidents, the force should ensure that the quality of service is not compromised by delayed response times.

The force's recognition of mental health issues is good. The force requirement to place markers on incidents involving mental health sufferers is well understood and the force records more incidents of this nature than elsewhere in England and Wales. Although the alliance currently has no arrangements in place with health service partners to introduce specialist staff into control rooms, it was close to doing so at the time of our inspection.

Forces define a vulnerable victim in different ways. This is because there is not a standard requirement on forces to record whether a victim is vulnerable on crime recording systems. Some forces use the definition from the government's *Code of Practice for Victims of Crime*,<sup>24</sup> others use the definition referred to in ACPO guidance<sup>25</sup> and the remainder use their own definition.

West Mercia Police uses its own definition of a vulnerable victim, which is:

“A person is vulnerable if, as a result of their situation or circumstances, they are unable to take care of, or protect themselves or others from harm or exploitation.”

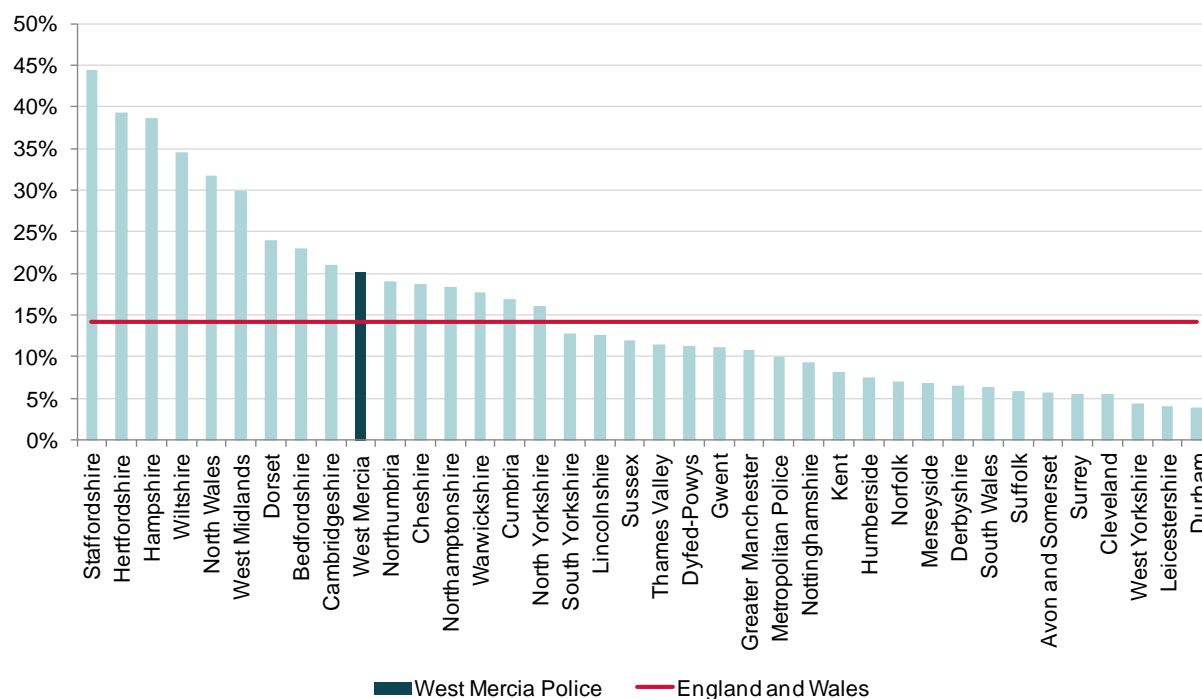
Data returned by forces to HMIC show that in the 12 months to 30 June 2016, the proportion of crime recorded which involves a vulnerable victim varies considerably between forces, from 3.9 percent to 44.4 percent. For the 12 months to 30 June 2016, 20.2 percent of all recorded crime in West Mercia was identified as having a vulnerable victim, which is above the England and Wales figure of 14.3 percent.

---

<sup>24</sup> *Code of Practice for Victims of Crime*, Ministry of Justice, 2013. Available from [www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/254459/code-of-practicevictims-of-crime.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/254459/code-of-practicevictims-of-crime.pdf)

<sup>25</sup> The Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) is now the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC). ACPO Guidance on Safeguarding and Investigating the Abuse of Vulnerable Adults, NPIA, 2012. Available from: [www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/major-investigation-and-public-protection/vulnerable-adults/](http://www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/major-investigation-and-public-protection/vulnerable-adults/)

**Figure 6: Percentage of police-recorded crime with a vulnerable victim identified, by force, for the 12 months to 30 June 2016<sup>26</sup>**



Source: HMIC data return, Home Office data

For further information about these data, please see annex A

## How effectively does the force initially respond to vulnerable victims?

The initial work of officers responding to a vulnerable person is vital, because failure to carry out the correct actions may make future work with the victim or further investigation very difficult. This could be the first time victims have contacted the police after suffering years of victimisation or they may have had repeated contact with the police; either way, the response of officers is crucial. The initial response to a vulnerable victim must inspire confidence that the victim’s concerns are being taken seriously as well as provide practical actions and support to keep the victim safe. The officer should also assess the risk to the victim at that moment and others in the same household, and collect sufficient information to support the longer-term response of the force and other partner organisations.

### Do officers assess risk correctly and keep victims safe?

HMIC examined how West Mercia Police assesses vulnerable people when responding to incidents and found that the force usually does this well. Our conversations with frontline officers and staff revealed that they understand the

<sup>26</sup> City of London, Devon and Cornwall, Essex, Gloucestershire and Lancashire forces were unable to provide data for recorded crimes with a vulnerable victim identified. Therefore, these forces’ data are not included in the graph or in the calculation of the England and Wales rate.

importance of identifying and protecting vulnerable people. We found that officers respond well to incidents involving domestic abuse and missing children, and actively identify the action needed to safeguard individuals.

Supervisory arrangements are in place to ensure action is routinely taken to mitigate the risk of further harm to victims. We noted specific examples where officers used a range of tactics to safeguard victims, including the prompt use of arrest powers, the installation of security measures and the use of domestic violence prevention notices (DVPNs).<sup>27</sup> These notices are authorised by senior officers to prevent a suspected perpetrator from returning to the victim's home and contacting the victim.

West Mercia Police has made significant changes to its operational capabilities in anticipation of an increase in the number of allegations of child abuse, sexual offences and violence. Its training programme to support the Pathfinder model is ambitious; by 2018, 30 percent of all officers should have completed a specialist two-week child abuse investigation course. The number of officers trained in these skills has doubled since the Pathfinder model was introduced, and 180 additional officers are due to be trained by the end of 2018.

In cases of domestic abuse, officers complete a DASH<sup>28</sup> risk-assessment form in the presence of the victim. These risk assessments identify the risk of harm, not only to the victim, but also to other family members, including children, and specific factors such as the use of coercive control. It is a mandatory part of the force's procedures for recording crimes of domestic abuse.

HMIC found that risk-assessment decisions are subject to subsequent scrutiny, and senior officers review high-risk cases at daily management meetings. HMIC found examples of risk assessments being updated when further information becomes available. One such case involved a victim who had been considered to be of medium risk. This was escalated to high risk when it became apparent that she had been subjected to similar abuse when stationed with the armed forces overseas. Risk assessments are subject to a 'triple-lock' supervisory process. This is

---

<sup>27</sup> A DVPN is the initial notice issued by the police to provide emergency protection to an individual believed to be the victim of domestic violence. This notice, which must be authorised by a police superintendent, contains prohibitions that effectively bar the suspected perpetrator from returning to the victim's home or otherwise contacting the victim.

A DVPN may be issued to a person aged 18 years and over if the police superintendent has reasonable grounds for believing that:

- the individual has been violent towards, or
- has threatened violence towards an associated person, and
- the DVPN is necessary to protect that person from violence or a threat of violence by the intended recipient of the DVPN.

<sup>28</sup> DASH (domestic abuse, stalking and harassment) is a risk identification, assessment and management model. The aim of the DASH assessment is to help frontline practitioners identify high-risk cases of domestic abuse, stalking and so-called honour-based violence.

conducted at the first point of contact by specialist domestic abuse risk officers (DAROs) and takes place again at daily management meetings. This helps to ensure that the threat or risk of further harm is identified properly and effective care plans are put in place to safeguard victims.

