

PEEL 2021/22

Police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy

An inspection of Norfolk Constabulary

Contents

Overall summary	1
Our judgments	1
Important changes to PEEL	1
HM Inspector's observations	2
Reducing crime assessment	3
Providing a service to the victims of crime	5
Victim service assessment	5
Engaging with and treating the public with fairness and respect	8
Area for improvement	8
Main findings	9
Preventing crime and anti-social behaviour	12
Area for improvement	12
Main findings	12
Responding to the public	16
Areas for improvement	16
Innovative practice	17
Main findings	17
Investigating crime	21
Areas for improvement	21
Innovative practice	22
Main findings	23
Protecting vulnerable people	27
Area for improvement	27
Main findings	28

Managing offenders and suspects	33
Area for improvement	33
Main findings	33
Disrupting serious organised crime	37
Building, supporting and protecting the workforce	38
Innovative practice	38
Main findings	38
Vetting and counter corruption	42
Strategic planning, organisational management and value for money	43
Innovative practice	43
Main findings	43

Overall summary

Our judgments

Our inspection assessed how good Norfolk Constabulary is in nine areas of policing. We make graded judgments in eight of these nine as follows:

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

We also inspected how effective a service Norfolk Constabulary gives to victims of crime. We don't make a graded judgment in this overall area.

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

Data in this report

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

Important changes to PEEL

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

We are moving to a more intelligence-led, continual assessment approach, rather than the annual [PEEL inspections](#) we used in previous years. For instance, we have integrated our rolling crime data integrity inspections into these PEEL assessments. Our PEEL victim service assessment will now include a crime data integrity element in at least every other assessment. We have also changed our approach to graded

judgments. We now assess forces against the characteristics of good performance, set out in the [PEEL Assessment Framework 2021/22](#), and we more clearly link our judgments to causes of concern and areas for improvement. We have also expanded our previous four-tier system of judgments to five tiers. As a result, we can state more precisely where we consider improvement is needed and highlight more effectively the best ways of doing things.

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

HM Inspector's observations

I am pleased with the performance of Norfolk Constabulary in keeping people safe and reducing crime. I am satisfied its performance has been maintained or improved in most areas, but there are some areas in which it needs to improve.

These are the findings I consider most important from our assessments of the constabulary over the past year.

The force's approach to planning and finances is outstanding and makes sure that the public of Norfolk receive a good service despite the pressures of increasing demand. It is making excellent use of data from its own systems and from partner organisations. This gives senior and operational leaders a comprehensive understanding of demand, risks and opportunities.

The force has improved its crime investigation, but more needs to be done. It has invested a lot of time and effort in giving its staff the skills and ambition to carry out excellent crime investigations for victims. Improvements are evident and there are more effective investigations now than there were in the past. However, there is still scope for improvement as supervision can be variable, and in some cases investigative opportunities aren't taken.

The force must become much more consistent at completing initial risk assessments when victims get in touch. The [control room](#) makes use of the [threat, harm, risk, investigation, vulnerability and engagement \(THRIVE\) risk assessment model](#). However, its use is inconsistent and too many victims, including vulnerable victims, aren't being risk-assessed as they should be.

The force is good at tackling crime, incidents and vulnerability through a focus on prevention activity. It has many initiatives that are making a difference to victims of crime and those who might be drawn into crime. The force needs to get better at assessing and evaluating problem-solving activity, so it can share learning and successful methods.

Leadership of the force is strong and ethical, and staff feel valued and have a sense of belonging. It is pleasing to see that wellbeing is a central theme throughout the force.

My report sets out the fuller findings of this inspection. While I congratulate the officers and [staff](#) of Norfolk Constabulary for their efforts in keeping the public safe, I will monitor their progress towards addressing the areas for improvement I have identified.



Roy Wilsher

HM Inspector of Constabulary

Reducing crime assessment

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

The force is focused on crime prevention and is developing its problem-solving ethos. Neighbourhood governance and performance meetings are focused on prevention. Good data analysis helps focus problem-solving activity. Local officers working with partner agencies make good use of preventative tactics.

Organisations are working well alongside the force to reduce crime and [anti-social behaviour \(ASB\)](#).

The constabulary, working with the office of the [police and crime commissioner](#) and partner agencies, prioritises early intervention work particularly directed towards children and young people who have encountered the criminal justice system or are in danger of doing so. It refers them to supportive projects intended to deter them from offending.

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

- its excellent grasp of the demand for and use of data to focus activities;
- how it carries out effective media campaigns, using social media and traditional methods to raise awareness regarding crime and crime prevention;
- its Early Help partnership hubs, which bring together partner organisations working with vulnerable children, families and, increasingly, adults to resolve their problems;
- its operational partnership team, which works with partner organisations to resolve ASB affecting [vulnerable people](#);
- its use of a range of specialists, including problem-solving tactical advisors, safer schools officers and a 'design out crime' role. They also help the force's communities and partner organisations to prevent crime; and
- its effective [integrated offender management \(IOM\)](#) programme, focusing on people who commit high levels of crime, and its [domestic abuse](#) offender scheme.

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

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

- It doesn't always establish repeat victims at the first point of contact.
- It doesn't always give crime prevention or scene preservation advice at the first point of contact.
- It doesn't always complete initial needs assessments in all appropriate cases.
- It doesn't always investigate crime promptly and effectively.

Providing a service to the victims of crime

Victim service assessment

This section describes our assessment of the service victims receive from Norfolk Constabulary, from the point of reporting a crime through to the outcome. As part of this assessment, we reviewed 90 case files as well as 20 each of cases where the victim supports police action but evidential difficulties prevent further action, the victim doesn't support or has withdrawn support for police action, and offences finalised because the prosecution time limit has expired. While this assessment is ungraded, it influences graded judgments in the other areas we have inspected.

The force isn't accurately assessing the risk and vulnerability of victims who contact the police

When a victim contacts the police, it is important that their call is answered quickly and that the right information is recorded accurately on police systems. The caller should be spoken to in a professional manner. The information should be assessed, taking into consideration threat, harm, risk and vulnerability. And the victim should get appropriate [safeguarding](#) advice.

The force needs to improve the time it takes to answer emergency calls as it isn't always meeting national standards. It also needs to improve its answering of non-emergency calls to prevent them being abandoned by the caller. When calls are answered, the victim's vulnerability is often not assessed using a structured process. Repeat victims aren't always identified, which means this isn't considered in the force's approach to the victim. Victims aren't always given advice on crime prevention and how to preserve evidence.

The force mostly responds to calls for service promptly

A force should aim to attend incidents within its published time frames, based on the prioritisation given to the call. It should change call priority only if the original prioritisation is deemed inappropriate, or if further information suggests a change is needed. The approach should consider risk and victim vulnerability, including information obtained after the call.

On most occasions the force responds to calls to incidents appropriately, and we found that attendance was within the published force timescales. However, on the few occasions there was a delay in attending, victims weren't always updated about

the delay. For non-emergency calls the force has an appointment system, which was used effectively. Appropriate staff were allocated to attend incidents.

The force allocates crimes to appropriate staff, but victims aren't always informed if their crime isn't going to be investigated further

Police forces should have a policy to make sure crimes are allocated to appropriately trained officers or staff for investigation or, if appropriate, not investigated further. The policy should be applied consistently. The victim of the crime should be kept informed of the allocation and whether the crime is to be investigated further.

We found that the arrangements for allocating recorded crimes for investigation were in accordance with the force policy. In nearly all cases the crime was allocated to the most appropriate department for further investigation. However, victims weren't always told that their crime report wouldn't be investigated further. This is important for giving victims an appropriate level of service and managing expectations.

The force isn't always carrying out thorough and prompt investigations, and victims aren't always updated on the progress of their investigation

Police forces should investigate reported crimes quickly, proportionately and thoroughly. Victims should be kept updated about the investigation, and the force should have effective governance arrangements to make sure investigation standards are high.

We found that investigations were sometimes not carried out promptly, and relevant lines of inquiry weren't completed. There was frequently a lack of effective supervision of investigations. This resulted in some investigations being neither thorough nor prompt. Victims are potentially being let down and offenders aren't being brought to justice. Victims weren't always kept updated about the progress of the investigation, particularly for serious crimes. This can result in victims losing confidence in the investigation. When domestic abuse victims withdrew their support for a prosecution, the force didn't always consider the use of orders designed to protect victims, such as a Domestic Violence Protection Notice ([DVPN](#)) or Order ([DVPO](#)). Obtaining such orders is an important method of safeguarding the victim from further abuse in the future.

Under the [Victims' Code of Practice](#), a needs assessment must be conducted at an early stage to decide whether victims need additional support. The outcome of the assessment and the request for additional support should be recorded. The force isn't always completing the victim needs assessment, which means not all victims will get the appropriate level of service.

The force isn't always using the appropriate outcome or obtaining an auditable record of the victim's wishes

The force should make sure it follows national guidance and rules for deciding the outcome of each report of crime. In doing so, the force should consider the nature of the crime, the offender and the victim. And it should show the necessary leadership and culture to make sure outcomes are appropriate.

