

Summary Extract from HMIC Report, “[PEEL: Police effectiveness 2015 \(Vulnerability\) - An inspection of Suffolk Constabulary](#)”, December 2015

Vulnerability in numbers



Calls for assistance

Calls for assistance per 1,000 population 12 months to 31 March 2015

Suffolk Constabulary England and Wales

242

350

Domestic abuse calls for assistance per 1,000 population 12 months to 31 March 2015

Suffolk Constabulary England and Wales

6.2

15.8



Crime

Crimes recorded per 1,000 population 12 months to 31 March 2015

Suffolk Constabulary England and Wales

51.5

61.6

Change in recorded crimes (excluding fraud) 12 months to 31 March 2015 against 12 months to 31 March 2014

Suffolk Constabulary England and Wales

+4.3%

+2.2%

Percentage of total crimes recorded (excluding fraud) as having a vulnerable victim 12 months to 31 March 2015

Suffolk Constabulary England and Wales

12.7%

10.7%

Percentage of total crimes recorded as domestic abuse 12 months to 31 March 2015

Suffolk Constabulary England and Wales

9.6%

10.0%

Change in domestic abuse recorded crime 12 months to 31 March 2015 against 12 months to 31 March 2014

Suffolk Constabulary England and Wales

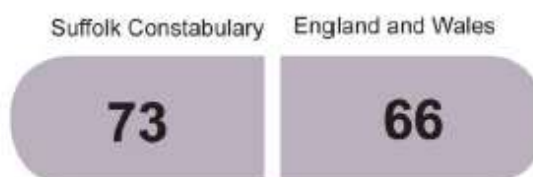
+18.2%

+20.8%



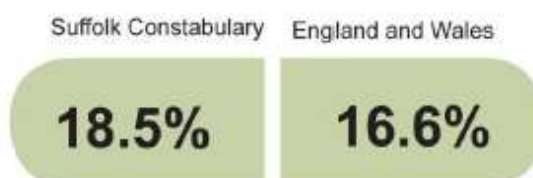
Domestic abuse arrest rate

Number of domestic abuse arrests per 100 domestic abuse crimes recorded 12 months to 31 March 2015



Charge rate

Charge rate as a percentage of all crimes recorded (excluding fraud) 12 months to 31 March 2015



Domestic abuse charge rate as a percentage of all domestic abuse crimes recorded 12 months to 31 March 2015



Victim satisfaction rate

Victim satisfaction rate 12 months to 31 March 2015



Data: for full details on the data used in this graphic see annex A in the vulnerability national report.

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

Summary



Requires improvement

Suffolk Constabulary generally provides a good service in identifying and responding to the needs of vulnerable people. The public can be confident that in most cases the constabulary supports victims well. However, in several areas improvement is needed to ensure the service is consistent and that vulnerable people, particularly children, are kept safe. Given the scale of the challenge in this area and the inherent risk to some of the most vulnerable people in society, overall the constabulary requires improvement.

HMIC acknowledges that the constabulary is committed to improving the quality of service it provides to vulnerable people and victims. The chief officer team has made protecting vulnerable people a clear priority for the constabulary, and police officers and staff understand and share this commitment. In order to translate this priority into practice, the constabulary has invested additional resources in the parts of its organisation which supports those who are vulnerable and keeps them safe. It now needs to build on this investment and the good work seen in some areas by HMIC. This should ensure that the risk of harm to vulnerable people is identified early and that this promising work results in a consistently high quality service.

Overall, the constabulary effectively identifies repeat and vulnerable victims and responds to them appropriately. It also investigates those crimes committed against the most vulnerable victims well, and generally assigns the right level of expertise relative to the complexity of investigation. However, the current caseload within the teams who deal with rape and child abuse investigations are on occasions unacceptably high, and can become unmanageable, leading to delays in investigation and a reduced service to the victim. The constabulary needs to ensure that caseloads are manageable and service provision is not being compromised. Frontline staff do not always have access to photographic and/or video recording equipment which means that evidence of injuries and scenes could be lost.