The force also pursues investigations where prosecutions are more difficult, and increasingly uses DVPNs and domestic violence protection orders (DVPOs)<sup>29</sup> to protect victims. These measures are now used as frequently in West Mercia as they are in other forces. Additionally, the alliance now employs 25 domestic abuse risk officers, who work alongside domestic abuse professionals in local councils and other organisations to support victims. They also have a specific remit to ensure that an increasing number of serial perpetrators are considered for inclusion in the IOM programmes.

The Home Office has shared domestic abuse related offences data, recorded in the 12 months to 30 June 2016, with HMIC. These are more recent figures than those previously published by the Office for National Statistics. These data shows that in the 12 months to 30 June 2016, police-recorded domestic abuse in West Mercia increased by 41 percent compared with the 12 months to 31 March 2015. This compares with an increase of 23 percent across England and Wales. In the same period, police-recorded domestic abuse accounted for 12 percent of all police-recorded crime in West Mercia, compared with 11 percent of all police-recorded crime across England and Wales.

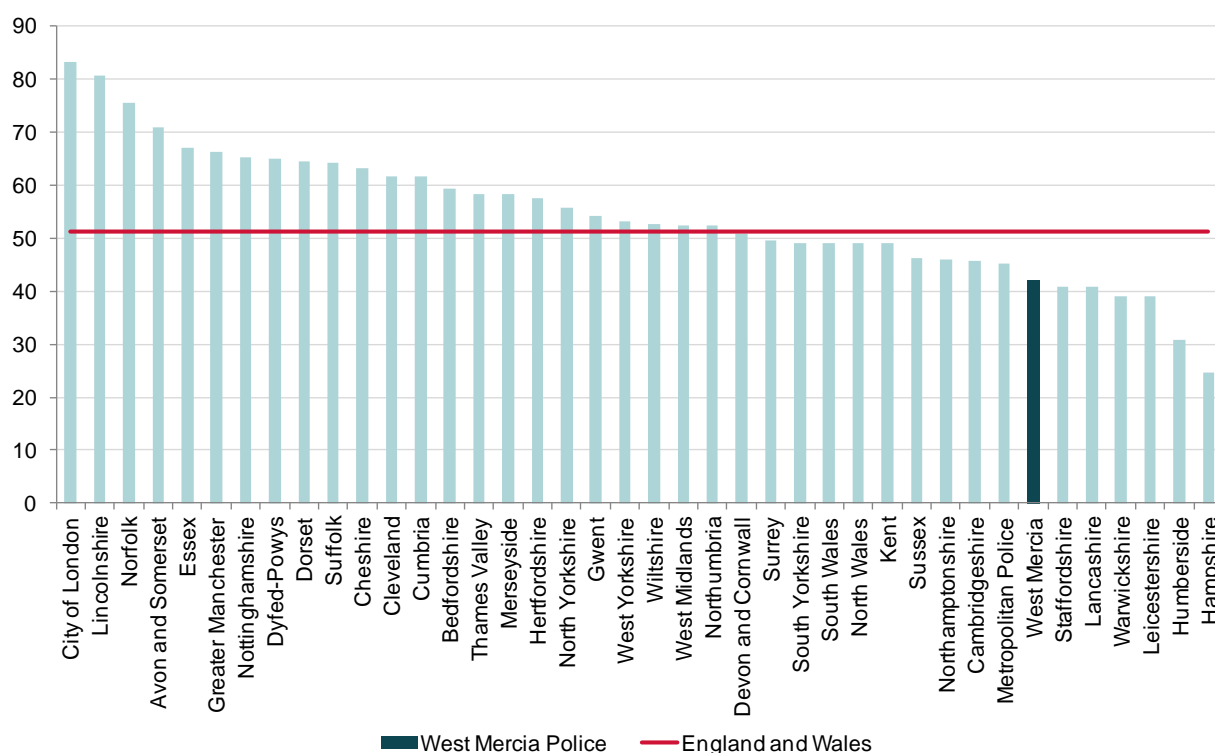
The rate of arrest for domestic abuse offences can provide an indication of a force's approach to handling domestic abuse offenders. Although for the purpose of this calculation arrests are not directly tracked to offences, a high arrest rate may suggest that a force prioritises arrests for domestic abuse offenders over other potential form of action (for further details, see annex A). HMIC has evaluated the arrest rate alongside other measures during our inspection process to understand how each force deals with domestic abuse overall.

In West Mercia Police, for every 100 domestic abuse related offences recorded in the 12 months to 30 June 2016, there were 42 arrests made in the same period.

---

<sup>29</sup> DVPOs are designed to provide protection to victims by enabling the police and magistrates' courts to put in place protection in the immediate aftermath of a domestic abuse incident. Where there is insufficient evidence to charge a perpetrator and provide protection to a victim via bail conditions, a DVPO can prevent the perpetrator from returning to a residence and from having contact with the victim for up to 28 days, allowing the victim time to consider their options and get the support they need.

**Figure 7: Domestic abuse arrest rate (per 100 domestic abuse crimes), by force, for the 12 months to 30 June 2016<sup>30</sup>**



Source: HMIC data return, Home Office data

For further information about these data, please see annex A

## How effectively does the force investigate offences involving vulnerable victims and work with external partners to keep victims safe?

Those who are vulnerable often have complex and multiple needs that a police response alone cannot always meet. They may need support with housing, access to mental health services or support from social services. Nonetheless, the police still have an important responsibility to keep victims safe and investigate crimes. These crimes can be serious and complex (such as rape or violent offences). Their victims may appear to be reluctant to support the work of the police, often because they are being controlled by the perpetrator (such as victims of domestic abuse or child sexual exploitation).

West Mercia Police generally investigates offences involving vulnerable victims to a good standard. Our file review of investigations indicates that the force investigates these offences in a consistent way. The force is in the early stages of introducing single points of contact to support liaison between the police and the Crown

<sup>30</sup> Derbyshire, Durham and Gloucestershire forces were not able to provide domestic abuse arrest data. Therefore, these forces' data are not included in the graph or in the calculation of the England and Wales rate.

Prosecution Service on measures to tackle stalking and harassment. Although we only assessed a small number of reports involving stalking and harassment, we found that the initial supervision of offences was limited, and this could adversely affect the quality of investigation.

During our inspection, we reviewed other investigations that involved vulnerable or repeat victims, and this confirmed that the general standard of investigation is good. The force allocates allegations of crime for investigation based on the THRIVE process, so that investigators with appropriate skills and experience to manage the case effectively are assigned to victims.

Completing a THRIVE assessment before a crime is allocated for investigation is an integral element of the Pathfinder model. However, investigators we spoke to were concerned that this would inevitably lead to an unmanageable increase in their workload. HMIC recognises that, as part of the evaluation of the Pathfinder model, individual workloads are being carefully monitored. It is important that frontline staff are at the centre of this evaluation as they are vital to the success of the model.

West Mercia Police works effectively with partner organisations to ensure appropriate safeguarding arrangements are in place for vulnerable people. It is collaborating on the introduction of new multi-agency safeguarding hubs (MASHs) across two counties and one unitary authority area. The MASH structure brings together local authorities and victim support professionals to develop risk-management plans for vulnerable victims. This will supersede the force's harm assessment units (HAUs), which currently review cases concerning vulnerable victims and make onward referrals to other organisations. As an interim arrangement, the HAUs work well. There were few cases requiring review at the time of our inspection. Access to a shared case management system means the staff have full access to all available information about victims. They also have direct access to all parties who can help develop support plans for victims. For example, the HAU has direct access to the emergency duty team within child social care, should a child require further intervention. The HAUs also refer the cases of high-risk domestic abuse victims to multi-agency risk assessment conferences (MARACs).<sup>31</sup> These forums bring together social services, housing authorities, drugs and alcohol treatment providers, the NHS and education to consider how best to support vulnerable victims.