When a suspect is identified but there are evidential difficulties in taking a prosecution forward, the victim should be told about the decision to finalise the investigation. We found that not all victims were informed by the force of the decision to take no further action and to finalise the crime.

Where a suspect is identified but the victim doesn't support, or withdraws support for, police action, the force should have an auditable record to confirm the victim's decision so that it can close the investigation. Evidence of the victim's decision was absent in most cases we reviewed. This means there is a risk that victims' wishes aren't being fully represented and considered before the crime is finalised.

A crime that can only be prosecuted at a magistrates' court must commence a prosecution within six months of the offence. A crime can be finalised if a suspect is identified but the time limit has expired. We found that the force used this outcome incorrectly on several occasions.

Engaging with and treating the public with fairness and respect

Requires improvement

Norfolk Constabulary requires improvement at treating people fairly and with respect.

Area for improvement

The force needs to make sure that officers properly record their grounds for stop and search

Our audit of stop and search records looks at the grounds the searching officer has recorded. We want to know whether the grounds they relied on when using their [stop and search powers](#) were reasonable.

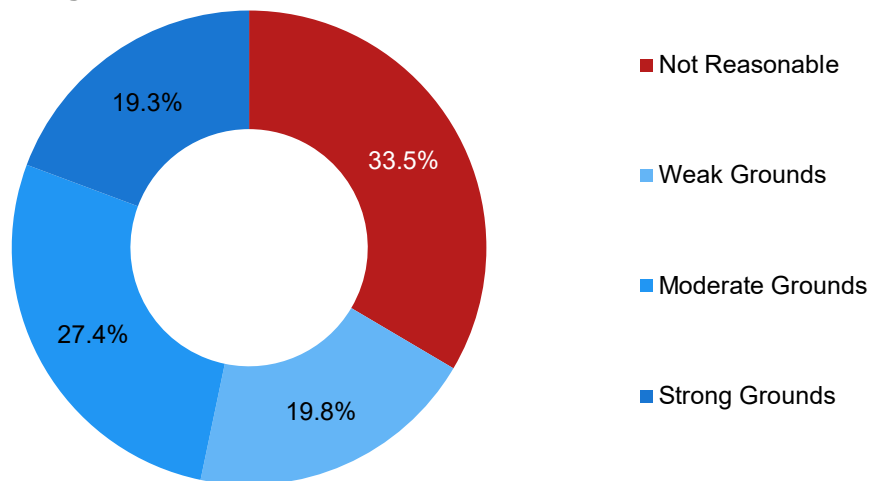
The officer doesn't need to provide unnecessarily detailed information. But the record must be specific and detailed enough for someone else to judge whether a reasonable person with the same information would also have suspected the person searched was carrying the item sought. The grounds must be written clearly enough for the person searched to understand them if they ask for a copy of the record.

Accurate recording of encounters makes scrutiny possible, both internally (by supervisors and at force level) and externally (by the public), which in turn helps the force to improve and better understand its use of the power.

During our inspection, we reviewed a sample of 263 stop and search records from 1 January to 31 December 2021. On the basis of this sample, we estimate that 66.5 percent (with a confidence interval of +/- 5.5 percent) of all stop and searches by the force during this period had reasonable grounds recorded. This presents a deterioration when compared with the findings from our previous review of records from 2019, where we found 76.9 percent (with a confidence interval of +/- 4.6 percent) of stop and searches had reasonable grounds recorded. Of the records we reviewed on people from ethnic minority backgrounds, 12 of 23 had reasonable grounds recorded.

Of the 263 records we reviewed, 34 percent weren't performed on reasonable grounds, 20 percent were considered 'weak grounds', 27 percent were considered 'moderate grounds' and 19 percent were performed on 'strong grounds'. The force must improve how officers record the grounds for stop and search or risk the public losing confidence in its use of these powers.

Figure 1: Reasonableness of grounds for Norfolk Constabulary stop and search cases in the year ending 31 December 2021



Main findings

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

The force works with diverse communities to understand what matters to them

The force's engagement strategy recognises that working with communities and giving people a platform to communicate are central to good and effective policing. Norfolk Constabulary has introduced the concept of hyperlocal communications, which means that communications and interactions are 'as local as possible'. The force has introduced local communications officers (LCOs) to lead the hyperlocal communications. The LCOs manage and monitor the local social media accounts for their area. They share information with the public about the force's work relating to crime, priorities, activities and outcomes. They also update communities on up-and-coming engagement events. Crucially, the role includes being proactive to concerns and complaints raised on social media, bringing them to the attention of local beat officers. This allows a swift and focused approach to the community problems raised.

The LCOs are focusing on those communities that traditionally interact less often with, or may have lower levels of trust and confidence in, the police. One example is an LCO who set up bimonthly meetings with representatives of the deaf community. She gave advice about fraud and raised awareness of the 'call 55' silent solutions

facility. This allows the caller, by dialling 55 once the 999 service has been accessed, to alert the police that they need help but can't speak.

Local beat officers are responsible for much of the routine work with communities and have a visible footprint in their areas. The force is making excellent use of StreetSafe, which is a national scheme for people to tell the police anonymously about public spaces where they feel unsafe because of poor street lighting or vandalism for example. The scheme has been used over 600 times in the county since it began in October 2021. The force regularly updates the public about what they have done to address concerns. Often this includes publishing photographs of officers at the notified location.

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

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

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

Norfolk Constabulary has an active public volunteer structure. On 31 March 2022, the force's special constabulary had 180 officers. The force told us that they completed 41,312 hours of duties in the 12 months leading up to 31 March 2022. There is also a very successful volunteer police and emergency services cadet scheme. It has 125 cadets throughout the county.

The force has 109 volunteers in various roles and locations. In the 12 months leading up to 31 March 2022, they completed 9,799 hours of work in support of the force. They volunteer in a range of areas, including:

- Community Speedwatch – to monitor those breaking the speed limit, to help reduce the number of people killed or injured on roads; and
- Appropriate Adult Service – where volunteers offer support and advice to young people in custody.

The force also works with Neighbourhood Watch schemes and has 1,066 co-ordinators.

The force's governance of stop and search, while comprehensive, isn't making sure that officers' use of the power is lawful

The force has internal and external scrutiny panels in place for the use of stop and search powers. A joint coercive powers board (with Suffolk Constabulary) is chaired

by an assistant chief constable. This board looks at the strategic and tactical use of all coercive powers and the data on each power. The data available to this board for stop and search is comprehensive, covering a wide range of areas including age, sex, ethnicity, the reason (object) for the search, and the outcomes of the search. The data allows the force to better understand how stop and search powers are being used to assure itself that the power is being used lawfully and reasonably.

Inspectors audit stop and search records every month. They use the information to learn about good and poor practice, amend training, and pass feedback to local commanders. Despite this, at a supervisory level it is the responsibility of sergeants to quality assure the stop and search records of their officers. This means they must check that the grounds recorded for the stop and search are reasonable. The high number of stop and searches where the grounds recorded aren't reasonable shows that this element of force governance needs to improve.

Officers are handcuffing compliant people during stop and searches in many instances where the use of handcuffs appears to be unjustified

Our review of [body-worn videos](#) of officers stopping and searching people showed a tendency for officers to use handcuffing almost as a matter of course. This was the case even when the subject was compliant and offered no resistance. Handcuffs should only be used where proportionate and necessary. This could be for example if the officer feels that the subject is posing a threat to themselves, the officer or others, to maintain control and prevent the subject from disposing of the object the officer was looking for, or to prevent the subject from escaping. The force should consider reviewing its use of handcuffing to make sure that officers only use handcuffs for stop and searches when the risks at that time justify it.

The force has improved its understanding of its use of force

Personal safety, [tactical communication](#) and use of force training are given during the officers' initial learning phase. Operational officers complete mandatory annual refresher training on the use of force. The force told us that the submission of use of force forms, which should be submitted for every use of force, has increased over the last 12 months.

The force recently assessed how it trains, uses and records its use of force. It has made changes to training to emphasise the need to submit forms for all uses of force and to clarify what constitutes a use of force. It commissioned a [peer review](#) in 2021, which has helped it gain a better understanding of this area. An independent external scrutiny panel process is in place, which will help the force achieve learning and good practice. This will help make sure that the use of force by its officers is justified and proportionate.

Preventing crime and anti-social behaviour

Good

Norfolk Constabulary is good at prevention and deterrence.

Area for improvement

The force should make sure problem-solving plans are better managed centrally and routinely assessed and evaluated, and that learning is made available to staff

The force is good at making use of problem-solving plans. However, only a few problem-solving plans have been subject to a full assessment at the point when the plans are finalised by the tactical advisors. The final assessment process should assess how successful the plan has been and, importantly, determine what works and make sure that learning is shared.

Officers aren't making use of the centralised recording hub on the force's data platform where all of the problem-solving plans should be kept. The force should consider how its problem-solving plans can be best serviced and managed. If this is via the centralised hub, they should make sure that it is easily accessible for staff and that they know how to make use of it.

By not always completing the final element of the [SARA \(scanning, analysis, response, and assessment\)](#) model, as they should, the force is missing opportunities to improve its problem-solving approach.