The constabulary needs to do more to ensure it provides a consistent and co-ordinated response to missing and absent children and has recently revised how it investigates such incidents. The current policy providing guidance to staff is out of date and needs to be updated to reflect these changes.

The constabulary has in place a specific risk assessment process for those who go missing and victims of domestic abuse. However, the application of this process is often inconsistent and supervision could be improved. The constabulary needs to ensure that these assessments accurately reflect the risk to ensure an appropriate response by police and partners.

Work between professionals in the multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH)¹ helps keep children safe, and makes sure that, should there be higher levels of risk, the response is then increased.

The constabulary has made a good start in ensuring it is well-prepared to tackle child sexual exploitation. It must now build on this initial approach and have confidence that its ambition translates into consistent operational practice. This inspection only considered how well-prepared the constabulary is to tackle child sexual exploitation.

Officers attending domestic abuse incidents have a good understanding of how to keep people safe and routinely assess the risk faced by victims. They can refer to a helpful booklet and checklist produced by the constabulary although supervisory oversight of this process could be improved. Those cases assessed as high or medium-risk are well-supervised. The constabulary has made some progress against the recommendations made in its last domestic abuse inspection in 2014.

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

Suffolk Constabulary has a strong commitment to improving the service provided to vulnerable people. This is an objective within the police and crime commissioner's *Police and Crime Plan for Suffolk 2013-17*,² and is understood and supported by officers and staff at all levels. The chief officer team provides clear leadership on what needs to change in order to improve services for vulnerable victims.

The constabulary has recognised that, in order to provide a different, more tailored response to vulnerable people, it first needs to correctly identify them as such, and then understand which services would best meet their particular needs.

¹ 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.

² *Police and Crime Plan for Suffolk 2013-2017*, Suffolk police and crime commissioner, version 1.1, July 2015, page 4, paragraph 4. Available from: www.suffolk-pcc.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/Police-and-Crime-Plan-2013-2017-Version-14-for-publication.pdf

Summary of findings



Requires improvement

Suffolk Constabulary generally provides a good service in identifying vulnerable people and responds well to them. However, there are several areas where improvement is needed to ensure the service is consistent and that vulnerable people, particularly children, are kept safe.

The PCC and chief officer team has made protecting vulnerable people a clear priority for the constabulary, and police officers and staff understand and share this commitment. It has invested additional resources in the parts of its organisation which supports those who are vulnerable and keeps them safe.

Overall, the constabulary effectively identifies repeat and vulnerable victims and responds to them appropriately. It also investigates those crimes committed against the most vulnerable victims well, and generally assigns the right level of expertise relative to the complexity of investigation. However, the current caseload within the teams who deal with rape and child abuse investigations are on occasions unacceptably high, and can become unmanageable, therefore leading to delays in investigation and a reduced service to the victim.

The constabulary needs to do more to ensure it provides a consistent and co-ordinated response to missing and absent children. It has made a good start in ensuring it is well prepared to tackle child sexual exploitation. Officers attending domestic abuse incidents know how to assess risk and keep victims safe.

Areas for improvement

- The constabulary should improve its investigation of cases involving vulnerable victims by ensuring officers and staff within the specialist child protection and rape investigation teams have their workloads properly supervised to ensure a timely and effective investigation. The constabulary should review the resourcing levels immediately to ensure they are appropriate, so that it conducts timely and effective investigations.
- The constabulary should improve its initial investigation of cases involving vulnerable victims by ensuring responding officers have access to photographic and/or video recording equipment to take evidence of injuries and scenes.
- The constabulary should improve its compliance with the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime specifically in relation to victim personal statements.
- The constabulary should improve its response to missing and absent children by ensuring there is clarity for frontline officers and supervisors as to their roles and responsibilities in relation to risk assessment and safeguarding action.