Across many areas in England and Wales, the MASH structures have been welcomed. However, in West Mercia we found that not all partner organisation representatives feel positive about their introduction. This is because they believe the force has not communicated clearly the reasons for the change to existing practices. HMIC believes that West Mercia Police's response to vulnerability,

---

<sup>31</sup> Multi-agency risk assessment conference(s) are local meetings where information about high-risk domestic abuse victims (those at risk of murder or serious harm) is shared between local agencies.



including repeat victimisation, is commendable and the Pathfinder model is well founded. However, it is essential that the force maintains its efforts to retain the confidence of both its own workforce and the organisations it works with.

### **Victims of domestic abuse**

HMIC paid particular attention to the service the force provides to domestic abuse victims and found that their needs are generally well met. West Mercia Police has well-established measures to respond to its immediate and longer-term needs. These improvements have been set out in an action plan which has been launched by chief officers. It is supported by the police and crime commissioner and validated by academic research from Worcester University.

The force flags more crimes as linked to domestic abuse, and is making more use of DVPOs when comparing the 12 months to 30 June 2016 to the 12 months to 31 March 2015. The force told HMIC it has obtained support from the Crown Prosecution Service to help it establish why cases are not being progressed to court; it recognises it needs to improve the quality and timeliness of prosecution file submissions. It has not yet made body-worn video widely available to its frontline staff, but is examining how it will introduce this equipment as part of its implementation of a repository hub for sources of digital evidence. These developments are encouraging, but the force still has more work to do to understand why positive outcomes for domestic abuse investigations are lower than elsewhere in England and Wales.

HMIC's 2016 legitimacy inspection examined how forces manage the risk of individuals being subjected to predatory acts of unwanted sexual attention by officers and staff. Part of this inspection also considered how the force supports victims should this type of serious misconduct take place. We found that the needs of the victims are handled on an individual basis. Some are supported by specialist investigators, with the investigation being overseen by the professional standards department (PSD). In other cases, PSD takes direct responsibility for care of the victim. We learned of one misconduct case where the alliance took steps to preserve the victim's anonymity, in accordance with that person's wishes.

In April 2015, the Home Office began collecting information from the police on whether recorded offences were related to domestic abuse. Crimes are identified by the police as domestic abuse related if the offence meets the government definition of domestic violence and abuse.<sup>32</sup>

The rate of outcomes recorded in the 12 months to 30 June 2016 for domestic abuse offences is shown in figure 8. Domestic abuse crimes used in this calculation are not

---

<sup>32</sup> Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality.

necessarily those to which the outcomes have been assigned and are only linked by the fact that they both occur in the 12 months to 30 June 2016. Therefore, direct comparisons should not be made between general outcomes in figure 4, where each crime is linked to its associated outcome (for further details see annex A).

**Figure 8: Rate of outcomes recorded in 12 months to 30 June 2016 for domestic-related offences in West Mercia Police<sup>33</sup>**

Outcome type / group	West Mercia Police	England and Wales
Charged / Summoned	20.8	23.2
Caution – adults	4.1	5.6
Caution – youths	0.2	0.3
Community resolution	0.3	1.4
Evidential difficulties prevent further action; victim supports police action	22.1	24.1
Evidential difficulties prevent further action; victim does not support police action	52.4	35.4

**Source: HMIC data return, Home Office data**

**For further information about these data, please see annex A**

In the 12 months to 30 June 2016, West Mercia Police's use of 'community resolution' was among the lowest in identified domestic abuse cases in England and Wales. However, any interpretation of outcomes should take into account that outcomes will vary dependent on the crime types that occur in each force area, and how it deals with offenders for different crimes.

## Summary of findings



**Good**

The force has a good understanding of the scale and nature of vulnerability in the communities it serves. It has analysed extensively areas of strategic risk, and its profiles of such areas, for example child sexual exploitation and human trafficking, are informative and influence its operational policing.

The THRIVE risk assessment principles are now part of routine practice. Call handlers are well trained, committed to their work and can accurately identify vulnerable people at the first point of contact. This provides a strong reference point

<sup>33</sup> Dorset Police and Nottinghamshire Police were unable to submit domestic abuse outcomes data. Therefore, these forces' data are not included in the graph or in the calculation of the England and Wales rate.

for later enquiries and aims to ensure that victims are placed at the centre of investigations.

Officers respond well to victims who need urgent help, and understand their responsibilities. They make use of criminal law and put immediate measures in place to protect vulnerable people. For example, Domestic Violence Protection Notices (DVPNs) are used to prevent abusive partners from contacting victims or returning to their homes. However, we found examples of incidents being downgraded without the rationale for this being recorded. This tended to occur when there were insufficient officers available to respond effectively.

The force's new investigative model provides greater certainty that highly-trained investigators will manage enquiries relating to vulnerable victims. Furthermore, the force's harm assessment units provide victims with direct access to third-party service providers, for example housing authorities and victim charities, for further support.

This inspection included a specific focus on the observations concerning domestic abuse that we made in HMIC's 2015 effectiveness (vulnerability) report. A chief officer has responded to all of these recommendations, particularly in relation to enhanced training, and this has resulted in an improved risk-assessment process that is more closely supervised. HMIC saw several examples where the improved approach has resulted in better services for victims.

## Areas for improvement

- The force should take immediate steps to understand the reasons why such a high proportion of crimes (including those related to domestic abuse) fall into the outcome category 'Evidential difficulties; victim does not support police action', and rectify this to ensure that it is pursuing justice on behalf of victims. West Mercia Police is one of several forces that have been asked to review its use of this outcome category. It is recommended that by 1 May 2017 the force should produce and submit to HMIC an action plan that sets out how it will:
  - undertake a comprehensive analysis of the use of this outcome across the force area to understand fully why the force is an outlier, and produce an accompanying report for scrutiny by HMIC by 1 June 2017;
  - review the extent to which the force's use of this outcome category is appropriate; and
  - take steps to reduce the force's reliance on this outcome category and improve outcomes for victims.

This action plan and subsequent report will be reviewed by HMIC and may prompt additional inspection re-visits during 2017 in order to assess the force's progress in adopting a more effective response in pursuing justice on behalf of victims.

## How effective is the force at tackling serious and organised crime?

Serious and organised crime poses a threat to the public across the whole of the UK and beyond. Individuals, communities and businesses feel its damaging effects. Police forces have a critical role in tackling serious and organised crime alongside regional organised crime units (ROCU), the National Crime Agency (NCA) and other partner organisations. Police forces that are effective in this area of policing tackle serious and organised crime not just by prosecuting offenders, but by disrupting and preventing organised criminality at a local level.

## How effectively does the force understand the threat and risk posed by serious and organised crime?

In order to tackle serious and organised crime effectively forces must first have a good understanding of the threats it poses to their communities. Forces should be using a range of intelligence (not just from the police but also from other partner organisations) to understand threats and risks, from traditional organised crime such as drug dealing and money laundering to the more recently-understood threats such as cyber-crime and child sexual exploitation.

West Mercia Police demonstrates an understanding of emerging as well as traditional threats from serious and organised crime.<sup>34</sup> Although the force has made good progress since this area was last examined in 2015, it could do more, by working with partner organisations to develop a joint understanding of the threat posed by organised crime groups (OCGs).

During our inspection, we explored how effectively the force uses intelligence to develop its understanding of the threat from serious and organised crime. The force has responded to HMIC's 2015 recommendations by completing serious and organised crime local profiles;<sup>35</sup> however, they do not currently contain the level of detail we would expect. The profiles do not address specific threats identified in the force's strategic assessment, nor is there an assessment of the threats from fraud, organised immigration crime, money laundering or counterfeiting. In addition, the profiles fail to describe the harm that serious and organised crime causes

---

<sup>34</sup> Serious and organised crime includes human trafficking, drug trafficking, organised illegal immigration, high-value fraud and other serious financial crimes, counterfeiting, organised theft, burglary or robbery and cyber-crime. It is perpetrated by groups of people operating collaboratively on a continuing basis, typically in order to realise substantial financial gain and sometimes involving serious violence. These are known as organised crime groups (OCGs).

<sup>35</sup> A local profile is a report that outlines the threat from serious and organised crime within a specific local area.