Main findings

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

The force is compliant with the College of Policing's neighbourhood policing guidelines, and with governance at a senior level

The force provides good neighbourhood policing, and it complies with the [College of Policing](#)'s neighbourhood policing guidelines. The force doesn't employ police community support officers (PCSOs). All neighbourhood policing activities are carried out by police officers, staff and volunteers, who are accessible and accountable to, and responsible for, their nominated communities. Staff working in problem-solving have been trained in its use, although wider training related to neighbourhood work could be considered.

Analytical support is available to staff taking part in problem-solving policing activities. Neighbourhood governance and performance meetings are focused on prevention. There is evidence of the force taking part in meetings and problem-solving with other organisations. An example is the monthly meeting that deals with ASB by bringing a range of local partners (housing, health, children's services) together to share information on and jointly tackle problems of ASB in their area. There is an active volunteer network in place.

The county policing commander is a member of the [National Police Chiefs' Council \(NPCC\)](#) neighbourhood policing steering group, which sets out the way ahead for neighbourhood policing. And as such the force is well informed regarding the development of local policing throughout the country.

The force uses evidence-based policing methods well

The force is making good use of evidenced-based policing methods and holds a joint evidence-based policing meeting with Suffolk Constabulary. This meeting is the commissioning body for bespoke research by officers and staff from the two forces. Examples include a detailed report on violent crime in Norfolk and Suffolk, the effect on the removal of PCSOs from Norfolk Constabulary and a report on 'missing from home' children. These reports are well researched and written. The meeting regularly produces a police research scanning document that contains links to various academic reports on a wide range of subjects that relate to the priorities of the forces. An evidenced-based journal is also regularly produced. This includes contributions from officers and staff who have undertaken academic study funded by the forces, in the form of MSc programmes with the Universities of Suffolk, Essex and London. Topics covered have included 'Evaluation of Demand Management Practices in UK Police Forces', 'Delivery of Reassurance Policing by Safer Neighbourhood Teams in Suffolk' and 'Maternity Matters: A Study of Police Officers' Perceptions and Experiences of Pregnancy, Maternity, and their Return to Work'. Importantly, officers and staff involved in problem-solving work have had training in the evidence-based approach.

The force achieves sustainable results by using a structured problem-solving model focused on understanding the root causes of crime and vulnerability

The chief constable's aim is for problem-solving to be a part of all elements of policing in Norfolk, not just neighbourhood policing. The force has work to do before it meets this goal, but officers taking part in neighbourhood policing are achieving results using the problem-solving approach. Importantly, they are all using the same model. Referred to as SARA, the model uses four stages: scanning, analysis, response and assessment. Problem-solving tactical advisors have been trained and deployed throughout the force area. They quality assure the problem-solving plans. Neighbourhood beat officers who are responsible for the problem-solving plans are good at this work and are making a difference in their communities.

The force tackles crime, incidents and vulnerability through a focus on prevention activity. It works in partnership with a wide range of other organisations in problem-solving, crime prevention and early intervention activity

The force focuses well on local priorities. Regular meetings direct resources appropriately at a county level and at a local district level. The focus of these meetings is on prevention and reducing crime and ASB, and decisions are made based on good analysis. Performance meetings at the force and local district level monitor the force's performance in preventing and tackling crime and ASB.

Organisations work alongside the force in reducing crime and ASB and are involved in meetings. Examples include the Norfolk Countywide Community Safety Partnership (NCCSP). The NCCSP includes the county council as well as all seven district councils, police, probation, fire and the office of the police and crime commissioner. The meeting is designed to make sure the partner organisations work together effectively to tackle crime and disorder in the county. Another more tactical example is a meeting between the police, the local council and health services that discusses people who make frequent use of public services. Each organisation at the meeting determines from its records the more problematic frequent callers, and the meeting will then decide the best way for the organisations to work together to help these people.

It is evident that the force's tasking and co-ordination groups are well structured and help to make sure that resources follow priorities. For the public to fully benefit from these processes, it is important that frontline officers receive high-quality briefings at the start of their duties. The force has recently reviewed and amended its briefing structure to help make sure briefings are focused and clearly direct officers to priorities. It is disappointing, therefore, that briefings for response officers are still of mixed quality, with some briefings being poor.

The force is using early intervention approaches with a focus on positive outcomes

The force is working with a wide range of other organisations in early intervention activity designed to stop people getting involved in criminal and risky behaviours. Much of this work is part-funded by the office of the police and crime commissioner (OPCC), and there are numerous examples of directed early intervention activity. These include Positive Futures, a collaboration with the Norwich City Community Sports Foundation, which is aimed at 11-to-13-year-olds who show signs (such as persistent absence from school) that they risk being drawn into crime and other inappropriate behaviours.

Managed by [St Giles Trust](#) in partnership with Future Projects, the Women Offenders of Norfolk Diversion, Engagement and Rehabilitation (WONDER+) Project works to help vulnerable women access the services and support needed to address the root causes of their offending or risk of offending. Numerous women have been referred to WONDER+ since it first began in 2018, and many have self-referred.

This early intervention approach means that people using the schemes are less likely to develop a range of problems later in life, such as poor physical and mental health, low educational attainment and criminal and anti-social behaviour.

The force has dedicated, effective teams that focus on working with partner organisation to reduce ASB

There are seven operational partnership teams (OPTs) throughout the force. They work with other organisations to deal with ASB and vulnerability. These teams are located at the county's Early Help hubs along with staff from the other organisations. The OPTs consider all ASB incidents and work with colleagues from the constabulary and partner organisations to resolve the causes of ASB, often using problem-solving plans. Weekly meetings with partner organisations make sure that identified issues are managed effectively. This includes discussions on which organisation has the most effective legal power to bring about change and improvements in behaviours. An example is the increase in incidents of ASB at King's Lynn bus station that was identified from police and council data. The council and constabulary worked together to address the problem.

In the year ending 31 March 2021, the force recorded 15.6 ASB incidents per 1,000 population. This is lower than the average for England and Wales, which was 33.9 per 1,000 population. In this period, the force recorded 14,296 incidents of ASB, the majority of which were categorised as Nuisance ASB (9,829) with another 3,134 categorised as Personal ASB. The force should reassure itself that it is recording all ASB incidents.

Responding to the public

Adequate

Norfolk Constabulary is adequate at responding to the public.

Areas for improvement

The force should make sure that call handlers use and correctly record structured initial triage and risk assessments, to decide on call prioritisation and the most appropriate response

In too many cases, a structured triage process isn't completed when it should be. Our victim service assessment found that call handlers used a structured triage process in only 15 out of 53 incidents reviewed. And when the process is used, the information gathered and recorded on the logs is, too often, limited. The need to conduct a structured triage also applies to crimes that are reported through other routes, such as online and via webchat. The force risks not identifying callers who are vulnerable, resulting in victim needs not being met.

The force should make sure that repeat callers and vulnerable victims are routinely identified

In too many cases call handlers aren't identifying repeat callers and vulnerable victims. Our victim service assessment found that checks to see if the call involved a repeat victim were only carried out in 34 out of 45 incidents reviewed. This means the callers who are repeat victims of crime may not receive an appropriate approach. Also, the force may not realise every opportunity to reduce the incidence of repeat victimisation. Checks to see if the call involved a vulnerable victim (or another vulnerable person) were also not always completed, as this took place in only 35 out of 48 incidents reviewed. And when such checks were made, they weren't always recorded on the incident system (this was done in only 16 out of 32 incidents).

The force needs to make sure that call takers give appropriate advice on crime prevention and the preservation of evidence

In too many cases, call handlers didn't give appropriate advice on preservation of evidence. Our victim service assessment found that call handlers aren't routinely giving advice on the preservation of evidence (this only happened in 11 out of 27 incidents reviewed). This means that evidence could be potentially lost or degraded, to the detriment of the investigation. Similarly, the opportunity to give crime prevention advice was often not taken (only in 24 out of 40 incidents reviewed). This means the force didn't routinely take opportunities to prevent further crimes.

Innovative practice

Call handling management

The force has a telephone system that allows switchboard staff to assess the call and assign it to one of many different call queues. These queues are risk-related. This means that a call to report a crime will be in a higher priority call queue than a call related to an advice and guidance request. The system helps call handlers in the control room (CCR) to better prioritise calls as the system makes sure that higher priority calls are dealt with first.

Main findings

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

The force is effective at answering emergency calls and is improving its non-emergency call handling

On 31 May 2022, the Home Office published data on 999 call answering times. Call answering time is the time taken for a call to be transferred to a force, and the time taken by that force to answer it. In England and Wales, forces should aim to answer 90 percent of these calls within 10 seconds.

Since the Home Office hadn't published this data at the time we made our judgment, we have used data provided by forces to assess how quickly they answer 999 calls. In future we will use the data supplied by the Home Office.