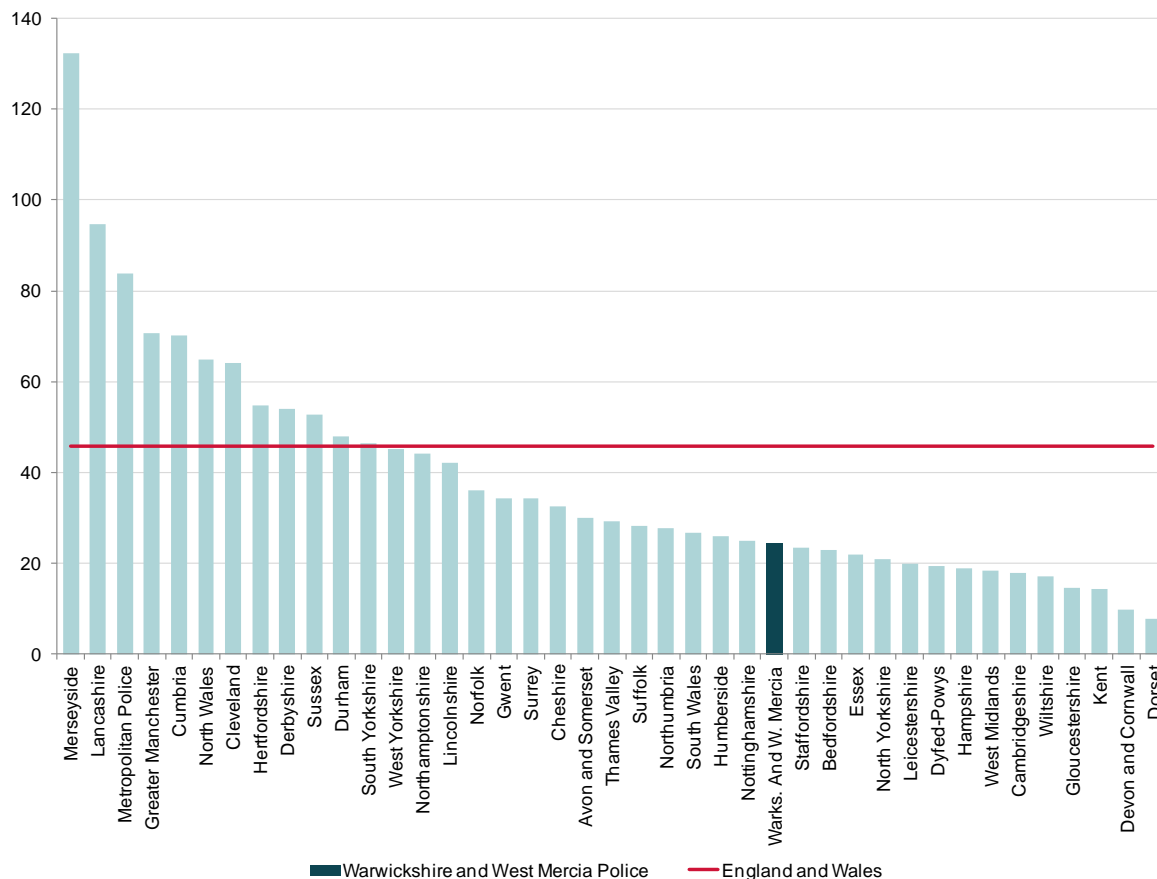
communities. The force needs to revise these documents to ensure they are of practical use.

We also assessed how the force has responded to HMIC's recommendation that it should develop a local partnership structure with responsibility for tackling serious and organised crime. Although the force engages with partner organisations, there is no force-wide group in place that involves statutory partners and other organisations. The force still needs to review how its partnership structure can enable it to develop a more comprehensive understanding of localised threats and support effective action against organised crime groups (OCGs).

Due to the strategic alliance arrangements, there is a high degree of consistency in the approach taken to tackling serious and organised crime across the two alliance forces. The alliance maps and scores OCGs using a national assessment tool to determine the level of action that is required from the force. The 'mapping' procedure involves entering the details of the group's known and suspected activity, associates and capability into a computer system, which assigns a numerical score to each organised crime group and places each organised crime group into one of several bands reflecting the range of severity of harm the group can cause. OCGs are tracked in accordance with national guidelines, while a monthly scrutiny panel reviews the action taken and determines whether OCGs should be re-scored and re-assessed.

As at 1 July 2016, West Mercia Police was actively disrupting, investigating or monitoring 23 organised crime groups (OCGs) per one million of the population. This compares to 46 OCGs per one million of the population across England and Wales.

**Figure 9: Organised crime groups per one million population, by force, as at 1 July 2016<sup>36</sup>**



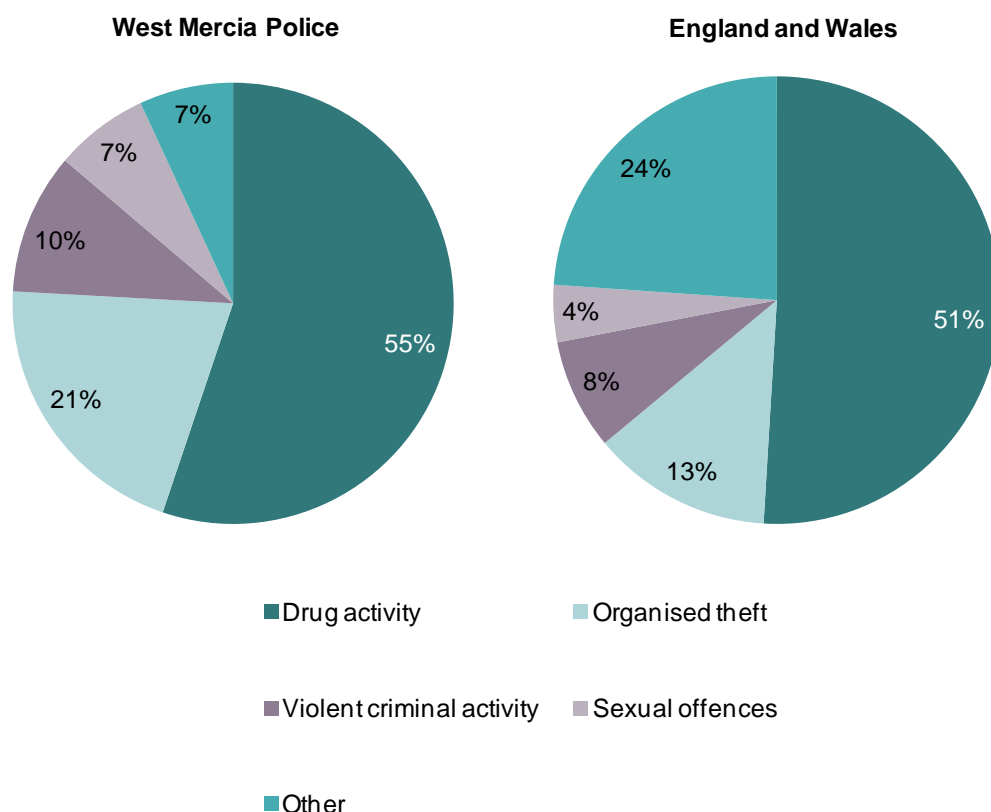
**Source: HMIC data return**

**For further information about these data, please see annex A**

Forces categorise OCGs by the predominant form of criminal activity in which the group is involved. Although OCGs are likely to be involved in multiple forms of criminality (for example groups supplying drugs may also be supplying firearms and be involved in money laundering), this indicates their most common characteristic. 'Drug activity' was the most common predominant crime type of the OCGs managed by West Mercia Police as at 1 July 2016. This was also the most common OCG crime type recorded by all forces in England and Wales.

<sup>36</sup> City of London Police data have been removed from the chart and the England and Wales rate as its OCG data are not comparable with other forces due to size and its wider national remit.

**Figure 10: Active organised crime groups by predominant crime type in West Mercia, as at 1 July 2016**



Source: HMIC data return

Note: Figures may not sum to 100 percent due to rounding. For further information about these data, please see annex A.

## How effectively does the force respond to serious and organised crime?

An effective force will pursue and prosecute offenders and disrupt organised criminality at a local level. The force will use specialist capabilities, both in the force and at regional level, and non-specialist capabilities such as its neighbourhood teams. While it can be complex for a force to assess the success of its actions against serious and organised crime, it is important that the force understands the extent to which it disrupts this crime and reduces harm.

West Mercia Police objectively prioritises activity aimed at tackling serious and organised crime using OCG mapping information. The force’s intelligence bureau has responsibility for mapping OCGs.

HMIC noted that in other areas (specifically at MARACs), a local partnership structure is in place to ensure different organisations operate consistently, to reflect good practice. We established that across the alliance and the wider Midlands region, there is a clear process for allocating police resources to tackle serious and



organised crime. This is supported by local partnership meetings, but there is no strategic partnership board in place.

The force is working with its strategic alliance partner to establish how the serious and organised crime joint action group (SOCJAG) that exists in Warwickshire can be expanded. This forum uses a range of intelligence sources to increase its understanding of serious and organised crime, including neighbourhood, community, partner agencies and digital intelligence. Potentially, this could be developed as a blueprint for a strategic board for the alliance.

Both at the West Midlands regional level and within the Warwickshire and West Mercia Police alliance, resource allocation processes support activity against OCGs. In addition, on behalf of the force, the director of intelligence holds a monthly scrutiny meeting to examine the actions taken against OCGs. The meeting is supported by analysis in the form of a tactical assessment document. The process ensures that specific individuals retain responsibility for serious and organised crime problems and there are sufficient resources in place to contain criminal activity. The force appoints lead responsible officers (LROs) to manage the local response to organised crime groups throughout their active lifespan. Although not all LROs are trained in OCG management, the force considers them to be sufficiently experienced to undertake these responsibilities. An intranet-based toolkit is also available to assist LROs with tactical options to address the criminality of OCGs. These tactics form the basis of disruption plans which are used to limit the activity of OCGs and minimise the harm that they cause.

The force has responded well in ensuring its action plans reflect national guidance on the management of OCGs. The plans are based on the 4Ps<sup>37</sup> model of pursue, prevent, protect and prepare to tackle serious and organised crime. The remaining challenge for the force is to establish a strategic partnership board, allowing senior executives of councils and other public sector organisations to become more closely involved in the force's efforts to combat organised crime.

West Mercia Police makes use of specialist crime capabilities which are available to all forces in the West Midlands region. It also collaborates with partner organisations to disrupt and investigate serious and organised crime. However, we observed that the force does not measure how it disrupts OCG activity in accordance with national guidelines.

---

<sup>37</sup> 4Ps provides a national framework for tackling serious and organised crime that has been developed for national counter-terrorist work and has four thematic pillars, often referred to as the 4Ps:

- Pursue – prosecuting and disrupting people engaged in serious and organised crime;
- Prevent – preventing people from engaging in serious and organised crime;
- Protect – increasing protection against serious and organised crime; and
- Prepare – reducing the impact of this criminality where it takes place.

The force has a good relationship with the regional organised crime unit (ROCU) it shares crime intelligence with, covering the West Midlands region. Through the ROCU the force has access to the Government Agency Intelligence Network (GAIN).<sup>38</sup> This network facilitates information sharing for the purpose of law enforcement. Participating organisations include HM Revenue and Customs, the Department for Work and Pensions and Action Fraud. Further intelligence is made available through the Regional Intelligence Unit (RIU), while the ROCU's Regional Asset Recovery Team (RART) provides additional capability to the force to seize the assets of criminals and the proceeds of their crimes. In addition, the force has its own established capability to combat organised crime. During this inspection, HMIC learned about some of the operations that have been conducted, including those involving child sexual exploitation. Representatives of partner agencies indicated to us that there was also a greater propensity to share information about OCG activity.

In 2015, HMIC inspected all of the regional organised crime units. A recommendation arising from that inspection (Recommendation 3) was that by 30 June 2016, every police force in England and Wales should publish an action plan that sets out in detail what steps it will take to make maximum use of the ROCU capabilities, minimise duplication at force level, and ensure that the use of shared ROCU resources is prioritised between regional forces. This action plan should be developed:

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

The West Midlands ROCU has published one action plan for the region, but this does not provide all of the recommended detail. In particular, there is a lack of detail as to how each force will maximise ROCU capabilities, minimise duplication and ensure regional prioritisation. There is also no reference to the individual force's local priorities, NCA priorities or evidence of consultation with individual police and crime commissioners or the NCA executive board.

West Mercia Police should help to develop this action plan as soon as practicable to address all of the matters contained within the above recommendation.

Safeguarding activity relating to people affected by serious and organised crime, including victims and witnesses, involves the use of regional and local resources. We

---

<sup>38</sup> A large network of partner organisations, including all police forces in England and Wales, which shares information about organised criminals.

found that the force handles this information appropriately when safeguarding arrangements are implemented.

West Mercia Police makes use of its safer neighbourhood teams when responding to serious and organised crime. However, safer neighbourhood teams tend to be involved either after specific operations have been carried out, or are used for intelligence gathering. They are not routinely used to identify people at risk of being drawn into serious and organised crime. Nevertheless, the force does provide intranet-based briefing materials (including 'OCG on a page') to ensure its safer neighbourhood teams are kept aware of OCG developments.

West Mercia Police has taken positive steps to improve its response to the threat of serious and organised crime. However, this is limited because it does not assess its disruption of organised crime groups.

## **How effectively does the force prevent serious and organised crime?**

A force that effectively tackles serious and organised crime needs to be able to stop people being drawn in to this crime. Many of these people may be vulnerable and already involved in gang and youth violence. It should also be using a range of approaches and powers to prevent those known criminals continuing to cause harm. HMIC expects a force's approach to prevention to be a significant element of its overall strategy to tackle the harm that serious and organised crime causes communities.

West Mercia Police is unable to demonstrate that it has effective initiatives in place to deter people from becoming involved in serious and organised crime. The force has not responded fully to our 2015 inspection findings, where we found only limited evidence of collaborative activity aimed at preventing serious and organised crime or deterring those involved. We noted that the force does work with partner organisations in Worcestershire through its Joint Policing Panel; however, this arrangement is limited to only one of the unitary authority areas within the force and needs to be developed further.

West Mercia Police actively manages serious and organised criminals to prevent them from re-offending. The force makes referrals to the Government Agency Intelligence Network (GAIN), and notifies integrated offender management (IOM) teams about individuals entering the criminal justice system. The force also uses appropriate tactics to disrupt criminal activity. HMIC found that prior to leaving prison, intelligence relating to members of organised crime groups is re-assessed and a lead responsible officer (LRO) appointed to prepare individual management plans for each individual. These plans include the use of engagement with perpetrators at an early stage.

West Mercia Police communicates regularly with the public about serious and organised crime. The alliance publicises successful operations and issues media statements in partnership with the ROCU, releasing information on arrests, cash seizures, the recovery of assets and court outcomes, and how these benefit the local community.

Neighbourhood policing teams have access to a media toolkit that contains examples of how the results of operations should be publicised. The toolkit also includes advice on the use of prevention messages. For more significant cases, the alliance creates bespoke communication strategies, structured around the 4Ps action plans.

During this inspection, we reviewed an example of a police operation communication strategy. The alliance's corporate communications team makes a case-by-case assessment of how to communicate the outcomes of newsworthy investigations effectively. A team member then attends operational forums to agree with the officer in charge which messages should be made public.

The alliance also conducts campaigns to deter people from engaging in serious and organised crime; we were shown examples relating to cyber-crime and child sexual exploitation. The alliance provides prevention advice and information to communities, and works closely with other organisations to help ensure these messages reach a wider audience. One example offers safeguarding advice relating to new psychoactive substances.

## Summary of findings



**Requires improvement**

Serious and organised crime is another area where the force has responded positively to comments made by HMIC in 2015. Local profiles of organised crime groups have now been completed and operational activity to limit the harm that they cause is both effective and conforms to national best practice guidelines.

HMIC found that a local partnership is in place to support activity against serious and organised crime, but the force is yet to develop a strategic partnership board.

HMIC also noted that there are good processes in place to assign local resources to serious and organised crime within the alliance and across the wider West Midlands region.