The force is effective at answering emergency calls for service. The force told us that in the year ending 31 December 2021, it answered 99.8 percent of 999 calls. However, it needs to do more, as it is answering around 87 percent of emergency calls in under 10 seconds when the national standard is 90 percent. The force

receives more non-emergency ([101](#)) calls than the England and Wales rate (346 per 1,000 population compared to 267 per 1,000 population in the year ending September 2021). Performance data from the force shows that in the year ending 31 December 2021 it failed to answer around 19 percent of non-emergency calls transferred into the CCR from the switchboard. The force has improved this performance, and in the period 1 January to 30 April 2022 it failed to answer around 14 percent of non-emergency calls transferred into the CCR from the switchboard.

The force is making an effort to improve its call handling of both emergency and non-emergency calls. It is partway through a three-year plan to improve performance that is based on detailed analytical assessment of demand, resource, shift pattern and likely future demand in the CCR. Performance data from the force shows that non-emergency call handling performance was improving in the early months of 2022.

The force has detailed performance data for call-handling and incident management, and is using it to better match resource to demand

The force has detailed data on the calls received by the CCR. The data includes abandonment rates for both emergency and non-emergency calls, the time taken to answer the calls, the time taken to abandon, and how long calls were once they had been answered. The data available includes breakdowns of calls received from a variety of routes including 101 Night Service, yellow phones outside police stations, and calls from partner agencies. The force uses software that projects the likely call handling demand, based on historical data, and projects the number of call handlers the force will need to meet the demand.

Incident management data is also very detailed and includes the time taken to attend all incidents. Incident response targets are 15 minutes for urban and 20 minutes for rural incidents. The force consistently attends incidents within its target times, and it consistently deploys the right type of resource to incidents. For non-emergency calls that are assessed as not requiring a rapid response, the force uses an appointment system, which is effective and gives a good service to the public.

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

The public can report crime in various ways, other than by phone. These include completing an online form on the force's website. People can also report crime via email and at police station front counters. A webchat function is available on the force website between 8am and 4pm five days a week. A dedicated communications officer is responsible for this service. The website offers guidance and online reporting routes for 15 types of call/crime including via email and online chat. It also offers an 'ask a question' service that will reply within five days. The public can report crime over the phone to a dedicated team, who will record and investigate the crime over the phone. This team, Op Solve, investigates non-urgent/low-risk offences suitable for this type of desktop investigation. Examples include shoplifting, evading payment (bilking),

low-level criminal damage, and some vehicle-related crimes. Op Solve is providing a good service to the public.

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

The force has an information-sharing arrangement with the Norfolk & Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust. This means relevant information can be shared when dealing with incidents involving people with mental health problems. The arrangement also allows for mental health nurses to be used in the CCR, and for them to crew the triage car used to assess vulnerable people or people in crisis at the scene of an incident.

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

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

Response officer workloads can be high, and officers are being allocated more serious crimes due to high demand

Uniformed officers are being allocated 49 percent of all recorded crime coming into the force for investigation. This is in addition to their primary role of attending incidents. The force is aware of the high workload. Force performance meetings use very detailed data to understand what the levels of demand are and what crimes are being allocated to response officers. Crimes being allocated to response officers include robberies and dwelling burglaries. There is evidence of crime investigation department (CID) oversight and support for the response officers. More serious crimes, and their allocation, are discussed at the daily management meeting to try and achieve the appropriate allocation and support. Overtime is being used in some instances to reduce the demand.

In the year ending 30 September 2021 the force recorded 174,524 incidents on its command and control system. This equates to an average of around 500 incidents a day and 191 per 1,000 population. Of these incidents, 44,078 (25 percent) were 'A' grade emergency incidents and 53,391 (31 percent) were dealt with over the phone or at a police station front counter. Response officers are directly responsible for around 50 percent of this incident demand.

Despite the levels of demand, response officers are coping well and being supported by leaders. But the force will need to make sure that its operating model stays fit for purpose.

The force thoroughly assesses a victim’s vulnerability and risk at the initial attendance of domestic abuse incidents. And officers determine risks relating to other vulnerable people within a household to make sure there is effective safeguarding, such as for children and older people

Officers complete [domestic abuse, stalking and harassment \(DASH\) forms](#) at incidents of domestic abuse, and these are reviewed by the shift sergeant. The force is moving from the DASH process to using the domestic abuse risk assessment (DARA) model. This focuses on the perpetrator, whereas the DASH process focuses on the victim. It is expected that the DARA approach will better meet the victim’s needs by improving understanding of the risks posed to the victim by the perpetrator. Frontline officers have a good knowledge of safeguarding and the DASH process. And they are aware of the need to check for a range of potential vulnerabilities at the scene, including children in the household. However, this focus on safeguarding and establishing of risk to victims isn’t translating into arrest rates that are in line with the England and Wales average. The force is below the average.

In cases where the risk is high or medium in a DASH assessment, the domestic abuse safeguarding team (DAST) carry out secondary safeguarding work. Cases assessed as being standard risk are subject to regular audit. And external and internal scrutiny panels offer further review and feedback on the quality of risk assessment.

The force has an arrangement with partner agencies including the East of England Ambulance Service, allowing trained officers to provide lifesaving medicine in some cases

The force has made an arrangement with Norfolk County Council, CGL Change Grow Live (Norfolk), and the East of England Ambulance Service (EEAST) to authorise trained officers to administer Naloxone. This medicine is given via the nostril and temporarily reverses the effects of overdose of opioids such as heroin, methadone, fentanyl, oxycodone, buprenorphine and morphine. This arrangement will likely improve outcomes for some of those who overdose within the county. It is part of the force’s approach to [county lines](#) activity and drug activity in the county.

Investigating crime

Adequate

Norfolk Constabulary is adequate at investigating crime.

Areas for improvement

The force should reassess the training and direction it has taken, to improve crime supervision and investigation quality

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

Structured governance supports the force's efforts to improve its crime investigations. Performance meetings focus on this, supported by regular audits of crimes. These consider and comment on areas such as investigation plans, supervisory reviews, victim safeguarding, and updates and lessons learned.

It is clear, however, that the force has responded positively to our critique of the quality of investigations in 2019. Investigations are now being carried out more effectively than in 2019, but improvements still need to be made. In this inspection we found that out of 90 investigations we reviewed, only 70 were effective. More needs to be done as too many investigations still lack supervisory oversight, and investigation plans aren't being routinely used by officers.

The force needs to make sure it complies with the Victims' Code

Under the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime, a needs assessment must be conducted at an early stage to decide whether victims fall into one of the three priority categories: victims of the most serious crimes; persistently targeted victims; and vulnerable or intimidated victims. If victims fall into these categories, special measures can be used to support them to give the best evidence in court, and these should be explained to the victim. The force isn't always conducting the needs assessment.

The code also states that when a suspect is identified but there are evidential difficulties in taking a prosecution forward, the victim should be informed of the decision to finalise the investigation. We found that not all victims were told by the force of the decision to take no further action and finalise the crime. We also found that victim personal statements were often not considered. This means that victims aren't always given the opportunity for their voices to be heard. This could lead to victims no longer contributing to investigations, not supporting prosecutions and losing faith in the criminal justice process.

The force should make sure that there is an auditable record of the decision of the victim and their reasons for withdrawal of support. The force should make sure it records whether evidence-led prosecutions have been considered in all such cases

When a victim decides to withdraw support for an investigation, known as [outcome 16](#), or wishes for it to be dealt with by an [out-of-court disposal](#) or a caution, an auditable record of the victim's wishes, such as a signed statement, needs to be obtained. This is important as it gives a record of the victim's wishes and the reasons why they don't want to support a prosecution. In many cases these wishes aren't recorded.

Innovative practice

Victim-centred crime allocation

In Norfolk Constabulary the crime allocation policy means investigations are allocated using effective processes based on an assessment of threat, risk and harm. These processes allow the force to meet a wide range of crime demand. The policy follows the principles of professional, victim-centred discussion and providing an appropriate service, rather than being prescriptive on who will eventually take responsibility for the investigation.

Main findings

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

Norfolk Constabulary is charging or summoning above the national average

Norfolk Constabulary is among the best forces for charging or summoning crimes. In the year ending 30 September 2021 Norfolk Constabulary charged or summonsed 9 percent of crime investigations. This is higher than the England and Wales rate, which is 7 percent for this same time period.

Data for the year ending 31 December 2021, released since we conducted our inspection, shows that the proportion of charge/summons outcomes is now much higher than the England and Wales average.

The increase in demand and procedural changes mean that it is taking longer to bring cases to a charge or summons. On average in the year ending 31 March 2020, it was taking the force 177 days to bring a sexual offence to a charge or summons. In the year ending 31 March 2021, it took 283 days. Similarly, for violence against the person cases, in the year ending 31 March 2020 it was taking the force, on average, 7 days to bring a charge or summons. In the year ending 31 March 2021 it took 32 days.

The force is working hard to reduce the time that cases take and has employed police digital investigators (PDIs) to support detective constables with the digital element of their investigations and speed up investigations. It has also moved some uniformed officers to help detectives investigate more serious investigations such as [rape and serious sexual offences \(RASSO\)](#). These officers support the investigations by taking witness and some victim statements and collecting evidence from the scene such as CCTV. This is helping speed up these investigations, meaning that the victim is more likely to have a good experience and a better outcome.