The force still has more to do to assess the effects of its efforts to disrupt organised crime group activity and to discourage young people who may be tempted into criminal lifestyles. At present, this is not strategically managed by the chief officer

team. In particular, safer neighbourhood teams could be more proactively involved in disrupting organised crime group activity.

Police operations to confront organised crime groups form part of the force's publicity campaigns. When an investigation ends, the force considers each case to decide whether the police activity is likely to be newsworthy, and which important messages should be made public.

### **Areas for improvement**

- The force should engage routinely with partner agencies at a senior level to enhance intelligence sharing and promote an effective, multi-agency response to serious and organised crime.
- The force should take steps to identify those at risk of being drawn into serious and organised crime, and ensure that preventative initiatives are put in place with partner organisations to deter them from offending.

## How effective are the force's specialist capabilities?

Some complex threats require both a specialist capability and forces to work together to respond to them. This question assesses both the overall preparedness of forces to work together on a number of strategic threats and whether forces have a good understanding of the threat presented by firearms incidents and how equipped they are to meet this threat.

## How effective are the force's arrangements to ensure that it can fulfil its national policing responsibilities?

The *Strategic Policing Requirement* (SPR)<sup>39</sup> specifies six national threats. These are complex threats and forces need to be able to work together if they are to respond to them effectively. These include serious and organised crime, terrorism, serious cyber-crime incidents and child sexual abuse. It is beyond the scope of this inspection to assess in detail whether forces are capable of responding to these national threats. Instead, HMIC has checked whether forces have made the necessary arrangements to test their own preparedness for dealing with these threats should they materialise.

West Mercia Police has good leadership arrangements in place to ensure it is ready to respond to national threats outlined in the SPR. The force's strategic assessment describes the medium-term threats, risks and harm it faces, together with its capacity and capability to respond. The force has formally assessed the threats covered in the SPR and has produced operational plans with its alliance partner to address them. It has identified which threats represent the highest risk to communities using the 'management of risk in law enforcement' (MoRiLE)<sup>40</sup> methodology. We noted how the alliance is taking further steps to improve its capabilities, particularly in relation to cyber-crime, through the provision of specialist training using a combination of internal and external training providers.

---

<sup>39</sup> The SPR is issued annually by the Home Secretary, setting out the latest national threats and the appropriate national policing capabilities required to counter those threats. National threats require a co-ordinated or aggregated response from a number of police forces. Forces often need to work collaboratively, and with other partners, national agencies or national arrangements, to ensure such threats are tackled effectively. *Strategic Policing Requirement*, Home Office, March 2015. Available at: [www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/417116/The\\_Strategic\\_Policing\\_Requirement.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/417116/The_Strategic_Policing_Requirement.pdf)

<sup>40</sup> Developed by the National Police Chiefs' Council, this tool assesses the types of crimes which most threaten communities and highlights where the force does not currently have the capacity or capability to tackle them effectively.

An assistant chief constable is the designated portfolio holder for each of the elements of the SPR. The alliance has strong governance arrangements in place for each of the national threats and the local resilience forum,<sup>41</sup> a joint emergency services panel, is chaired by the chief constable.

The alliance has good arrangements in place for testing its preparedness to respond to national threats. It conducts and participates in regular exercises to check capability and capacity. Inspectors noted that a suitable testing regime, involving partner organisations, is planned for the next 12 months. For example, the alliance plans to conduct a cyber-attack exercise, where it will test its operational functions, including the resilience of its media capabilities. We learned of other recent exercises that had tested the capability and capacity of the alliance and its partner organisations to respond to a diverse range of incidents. These ranged from flooding to a marauding terrorist firearms attack.

## **How well prepared is the force to respond to a firearms attack?**

Following the terrorist attacks in Paris on 13 November 2015, the government allocated £143 million to the 43 England and Wales police forces to increase their armed capability. This funding has enabled some forces to increase the number of armed police officers able to respond to a terrorist attack. These attacks include those committed by heavily armed terrorists across multiple sites in quick succession, as in Paris. These attacks are known as marauding terrorist firearms attacks. The funding is for those forces considered to be at greatest risk of a terrorist attack. This also has the effect of increasing the ability of the police service to respond to other forms of terrorist attacks (and another incident requiring an armed policing response). Forces have begun to recruit and train new armed officers. This process is due to be completed by March 2018.

West Mercia Police has adequately assessed the threat of an attack requiring an armed response. In early 2016, it completed an armed policing strategic threat and risk assessment (APSTRA), which was overseen by an assistant chief constable. The assessment was compiled using a range of information, including data from the force intelligence bureau relating to the criminal use of firearms and counter-terrorism. The APSTRA also informs the force's training programme.

HMIC noted that the APSTRA had been completed since the November 2015 Paris attacks. It complies with the College of Policing and Home Office standards and

---

<sup>41</sup> The local resilience forum brings together emergency services and other statutory bodies involved in crisis management and disaster recovery. The forum has a number of responsibilities, including joint operational planning and developing a programme of exercise planning to test the force's state of readiness and response to major incidents.

contains clear procedures for responding to extreme threats, including the use of regional firearms assets where necessary.

During our inspection, HMIC learned that the alliance has participated in various exercises and events involving other forces and partner organisations to test its firearms capabilities. These cover the suitability of command structures and its interoperability arrangements with other organisations, including the Ministry of Defence. It has good arrangements in place for reviewing and, if necessary, increasing its firearms capability. Governance across the alliance is provided by an armed policing review group and the force also participates in regional and national meetings that support its assessments of training and operational requirements.

Although the alliance is not part of the national armed policing uplift programme to increase armed response vehicle numbers, it takes steps to ensure that the firearms capacity and capabilities are not compromised. A service level agreement is in place across the alliance that defines minimum standards for armed response. The alliance has used APSTRA to assess its armed response vehicle needs, and has also taken into account the likely travelling time to incidents. The recruitment and training programme for authorised firearms officers has been revised and is now scheduled to take place three times each year, with training provided on a modular basis to avoid the need for long-term residential courses. The alliance's position is that the changes it has made to its recruitment and training programmes will help it maintain a resilient pool of firearms officers.



## Summary of findings

### Ungraded

West Mercia Police has a good understanding of how the national threats outlined in the *Strategic Policing Requirement* relate to the force area. They are central to the force's strategic assessment of all priorities; this ensures that the force's capabilities and capacity to address the threats are kept under constant review.

One of the national threats relates specifically to counter terrorism. This inspection specifically examined the force's state of readiness to manage the type of attacks that took place in Paris in November 2015. The force has studied these attacks carefully and considered their implications for the command, deployment and training of armed officers.

Firearms training in West Mercia Police conforms to national standards, and police weaponry and tactics have been enhanced as a consequence of the nature of modern-day terrorist attacks. The force has also deepened its collaboration agreements with its alliance partner and surrounding forces in preparation for an increase in the numbers of armed officers being urgently required.

The force has an established exercise training regime, and simulated terrorist attacks are used frequently to test the force's ability to withstand this type of threat.

## Next steps

HMIC assesses progress on causes of concern and areas for improvement identified within its reports in a number of ways. We receive updates through our regular conversations with forces, re-assess as part of our annual PEEL programme, and, in the most serious cases, revisit forces.

HMIC highlights recurring themes emerging from our PEEL inspections of police forces within our national reports on police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy. These reports identify those issues that are reflected across England and Wales and may contain additional recommendations directed at national policing organisations, including the Home Office, where we believe improvements can be made at a national level.

Findings and judgments from this year's PEEL effectiveness inspection will be used to direct the design of the next cycle of PEEL effectiveness assessments. The specific areas for assessment are yet to be confirmed, based on further consultation, but we will continue to assess how forces keep people safe and reduce crime to ensure our findings are comparable year on year.

## Annex A – About the data

The information presented in this report comes from a range of sources, including published data by the Home Office and Office for National Statistics, inspection fieldwork and data collected directly from all 43 geographic police forces in England and Wales.