The force is improving its management of investigations where a statutory time limit applies

A crime that can only be prosecuted at magistrates' court must commence a prosecution within six months of the offence. This is a statutory time limit that applies to many offences. We found the force had little oversight of these offences. To rectify this it has developed a data pack that shows those investigations that are subject, or likely to become subject, to statutory time limits. The data is presented in a format that shows the number of days left within the statutory limits. Cases within eight weeks of the time limit are highlighted in yellow. Those that are six weeks from the limit are highlighted in red. There is a link in the dashboard for help and advice. Supervisors are using the data pack to better manage these types of investigations, and senior leaders are using the data to inform performance meetings.

The force is developing new operating ‘hubs’ where investigators are brought together to work

The force has built a ‘hub’ at Swaffham and is in the process of building another on the outskirts of Norwich. These hubs bring together investigatory teams from various stations around the county. This is allowing better supervision and support while helping to create a good team environment. The hubs offer an excellent space to work. We found that officers working from the Swaffham hub were very positive about the environment and team spirit.

The move to hubs does create distance between investigators and uniformed officers who have stayed at their local stations and haven’t moved to the hubs. Leaders are aware of the risk of a disconnect between uniformed and investigative staff. They are actively working to make sure relationships are maintained and developed using technical solutions such as video conferencing as well as more traditional methods. Response officers recognised the potential problems but most reported that it was very easy to get hold of an investigator when they needed to speak to one for advice.

The force has effective crime screening processes and is consistent in its approach to the allocation of investigations to appropriate teams (but it is facing pressure)

We found the arrangements for allocating recorded crimes for investigation were in accordance with the force policy. In nearly all cases the crime was allocated to the most appropriate department for further investigation.

The number of crime investigations in the force is reasonably high, and in some areas there has been an increase. National procedural changes mean that it takes longer to prepare case files, comply with [disclosure](#) rules and gather evidence from electronic devices. This extra work has been taken on by existing teams.

Rape and other serious sexual offences (RASSO) have continued to increase. The force told us that in the year ending 31 January 2022 they recorded 1,078 rapes and 1,428 other serious sexual offences. RASSO investigations are done by PIP2 (level 2 [professionalising investigation programme](#)) investigators. Despite the volume of such cases, we found that most of the staff were managing the demand well with good support from supervisors.

The force has a desktop investigations unit (Op Solve) that is responsible for investigating around 30 percent of reported crime. The unit investigates non-urgent and low-risk offences such as some thefts and criminal damage, primarily by speaking to the victim on the telephone. The unit is partly made up of officers on recuperative postings. These officers are based at various stations throughout the force and with some working from home.

The unit is good at recognising crime trends and series, such as a series of linked criminal damages or thefts. When this occurs, they collect all available information and carry out all possible desk-based investigative actions, collate all the information on a document, then hand over to the appropriate investigative unit. If a suspect is identified, the unit will pass the investigation over to a response officer, who will continue to investigate the case and interview the suspect.

There are some risks and areas to consider. Online reports of crime are channelled straight through to the unit without any review or assessment. And despite the online reporting system explaining the criteria for online reporting, members of the public don't always follow them, and report crimes like sexual offences and domestic abuse incidents. This can mean a delay as it might take the unit a few days to reach these cases if there is a build-up of work.

Where the unit deals with an incident involving a child, they will sometimes need to submit a child referral. However, they will almost always have spoken only to the parent or adult and not the child. This doesn't consider the '[voice of the child](#)'.

The force has successfully encouraged officers to pursue a detective career, including direct entry detectives

As of 31 March 2021, Norfolk Constabulary had 93 percent of posts that need officers to be at level 2 of the professionalising investigation programme (PIP2) filled with accredited investigators or trainee investigators. Fully qualified PIP2 investigators equate to 62 percent (214 of 343 posts).

The force complies with national PIP2 standards, so that an officer who fails the entrance exam twice is returned to uniform or other duties. To help officers pass the exam the force offers support with mentors and mock exam papers.

The force has a fast-track detectives programme, with support and help in place. This includes an informative 16-page document with an introduction by the chief constable that gives an insight into life as a detective and explains what potential candidates will be doing if they're successful. Direct entry detectives are allocated a tutor to help with their development. The force told us it had recruited 69 direct entry detectives in the year ending 31 January 2022. These officers are being well received by the rest of the workforce.

The force is investing in supporting digital investigations

The force has a mature, collaborative digital approach with Suffolk Constabulary. A Digital Strategy 2021–26 is in place, as is suitable governance to support the provision of the aims and objectives of the strategy. And the mid-term financial plan (MTFP) reflects the forces' intentions in this area. Investment includes the recruitment of police digital investigators and the development of software to support investigations. An example of this is the development of software to transcribe WhatsApp voice messages into a format that can be searched. In one case where this software was used, the force estimated that it saved around 1,000 hours of officer time. The force has advertised for interns in the Cambridge Silicon Fen area and is working with colleges and universities to try to recruit students directly into its digital units.

The force faced delays of around six months in the processing of laptops and other electronic devices submitted for [digital forensic](#) examination through 2021. The delays were caused by a lack of staff to do the work, partly due to staff leaving to work for the Eastern Region Special Operations Unit (ERSOU). The force has resolved these problems and the delays have reduced greatly to an average of slightly less than three months. The lead officer for the area has introduced a performance meeting to better understand and manage demand and performance. The force told us that in July 2021 they had over 800 devices awaiting examination. By June 2022 this has been reduced to 385 devices awaiting examination. Of these, 60 devices had been waiting over 6 months for examination. These devices had been risk-assessed and prioritised.

Supervisors are trying to reduce the demand by completing a triage at searches conducted under the powers of a court warrant and searches after arrest, to reduce the number of devices being seized.

Protecting vulnerable people

Adequate

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

Area for improvement

The force should make sure that ancillary orders such as Domestic Violence Protection Notices (DVPNs) or Orders (DVPOs) are considered in all appropriate cases

In the year ending 30 September 2021 the force applied for 2.3 DVPNs per 1,000 domestic abuse-related crimes recorded. This is a reduction from the year ending 30 September 2019, when the force applied for 7.7 DVPNs per 1,000 domestic abuse-related crimes recorded. We reviewed ten cases where ancillary orders such as DVPNs, DVPOs and [Stalking Protection Orders](#) should have been considered. Ancillary orders were considered in only two of these cases.

Officers understand the importance of ancillary orders to protect victims and know the routes through which they are obtained. Those responsible for authorising the orders told us that officers are making requests and that they are approving many of them. Guidance is readily available on the force's intranet.

The force should make sure that officers are aware of their safeguarding responsibilities beyond the initial safeguarding

Officers we spoke to understand their safeguarding responsibilities upon attendance at the scene. But they didn't always understand how safeguarding continued beyond their initial actions. They understand that [positive action](#) at the scene of domestic abuse cases is important, and that this often takes the form of arrest. Detainees are often handed over by the arresting officer to the prisoner handling team in the custody suite. Arresting officers are much less clear as to their safeguarding responsibilities when this happens. There is a gap in the process after arrest in that if a detainee is interviewed and then released, they are occasionally bailed back to the arresting officer. If that officer isn't on duty and on rest days, there can be a delay of several days. Suspects released on police [bail](#) must have that bail extended by a magistrates' court after three months. If this isn't done, the suspect reverts to [release under investigation \(RUI\)](#) rules. In these cases, the officer leading the case needs to be aware of what safeguarding needs to be in place as the bail conditions will no longer be applicable. Some officers weren't clear about their responsibilities in these cases. This means that vulnerable victims may not be given the safeguarding protection that they need.

Main findings

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

The force's governance of the service given to vulnerable people is strong and effective

The College of Policing has designated the 13 main disciplines of public protection.¹ These have become known as the 13 strands of vulnerability, and they are addressed in the National Vulnerability Action Plan (NVAP). The force's own plan reflects the NVAP precisely.

Force performance meetings and boards designed to oversee priorities give the force effective overview and management of vulnerability. An important meeting is the safeguarding and investigation (S&I) tasking meeting, chaired by the head of the S&I command. The meeting reviews current priorities and potential areas of increasing concern in detail, using a risks log to help in this process. The meeting is very well attended, informed and chaired, meaning that the force can stay focused on what matters in this important area.

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

Performance monitoring is an essential part of the force's approach to vulnerability, and it uses bespoke analysis. An example is the Norfolk Domestic Abuse Performance Report, which includes detailed data and analysis of domestic abuse in the county. The domestic abuse delivery group offers focused review and critical assessment of strategic issues and individual cases where appropriate.

Partnership governance is also good. The force works well with partner organisations and is signed up to the Norfolk Safeguarding Children Partnership strategy on child sexual exploitation (CSE) and protecting adolescents from extra-familial harm. The force attends many partnership vulnerability meetings including the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership Group, Neglect Strategy Implementation Group, New Roads Implementation Board, Norfolk Safeguarding Children Partnership and the Vulnerable Adolescent Group.