Where HMIC has collected data directly from police forces, we have taken reasonable steps to agree the design of the data collection with forces and with other relevant interested parties such as the Home Office. We have given forces several opportunities to check and validate the data they have provided us to ensure the accuracy of our evidence. For instance:

- We checked the data that forces submitted and queried with forces where figures were notably different from other forces or were internally inconsistent.
- We asked all forces to check the final data used in the report and correct any errors identified.

The source of the data is presented with each figure in the report, and is set out in more detail in this annex. The source of Force in numbers data is also set out below.

### Methodology

#### Data in the report

The British Transport Police was outside the scope of inspection. Therefore any aggregated totals for England and Wales exclude British Transport Police data and numbers will differ from those published by the Home Office.

Where other forces have been unable to supply data, this is mentioned under the relevant sections below.

#### Population

For all uses of population as a denominator in our calculations, unless otherwise noted, we use Office for National Statistics (ONS) mid-2015 population estimates. These were the most recent data available at the time of the inspection.

For the specific case of City of London Police, we include both resident and transient population within our calculations. This is to account for the unique nature and demographics of this force's responsibility.

## **Survey of police staff**

HMIC conducted a short survey of police staff across forces in England and Wales, to understand their views on workloads, redeployment and the suitability of tasks assigned to them. The survey was a non-statistical, voluntary sample which means that results may not be representative of the population. The number of responses varied between 8 and 2,471 across forces. Therefore, we treated results with caution and used them for exploring further during fieldwork rather than to assess individual force performance.

## **Ipsos MORI survey of public attitudes towards policing**

HMIC commissioned Ipsos MORI to conduct a survey of attitudes towards policing between July and August 2016. Respondents were drawn from an online panel and results were weighted by age, gender and work status to match the population profile of the force area. The sampling method used is not a statistical random sample and the sample size was small, varying between 331 to 429 in each force area. Therefore, any results provided are only an indication of satisfaction rather than an absolute.

The findings of this survey will be shared on our website by summer 2017:

[www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/data/peel-assessments/](http://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/data/peel-assessments/)

## **Review of crime files**

HMIC reviewed 60 police case files across crime types for: robbery, common assault (flagged as domestic abuse), grievous bodily harm (GBH), stalking, harassment, rape and domestic burglary. The file review was designed to provide a broad overview of the identification of vulnerability, the effectiveness of investigations and to understand how victims are treated through police processes. Files were randomly selected from crimes recorded between 1 January 2016 and 31 March 2016 and were assessed against several criteria. Due to the small sample size of cases selected, we have not used results from the file review as the sole basis for assessing individual force performance but alongside other evidence gathered.

## **Force in numbers**

A dash in this graphic indicates that a force was not able to supply HMIC with data.

### **Calls for assistance (including those for domestic abuse)**

These data were collected directly from all 43 forces. In 2016, the questions contained a different breakdown of instances where the police were called to an incident compared to the 2015 data collection, so direct comparisons to the equivalent 2015 data are not advised.

## Recorded crime and crime outcomes

These data are obtained from Home Office police-recorded crime and outcomes data tables for the 12 months to 30 June 2016 and are taken from the October 2016 Home Office data release, which is available from:

[www.gov.uk/government/statistics/police-recorded-crime-open-data-tables](http://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/police-recorded-crime-open-data-tables)

Total police-recorded crime includes all crime (excluding fraud offences) recorded by police forces in England and Wales. Home Office publications on the overall volumes and rates of recorded crime and outcomes include the British Transport Police, which is outside the scope of this HMIC inspection. Therefore, England and Wales rates in this report will differ from those published by the Home Office.

Figures about police-recorded crime should be treated with care, as recent increases are likely to have been affected by the renewed focus on the quality and compliance of crime recording since HMIC's national inspection of crime data in 2014.

For crime outcomes, Dorset Police has been excluded from the England and Wales figure. Dorset Police experienced difficulties with the recording of crime outcomes for the 12 months to 30 June 2016. This was due to the force introducing the Niche records management system in Spring 2015. Problems with the implementation of Niche meant that crime outcomes were not reliably recorded. The failure to file investigations properly meant that a higher than normal proportion of offences were allocated to 'Not yet assigned an outcome'. During 2016, the force conducted additional work to solve the problem. In doing so, some crime outcomes from the 12 months to 30 June 2016 were updated after that date and are reflected in a later period. This makes Dorset Police's crime outcome data inconsistent with that provided by other forces. HMIC has decided not to use Dorset Police's outcome data in the interests of consistency of data use and to maintain fairness to all forces.

Other notable points to consider when interpreting outcome data are listed below and also apply to figure 4.

- For a full commentary and explanation of outcome types please see Crime Outcomes in England and Wales: year ending March 2016, Home Office, July 2016. Available from:  
[www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/539447/crime-outcomes-hosb0616.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/539447/crime-outcomes-hosb0616.pdf)
- Crime outcome proportions show the percentage of crimes recorded in the 12 months to 30 June 2016 that have been assigned each outcome. This means that each crime is tracked or linked to its outcome.
- These data are subject to change, as more crimes are assigned outcomes over time. These data are taken from the October 2016 Home Office data release.

- Providing outcomes data under the new framework is voluntary if not provided directly through the Home Office Data Hub. However, as proportions are used, calculations can be based on fewer than four quarters of data. For the 12 months to 30 June 2016, Derbyshire Constabulary and Suffolk Constabulary were unable to provide the last quarter of data. Therefore, their figures are based on the first three quarters of the year.
- Leicestershire, Staffordshire and West Yorkshire forces are participating in the Ministry of Justice's out of court disposals pilot. This means these forces no longer issue simple cautions or cannabis/khat warnings and they restrict their use of penalty notices for disorder as disposal options for adult offenders, as part of the pilot. Therefore, their outcomes data should be viewed with this in mind.
- It is important to note that the outcomes that are displayed in figure 8 are based on the number of outcomes recorded in the 12 months to 30 June 2016, irrespective of when the crime was recorded. Therefore, the crimes and outcomes recorded in the reporting year are not tracked, so direct comparisons should not be made between general outcomes and domestic abuse related outcomes in this report. For more details about the methodology for domestic abuse outcomes please see explanatory notes below, under figure 8.

### **Anti-social behaviour**

These data are obtained from Office for National Statistics data tables, available from:

[www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/datasets/policeforceareadatatables](http://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/datasets/policeforceareadatatables)

All police forces record incidents of anti-social behaviour reported to them in accordance with the provisions of the National Standard for Incident Recording (NSIR). Incidents are recorded under NSIR in accordance with the same 'victim focused' approach that applies for recorded crime, although these figures are not subject to the same level of quality assurance as the main recorded crime collection. Incident counts should be interpreted as incidents recorded by the police, rather than reflecting the true level of victimisation. Other agencies also deal with anti-social behaviour incidents (for example, local authorities and social landlords); incidents reported to these agencies will not generally be included in police figures.

When viewing this data the user should be aware of the following:

- Warwickshire Police had a problem with its incident recording. For a small percentage of all incidents reported during 2014-15 and 2015-16 it was not possible for the force to identify whether these were anti-social behaviour or other types of incident. These incidents have been distributed pro rata for

Warwickshire, so that one percent of anti-social behaviour in 2014-15 and two percent of anti-social behaviour in 2015-16 are estimated.

- From May 2014, South Yorkshire Police experienced difficulties in reporting those incidents of anti-social behaviour that resulted from how it processed calls for assistance, specifically for scheduled appointments. In November 2016, South Yorkshire Police resolved this problem and resubmitted anti-social behaviour data to Office for National Statistics. HMIC has used corrected data for South Yorkshire Police which are available in the November 2016 release of anti-social behaviour incidents data in the link above.
- Bedfordshire Police resubmitted anti-social behaviour data to Office for National Statistics for the 12 months to 30 June 2016. This was because data had been double counted for the second quarter of the financial year. HMIC has used corrected data for Bedfordshire Police which are available in the November 2016 release of anti-social behaviour incidents data in the link above.

### **Domestic abuse**

Data for domestic abuse flagged offences were provided by the Home Office for the 12 months to 30 June 2016. These are more recent figures than those previously published by Office for National Statistics.

Data relating to domestic abuse arrests, charges and outcomes were collected through the HMIC data collection.

Further information about the domestic abuse statistics and recent releases are available from:

[www.ons.gov.uk/releases/domesticabuseinenglandandwalesyearendingmarch2016](http://www.ons.gov.uk/releases/domesticabuseinenglandandwalesyearendingmarch2016)

### **Organised crime groups (OCGs)**

These data were collected directly from all 43 forces. City of London Police is excluded from the England and Wales rate as its OCG data are not comparable with other forces due to size and its wider national remit.

The number of OCGs in the Warwickshire Police and West Mercia Police force areas is a combined total of OCGs for the two force areas. The OCGs per one million population rate is based upon their areas' combined population figures.

OCGs which are no longer active – for example because they have been dismantled by the police – can be archived. This means that they are no longer subject to disruption, investigation or monitoring. From 1 September 2014 to 31 December 2015, forces were given a directive by the National Police Chiefs' Council to suspend archiving, pending a review of OCG recording policy. This directive was removed on

1 January 2016, but resulted in many forces archiving more OCGs than they otherwise would have in the 12 months to June 2016. Therefore, direct comparisons should not be made with OCG figures from previous years.

### **Victim satisfaction**

Forces were required by the Home Office to conduct satisfaction surveys with specific victim groups. Force victim satisfaction surveys are structured around principal questions exploring satisfaction responses across four stages of interactions:

- initial contact;
- actions;
- follow-up;
- treatment plus the whole experience.

The data used in this report use the results to the question relating to the victim's whole experience, which specifically asks, "Taking the whole experience into account, are you satisfied, dissatisfied, or neither with the service provided by the police in this case?"

The England and Wales average is calculated based on the average of the rates of satisfaction in all 43 forces.

## **Figures throughout the report**

### **Figure 1: Police-recorded crime rates (per 1,000 population) for the five year period to 30 June 2016**

Please see 'Recorded Crime and Crime Outcomes' above.

### **Figure 2: Police-recorded crime rates (per 1,000 population) for the 12 months to 30 June 2016**

Please see 'Recorded Crime and Crime Outcomes' above.

### **Figure 3: Percentage change in the rate of anti-social behaviour incidents (per 1,000 population), by force, comparing the 12 months to 31 March 2016 with the 12 months to 31 March 2015**

Please see 'Anti-social behaviour' above.

### **Figure 4: Proportion of outcomes assigned to offences recorded, in 12 months to 30 June 2016, by outcome type**

Please see 'Recorded Crime and Crime Outcomes' above.



The outcome number has been provided to improve usability across multiple publications and is in line with Home Office categorisation.

For these data, we state whether the force's value is 'one of the highest', 'one of the lowest' or 'broadly in line with' all forces in England and Wales. This is calculated by ranking the usage of outcomes and then highlighting the top and bottom 25 percent of forces. All other forces will be broadly in line with England and Wales. However, any interpretation of outcomes should take into account that outcomes will vary dependent on the crime types that occur in each force area, and how the force deals with offenders for different crimes.

This methodology is not comparable with figure 8, so direct comparisons should not be made between the two tables.

**Figure 5: Percentage of 'Evidential difficulties; victim does not support action' outcomes assigned to offences recorded in the 12 months to 30 June 2016, by force**

Please see 'Recorded Crime and Crime Outcomes' above.

In addition, it is important to understand that the percentages of evidential difficulties can be affected by the level of certain types of crime within a force, such as domestic abuse related offences. The category of evidential difficulties also includes where a suspect has been identified and the victim supports police action, but evidential difficulties prevent further action being taken.

**Figure 6: Percentage of police recorded crime with a vulnerable victim identified, by force, for the 12 months to 30 June 2016**

Please see 'Recorded Crime and Crime Outcomes' above.

The number of offences identified with a vulnerable victim in a force is dependent on the force's definition of vulnerability.

City of London, Devon and Cornwall, Essex, Gloucestershire and Lancashire forces were unable to provide data for the number of recorded crimes with a vulnerable victim identified. Therefore, these forces' data are not included in the graph or in the calculation of the England and Wales rate.

When viewing this data the user should be aware of the following:

- Suffolk Constabulary was only able to provide eight months of vulnerability data to the 30 June 2016 due to transferring to a different crime management system. Its previous system did not record vulnerability. Therefore, these are the most reliable data it can provide.

**Figure 7: Domestic abuse arrest rate (per 100 domestic abuse crimes), by force, for the 12 months to 30 June 2016**

Please see 'Domestic abuse' above.

Derbyshire, Durham and Gloucestershire forces were unable to provide domestic abuse arrest data. Therefore, these forces' data are not included in the graph or in the calculation of the England and Wales rate.

The arrest rate is calculated using a common time period for arrests and offences. It is important to note that each arrest is not necessarily directly linked to its specific domestic abuse offence recorded in the 12 months to 30 June 2016 in this calculation. It is also possible to have more than one arrest per offence although this is rare. In addition, the reader should note the increase in police-recorded crime which has affected the majority of forces over the last year (39 out of 43). This may have the effect of arrest rates actually being higher than the figures suggest. Despite this, the calculation still indicates whether the force prioritises arrests for domestic abuse offenders over other potential forms of action. HMIC has evaluated the arrest rate alongside other measures (such as use of voluntary attendance or body-worn video cameras) during our inspection process to understand how each force deals with domestic abuse overall.

When viewing this data the user should be aware of the following:

- Cambridgeshire Constabulary identified a recording issue and that it could only obtain accurate data from a manual audit of its custody records. This means its data may indicate a lower arrest rate. However, at the time of publication this was the most reliable figure the force could provide for the 12 months to 30 June 2016. The force plans to conduct regular manual audits while the recording issue is resolved. HMIC will conduct a further review to test this evidence when more data are available.
- Lancashire Constabulary experienced difficulties in identifying all domestic abuse flagged arrests. This affected 23 days in the 12 months to 30 June 2016. The force investigated this and confirmed that the impact on data provided to HMIC would be marginal and that these are the most reliable figures it can provide.

**Figure 8: Rate of outcomes recorded in 12 months to 30 June 2016 for domestic-related offences**

Please see 'Domestic Abuse' above.

Dorset Police is excluded from our data for the reasons described under 'Recorded Crime and Crime Outcomes' above.

Nottinghamshire Police has been excluded from domestic abuse outcomes data. The force experienced difficulties with the conversion of some crime data when it

moved to a new crime recording system. This means that the force did not record reliably some crime outcomes for domestic abuse related offences. The force subsequently solved the problem and provided updated outcomes figures. However, this makes Nottinghamshire Police's outcomes data for domestic abuse related offences inconsistent with that provided by other forces. HMIC has decided not to use Nottinghamshire Police's outcomes data for domestic abuse related offences in the interests of consistency of data use and to maintain fairness to all forces.

In April 2015, the Home Office began collecting information from the police on whether recorded offences were related to domestic abuse. Crimes are identified by the police as domestic abuse related if the offence meets the government definition of domestic violence and abuse:

"Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality."

In figure 8, the rate is calculated by the number of each outcome recorded for domestic abuse flagged offences in the 12 months to 30 June 2016, divided by the total number of domestic abuse offences recorded in the 12 months to 30 June 2016. The domestic abuse-related crimes used in this calculation are not necessarily those to which the outcomes have been assigned. Therefore, direct comparisons should not be made between general outcomes in figure 4, where each crime is linked to its associated outcome, and domestic abuse outcomes in figure 8.

For these data, we state whether the force's value is 'one of the highest', 'one of the lowest' or 'broadly in line with' all forces in England and Wales. This is calculated by ranking the usage of outcomes and then highlighting the top and bottom 25 percent of forces. All other forces will be broadly in line with England and Wales. However, any interpretation of outcomes should take into account that outcomes will vary dependent on the crime types that occur in each force area, and how the force deals with offenders for different crimes.

### **Figure 9: Organised crime groups per one million population, by force, as at 1 July 2016**

Please see 'Organised Crime Groups' above.

### **Figure 10: Active organised crime groups by predominant crime type, as at 1 July 2016**

Humberside Police was unable to provide the full data for predominant crime types in the time available. Therefore, this force's data are not included in the graph or in the calculation of the England and Wales proportion.

Numbers may not sum to 100 percent due to rounding.