There is a multi-agency audit group (MAAG) whose purpose is to improve the safeguarding of children by reviewing how the partner organisations work together and by addressing recommendations from [serious case reviews](#)/safeguarding practice reviews.

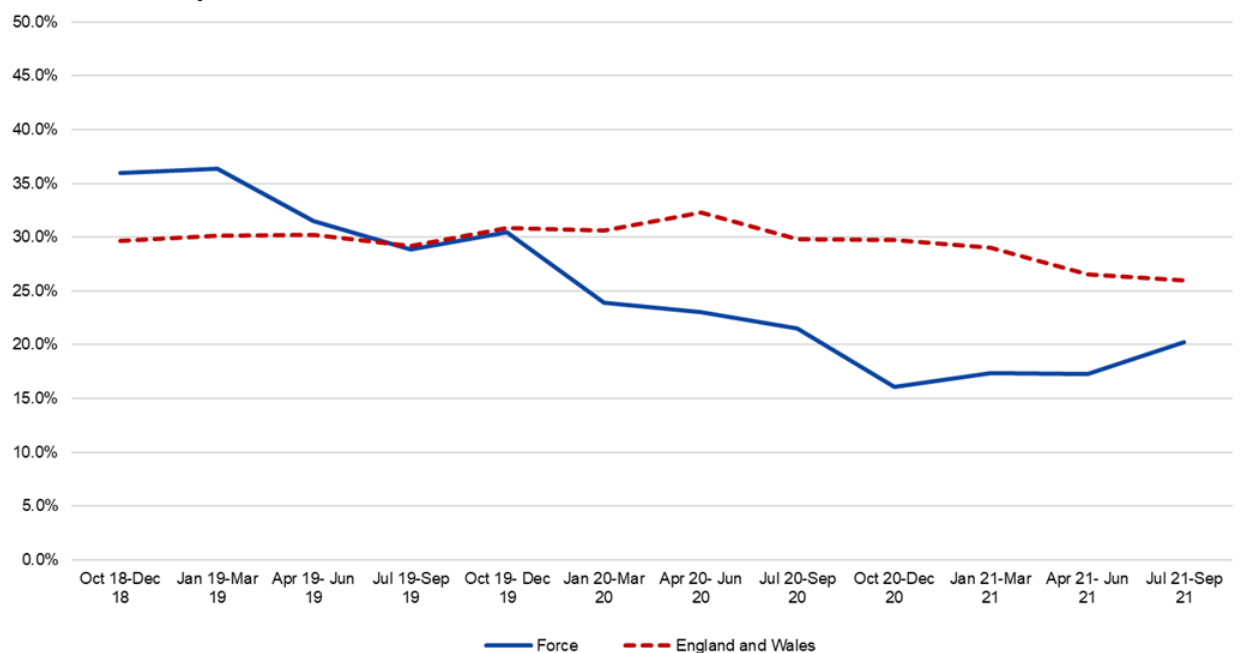
The force is below the England and Wales average for arrest rate at domestic abuse incidents

The force is arresting lower numbers of suspects for domestic abuse incidents than the average throughout England and Wales. The force is aware of this and has worked to improve its performance, for example by showing staff video briefings from a [chief officer](#) pointing out that consideration of arrest should always be in an officer's mind. Despite this the force remains well below the national average.

In the year ending 30 September 2021, Norfolk Constabulary had a domestic abuse arrest rate of 17 percent. This was lower than the England and Wales rate, which was 28 percent.

The force's domestic abuse arrest rate has been lower than the England and Wales rate since July to September 2019. Prior to this, it had been higher than the England and Wales rate.

Figure 2: Domestic abuse arrest rate over time for Norfolk Constabulary from 1 October 2018 to 30 September 2021



Failing to take positive action such as arrest may mean that a victim is left in a vulnerable position.

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

The force has a single [multi-agency safeguarding hub \(MASH\)](#). The MASH allows the sharing of information between services, so risks to children can be identified at an early stage. It is a link between schools, GPs, the police, the ambulance service and social care.

There is a backlog of around 400 medium-risk domestic abuse cases in the MASH. To reduce this, the force has changed the way this queue is managed. Riskier cases can now be more easily identified and prioritised for review. Previously the cases were reviewed chronologically without any process to establish which cases held the greater risk. Staff in the MASH like the new approach and recognise it as a more effective process. Early indications suggest that the backlog will quickly reduce because of the approach taken.

The force works closely with other organisations and makes good use of their data to establish and protect those at most risk of harm or of becoming repeat victims. This includes young people who are in danger of harm by frequently going missing, or others involved with drugs supply or other forms of exploitation. An example is the Early Help hubs throughout Norfolk where organisations, including Norfolk Constabulary, that work with vulnerable children, families and, increasingly, adults, work together from the same building to help vulnerable people resolve their problems.

The force is working with partner agencies to help children and young people who are known to be at risk of child exploitation and/or serious youth violence

The Exploitation Operational Oversight Forum is intended to help the force and its partner agencies improve outcomes for children and young people who are known to be at risk of child exploitation and/or serious youth violence. The organisations involved include children's services, Youth Offending and education. The forum discusses children and young people to try to make sure that all cases are well managed and co-ordinated, and that all relevant organisations have taken all possible action to protect victims.

The force has moved from the formal MARAC meeting structure to a new online process

A [multi-agency risk assessment conference \(MARAC\)](#) is a meeting on the highest-risk domestic abuse cases. It is attended by representatives of several organisations including police, probation, health, child protection, housing practitioners, [independent domestic violence advisers](#) and other specialists from the statutory and voluntary sectors. These organisations share all relevant information about a victim before discussing options to improve the safety of the victim and develop a co-ordinated action plan.

Norfolk Constabulary, along with its partner organisations, no longer convenes a traditional MARAC meeting as it was felt the previous model wasn't working effectively. Partner organisations didn't always attend or contribute, and there were delays in safeguarding because referrals were made but no action was taken until the next MARAC meeting. The intention of the new model is to make sure that, while there is no live discussion which takes place at a meeting, views of partner agencies are sought and risks considered at the earliest opportunity. The new process is primarily an online one whereby organisations email their information on a victim to a central point. The police then complete an assessment, and the decisions are recorded and actions allocated to organisations for completion. The police are now the de facto MARAC chair in the new process, which is very much a police-led process. An officer makes decisions about actions and is responsible for making sure that cases are safeguarded.

The intention is that the new MARAC process will be incorporated into the Norfolk Integrated Domestic Abuse Service (NIDAS). This offers free, confidential and non-judgmental support to those affected by domestic abuse, and their children, to help them escape and recover from abuse. By incorporating the process into the NIDAS, the force expects to be able to deal quickly and effectively with both high and medium-risk domestic abuse cases.

The force has recently set up safeguarding scrutiny panels to track the service for the victim. This should uncover what gaps there are in the new process.

We will continue to monitor this new approach over the coming months.

The force is trying to reduce the number of victims who don't support, or withdraw their support for, an investigation and prosecution

In the year ending September 2021, 32 percent of victim-based crimes recorded by the force resulted in an outcome 16, which was higher than expected. Outcome 16 is where a suspect has been identified but the victim doesn't support an investigation and there are evidential difficulties. The force recognises that where a victim decides not to give a formal evidential account, some investigations are being closed too quickly and without gathering all the evidence in line with an evidence-led approach.

To help combat this, the force has begun a pilot scheme called the Victim Engagement Subject Matter Expert (VESME). Through this scheme, dedicated officers work with victims who withdraw support for a prosecution, or are likely to do so. The aim of the scheme is to keep these victims engaged and supportive of the investigation and prosecution. Officers have already been trained and deployed. Governance is provided, and the force's domestic abuse delivery group will review the pilot later in 2022.

Managing offenders and suspects

Good

Norfolk Constabulary is good at managing offenders and suspects.

Area for improvement

The force should review its capacity to manage the risk posed by registered sex offenders. It should review its policy in relation to deviation away from authorised professional practice (APP) regarding reactively managed offenders

Sex offender management processes in the force are under pressure due to the levels of demand, and the force doesn't follow APP. It allows some offenders who have a court order to be reduced to [reactive management](#). This prevents officers from taking steps to enforce the court order during home visits. It also renders restrictive measures sanctioned by a court for the purpose of risk management redundant.

Main findings

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

There is a clear policy and process for dealing with outstanding suspects. These are subject to effective governance and are understood by frontline staff and supervisors

The force's management of outstanding suspects is strong and clear. This includes an understanding of how and when to circulate suspects' details on the [police national computer \(PNC\)](#), and how to manage this while it works to locate suspects.

Outstanding suspects are risk-assessed. Details of those considered to be high risk are discussed in the force's daily management meeting. Daily priorities and resource allocation are then approved.

Local policing teams manage lower-risk outstanding suspects. This includes circulating monthly throughout the force, to operational inspectors and above, the details of all outstanding suspects. This briefing outlines how to manage outstanding suspects, with links to policy and process. The aim is to make sure staff have the information and motivation to investigate and locate the outstanding suspects, and that suitable supervisory direction is recorded.

The force manages pre-charge bail well through its bail app

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

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

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

The force is managing the risk posed by registered sex offenders (RSOs), but demand is high

The unit managing RSOs is fully staffed, including polygraph-trained officers. They are all trained in [active risk management system \(ARMS\)](#) procedures and other risk assessment tools. The staff understand the processes and are confident in using them to develop risk management plans (RMPs) for individual RSOs. Intelligence checks are conducted but they are routinely limited to internal police systems, and checks aren't habitually done on the Police National Database (PND). Checks don't regularly include enhanced intelligence checks such as social media. This reduces the opportunity to gather information from a variety of sources or to test accounts given by RSOs to accurately determine the risk they pose. Markers are placed on the force's crime recording system to alert officers about the RSO status of an individual. But similar markers aren't routinely added to the force's incident management system.

As of 31 March 2021, Norfolk had 1,163 offenders in the community and an additional 251 in custody. This means that staff caseloads are high, averaging around 77 active cases per officer. Staff report that these numbers are unmanageable and unsustainable. The force told us that there has been a 22 percent increase in (or an additional 215) RSOs in the community since 2016, and overall demand has increased by 34 percent since 2017.

The proportion of visits to RSOs completed by staff fell in the year ending 31 December 2021. In January 2021 the force told us they had completed 91 percent of visits. But by December 2021 this had reduced to 73 percent of visits completed. Backlogs in visits to RSOs are highlighted to senior managers monthly. At the time of

our inspection there were 59 visits outstanding throughout the force. Some of these were for high-risk RSOs and one for a very high-risk RSO.

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

There were 74 [sexual harm prevention orders \(SHPOs\)](#) issued in Norfolk in the year ending 31 March 2021, with 21 breaches recorded.

The force has systems in place to identify and take prompt action against those who may be sharing indecent images of children

The force assesses referrals concerning indecent images of children quickly. The team that conducts these investigations is well staffed, with officers who are well trained and dedicated to their work. At the time of our inspection there was a small backlog: 2 cases awaiting enforcement action and 35 cases yet to be assessed. A regular performance meeting reviews outcomes and helps establish patterns, trends and concerns at an early stage. The unit works well with other units such as the MASH to make sure that safeguarding takes place wherever possible. In all cases heard at court, an SHPO is applied for.

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

The force has a detailed policy for managing people that are on the IOM scheme. The force works with Suffolk Constabulary to manage all those on the IOM programme. This is known as the '180 Scheme' in both Norfolk and Suffolk. All people on the IOM are discussed at the regular panel meetings led by the IOM lead, and decisions are made. At these meetings, there are clear procedures that follow the national operating model for adopting new offenders onto the scheme. The cohort is subject to constant review, and the IOM staff are certain that they are getting the right people on the scheme. There are around 135 people on the Norfolk IOM scheme at present. The force has developed a glossy leaflet for offenders who may be suitable to be taken onto the IOM scheme. This outlines details of what support is available, and to some extent, what the offender can expect.

The IOM team works closely with the probation provider, sharing office space. Members of the IOM team are appropriately trained. As well as having been through the appropriate and mandated police training, they also take part in joint training with the probation service. The force is using the Home Office provided system (IDIOM) that uses data on arrests, charges and courts and other outcomes for identified individuals, to understand the costs vs benefits of the IOM scheme. The force is working hard in the area of repeat offenders. This includes giving local police commanders regular data on repeat offenders, to help them allocate tasks.

The force has recently developed a domestic abuse perpetrator scheme. This is a multi-agency approach designed to identify and manage the highest-risk domestic abuse perpetrators in Norfolk. The team work on a one-to-one basis, with perpetrators completing different modules over five to six months. The aim is for those taking part to understand their behaviour and trigger points and how to deal with their behaviour to prevent it from happening again.

Disrupting serious organised crime

We now inspect [serious and organised crime \(SOC\)](#) on a regional basis, rather than inspecting each force individually in this area. This is so we can be more effective and efficient in how we inspect the whole SOC system, as set out in HM Government's SOC strategy.

SOC is tackled by each force working with [regional organised crime units \(ROCU\)](#). These units lead the regional response to SOC by providing access to specialist resources and assets to disrupt [organised crime groups](#) that pose the highest harm.

Through our new inspections we seek to understand how well forces and ROCUs work in partnership. As a result, we now inspect ROCUs and their forces together and report on regional performance. Forces and ROCUs are now graded and reported on in regional SOC reports.

Our SOC inspection of Norfolk Constabulary hasn't yet been completed. We will update our website with our findings (including the force's grade) and a link to the regional report once the inspection is complete.

Building, supporting and protecting the workforce

Good

Norfolk Constabulary is good at building and developing its workforce.

Innovative practice

The force has developed an excellent virtual work experience for teenagers

It was recognised that there were limited opportunities in Norfolk Constabulary for teenagers who wanted to do their work experience with the force. To remedy this, the force has developed a virtual experience where successful applicants, over a week, work their way through the 'case' of a missing schoolgirl, which leads to the stop and search of a male and his arrest.

Uptake has been high, with more applicants than can be accommodated. The force can take 60 onto the scheme twice a year. Those who have taken part in the experience have given very positive feedback and several have applied for roles within the force.

Main findings

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

The force promotes an ethical and inclusive culture and all levels of the workforce have a strong sense of belonging

Most staff spoke of being well led and said that the chief constable and other [senior officers](#) were ethical and approachable. They told us that senior officers, including the chief constable, sent letters and emails directly to officers and staff to thank them for good work. The force supports several staff associations whose representatives stated that the force makes staff feel valued. All new starters including transferees are allocated a buddy on their first day to help ease them into Norfolk Constabulary. Feedback from those who have used the scheme has been positive. There is an

ethics board, but we found that not many members of the workforce were aware of it and what it does. The force should try to improve awareness of the board to make sure that its value is realised. However, the workforce did know how to raise problems and concerns and told us that they were confident in doing so. The approach taken by the chief constable and his senior command team is creating a positive working environment. This in turn increases the potential for all the workforce to contribute to effective policing.

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

The force's wellbeing plan strives for a stigma-free, supportive, proactive service where people feel safe and well at work. The four themes of the plan are workplace health, health and safety, provision of [trauma risk management \(TRIM\)](#), and wellbeing. The force uses a variety of methods to determine, inform and understand risks and threats to workforce wellbeing and their underlying causes. These include staff surveys and the Police Federation pay and morale survey 2020. Based on the findings from this work, the force, in collaboration with Suffolk Constabulary, is reviewing flexible working arrangements. It may continue with some of the positive working arrangements that came about as part of the force's approach to COVID-19.

There is a network of wellbeing champions (who are officers on the ground) and wellbeing advisors. The force, in collaboration with Suffolk Constabulary, has two full-time wellbeing advisors. The force promotes peer support groups covering several topics including maternity and cancer support. The workforce is positive about the wellbeing provision, such as support for return to work and the employee assistance line that staff can self-refer to.

There have been bespoke campaigns relating to women's health, mindfulness and nutrition. Efforts to improve in this area are ongoing, and the force recently carried out an exercise to recruit mental health first aiders from among the staff. There is an employee assistance programme (EAP) to help support staff wellbeing. The EAP is run by an external company and offers a 24/7 telephone advice service for staff. The programme also provides advice and guidance to line managers to help them when dealing with their staff. Support and advice on mental health problems and financial and legal issues are offered. The service can be accessed by the individual affected or anyone else looking for advice on how to support the individual. The force has appointed an external provider of counselling welfare support to which the workforce can self-refer.

The force supports the welfare and wellbeing of volunteers. The special constabulary has the same access to internal welfare services as regular officers. Police support volunteers don't have access to the external counselling welfare support, but the force helps where it can. The force recognises that high demand could harm the wellbeing of the workforce. It is managing this issue well and so the effect on the workforce is reduced.

The force has achieved the needs of the policing education qualifications framework (PEQF) initial entry routes

The force reassessed its recruitment processes to meet the needs of PEQF. Following due diligence, Anglia Ruskin University was selected as the preferred higher education institute. The pandemic delayed implementation of PEQF to April 2022. Locally, work continued on the programme, and workstreams progressed well in all areas to meet the implementation date. The force is making good use of external marketers to help with conceptual ideas for marketing and recruitment. This includes the use of focus groups with external contributors to understand people's views and perceptions of policing in Norfolk. The idea is to shape recruitment campaigns to meet the candidate requirements of the future. The force has a positive action plan and a positive action co-ordinator, who helps with recruitment and community involvement through schools, colleges and recruitment fairs.

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

The force has a career management approach for officers and staff that helps them build successful careers in the organisation

The force has a joint leadership development programme with Suffolk Constabulary called Leading with Care. It is, at one level, designed to develop and progress those deemed strategic leaders of the future. Another level is in place as the equivalent for sergeant and police staff. The programme is tied into staff and officers' annual professional development reviews and is needed on the route toward promotion. It links to the College of Policing's Senior Leadership Programme. It suggests routes to encourage and support underrepresented groups via the ASPIRE Leadership programme. It also gives support to new supervisors and advice on having difficult conversations. There are 300 or so people on the programme, of whom around 100 are police staff members. The programme is allowing the force to develop its workforce and helps staff build successful careers within, and in some cases outside, the organisation.

The force is building its workforce effectively for the future

The force is working to make sure that it can build its workforce effectively for the future. It understands its recruitment needs and has an effective plan to meet them. The force actively looks for opportunities for collaboration in line with its statutory responsibilities. The collaboration with Suffolk Constabulary has been restructured so that recruitment of both police officers and police staff is now centralised. This is to support the Police Uplift Programme, the government's programme to increase the number of police officers. The force has a three-year forecasting plan for recruitment. The plan considers both uplift and attritions through people leaving the force for reasons such as retirement or for a new job. The force considers which areas of recruitment to prioritise; for example the CID, which is short of applicants. In light of this, the force continues to run a highly successful fast-track detectives programme.

The force's equality, diversity and inclusion plan understands the importance of workforce data and working towards collecting relevant information. As of 31 March 2021, 2.3 percent of Norfolk's police officers were from an ethnic minority background, (of those who stated their ethnicity) compared to an ethnic minority local population of 3.5 percent. Activities to improve have included the use of positive action recruiters, who link with ethnic minority candidates to support them through the process. Those who are successful are offered a buddy and mentor when they join. There have also been vetting issues connected with ethnic minority candidates. As a result vetting is now dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

Increasing numbers of staff are leaving the force, and it is working to better understand why this is and to reduce the numbers

The force has seen a growing attrition rate from voluntary resignations, many of which are from officers in their first year. Most of the new officers who leave do so between starting and their first month of being independent, which is a change from previous trends. The force told us that in the year ending 31 March 2018 the attrition rate for new officers was 3 percent (5 officers). In the year ending 31 March 2022 the attrition rate was 21 percent (13 officers). It has developed Project Attrition to better understand the reasons for this and to find ways of reducing the attrition rate. The force assesses from its current data that people leave for four main reasons:

- Work-life balance (29 percent)
- Better career opportunities (28 percent)
- Job satisfaction (24 percent)
- Retirement/transfer to another force (24 percent).

The project team is increasing the numbers of exit interviews, as only around 40 percent of leavers have one at present. Staff from the People Directorate, which manages the recruitment and retention for the force, will also be phoning every leaver to try and find out why they left. The project is also working to improve career options for police staff. Around 100 police staff members are participating in the force's management development scheme, Leading with Care, with another 200+ police officers also taking part. The force is committed to advertising internal roles within the force first, to give staff an opportunity for progression. They hope that these measures can reduce the number of leavers, in particular officers in the early stages of their service.

Vetting and counter corruption

We now inspect how forces deal with vetting and counter corruption differently. This is so we can be more effective and efficient in how we inspect this high-risk area of police business.

Corruption in forces is tackled by specialist units, designed to proactively target corruption threats. Police corruption is corrosive and poses a significant risk to public trust and confidence. There is a national expectation of standards and how they should use specialist resources and assets to target and arrest those that pose the highest threat.

Through our new inspections, we seek to understand how well forces apply these standards. As a result, we now inspect forces and report on national risks and performance in this area. We now grade and report on forces' performance separately.

Norfolk Constabulary's vetting and counter corruption inspection hasn't yet been completed. We will update our website with our findings and the separate report once the inspection is complete.

Strategic planning, organisational management and value for money

Outstanding

Norfolk Constabulary is outstanding at operating efficiently.

Innovative practice

The development and use of Power BI and data from partner organisations give the force an excellent understanding of performance and its management

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

Using Power BI, the force has significantly enhanced its ability to process and interpret large amounts of information about important trends. Data is presented in detailed diagnostic dashboards, which visualise demand and vulnerability data. This is allowing senior and operational leaders to gain a comprehensive understanding of demand, risks and opportunities. The dashboards display 12 months' rolling data, collated from numerous relevant databases in a clear and detailed way. Hyperlinks are being created for users to click on when they need more information. The approach to data and analytics taken by the force is developing a more sophisticated understanding of demand and risk.

To further enhance the system, the force is in the process of getting approval for a data warehouse. This will mean that all data, including that from partner organisations, is put in and extracted from a single location, making processes extremely efficient.

Main findings

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

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

The force's strategic plan takes account of the Police and Crime Commissioner's Plan 2022–24 and the [force management statement \(FMS\)](#). A comprehensive outcome-based budgeting (OBB) process underpins all budgeting decisions for meeting expected demand, performance, outcomes and priorities. The thread of shared objectives with the police and crime commissioner (PCC) is visible through the force's operational and departmental plans. A mature performance framework underpins the priorities and strategic objectives at all levels of the force. The workforce understands its role in achieving force priorities and objectives. A strategic planning unit (Norfolk Horizons) makes sure that innovation is embraced and that the focus stays on the PCC and force strategic plans and priorities as regards investment.

The force works with the public in numerous ways. Each policing district has a dedicated engagement officer who is responsible for co-ordinating proactive contact with the local community via several channels. Effective analysis of information and data by the strategic, business and operational service (SBOS) department helps the force to make sure it operates as effectively and efficiently as it can. SBOS offers several services designed to support the force in policing across all business areas. The department offers analysis and research, programme and project management, data insight, evidence-based policing and broader governance and change management. This means that the data underpinning decisions can be trusted.

The force has an excellent understanding of demand

The FMS outlines the main issues, threats and gaps in demand and resourcing within the force over the next four years. Strategic partners such as local authorities are actively involved in the early stages of the development of the FMS. This adds further value to the force's understanding of demand and what matters locally. Professional judgment is used to help with quantification and interpretation of current and future demand. This is supported by substantial demand data and forecast modelling. It identifies the main problems the force faces, including new legislation and guidance, digital footprints on crimes, difficulties in recruitment and retention, and skills gaps in a young and inexperienced workforce.

The force's development and use of data results in an excellent understanding of performance and management. The detailed approach in its use of data from its own systems and from partner organisations, via the county data warehouse, is impressive. The force can present detailed data to its senior and operational leaders in a way that supports a comprehensive understanding of demand, risk and opportunities. An example of this approach is the recent development of the statutory time limit data to improve management of investigations that are subject to time limits.

The investment in a comprehensive data suite and the refreshing approach to partnership data mean that the force can determine demand challenges and take steps to mitigate the risk. For example, the criminal justice processes have been identified as a significant risk due to the unprecedented demand and backlogs at courts, coupled with the new guidance on disclosure and the ever-growing complexity of managing cases. Linked to this, the force recognises how digital technology has an effect on its work and estimates that around 90 percent of all cases have a digital element. It is also encouraging leaders to consider new and emerging problems such as the developing cost of living crisis, new and evolving communities and how the increased pressure placed on other organisations will affect force demand.

The force has an operating model that helps it deal with priorities and meet demands

The force regularly reviews the operating model and parts within it to make sure it stays fit for purpose and can deal with changing demands. The strategic planning team (Norfolk Horizons) reviews processes to continually assure the force that its model is fit for the future. This work is also helping determine where pressures exist.

The force is aware of its changing workforce profile, particularly through the Police Uplift Programme. Acknowledging these challenges, the Norfolk Horizons team ran a programme focused on how best to provide policing, considering the changes to recruitment, and how to maximise the opportunity that the Police Uplift Programme of officers gives. The force's share of the programme will realise an additional 224 roles by March 2023. It has prioritised where these roles will be placed within the force. They will all be aligned to the force's identified priorities. This includes officers being posted to local policing and investigations.

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

The force has produced an MTFP covering the period 2020–26, which is clear with sensible assumptions. The force makes the best use of the finance available, which is important as its operating model is under pressure due to the rise in demand. Its financial plans are both ambitious and sustainable.

The force has established which savings it needs to make and has plans in place to make them. The comprehensive understanding of demand that the force faces is helping with efficiency while maintaining service provision. This is feeding the force OBB process. OBB aligns budgets to demand, performance, outcomes and priorities. The process analyses the force's spending against priorities, allowing development of projects to target efficiency and need for investment. The force underpins the OBB process with the FMSs, which project expected future demand, risks and opportunities.

The force and its leaders show good fiscal management. The OBB process means that force staff are better informed and held more accountable. This provides confidence that the force has a good approach to operational management and service provision.

The force has developed ambitious and effective collaborations with partner organisations, demonstrably leading to better value for money

The force has an excellent track record of making savings both from the Norfolk-only cost centres and from the collaborated space. This is where they work closely with other constabularies and strategic partners.

The strong and highly effective collaboration between Norfolk Constabulary and Suffolk Constabulary has been in place since 2010 and has yielded savings of over £44.7m (£23m Norfolk and £21.7m Suffolk). A further £3.3m of savings from this collaboration is budgeted in 2021/22, of which £1.7m relates to Norfolk. Besides the financial collaboration, the force has worked with Suffolk Constabulary on developing an environment strategy, estates strategy and outcome-based budgeting. The force is also part of a seven-force strategic network with Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Essex, Hertfordshire, Kent and Suffolk police forces, all of which are looking at ways of pooling resources to save money. Recent workstreams have included work on procurement, forensic case management and vetting.

October 2022 | © HMICFRS 2022

www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmicfrs