

## Performance and Resources Scrutiny Programme 2019

Report to: the Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Essex

<b>Title of Report:</b>	<b>Crime Data Accuracy – Update</b>
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<b>Chief Officer:</b>	<b>DCC Mills</b>
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<b>Report from:</b>	<b>Essex Police</b>
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>31<sup>st</sup> October 2019</b>
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### 1.0 Purpose of Report

To provide a quarterly update in relation to the progress of Crime Data Accuracy (CDA) of Essex Police.

### 2.0 Recommendations

For the board to consider and note the contents of this report.

### 3.0 Executive Summary

HMICFRS published their report and findings in relation to the Crime Data Integrity Inspection carried out in April 2019 on 8<sup>th</sup> October 2019.

**Essex Police received an overall judgment of ‘Outstanding’, with HMICFRS finding that “The leadership shown has created a cultural change among officers and staff regarding the importance of crime reporting. This has made sure that more victims receive the service they are entitled to and have access to support and safeguarding when required”.**

The key findings are:

- Essex Police is the strongest performance they had seen in the programme of inspection;
- They commended the senior officer lead for crime and the force crime registrar for the efforts they have made to ensure performance was strong;
- That victims were at the forefront of its crime recording arrangements;
- Officers and staff understand the importance of crime recording;
- A comprehensive and ongoing training programme for officers and staff;
- Senior officers consistently highlight the importance of accurate crime recording and hold all officers to account for poor recording decisions;
- A comprehensive feedback system, so officers and staff who make errors can learn the correct requirements for their future crime recording decisions.

HMICFRS also reported that “The force is determined to get crime recording right, to understand clearly how crime affects its communities and to respond appropriately to this demand. But the force understands there is still room for improvement and is committed to make those improvements. It recognises that it still doesn’t always make the correct crime recording decisions on the front line”. The areas that could be strengthened are highlighted below for ease of reference:

- Improve initial crime recording decisions, to reduce the need for the NCRS support and review team(NSRT)’s quality assurance;
- Officers and staff not correctly identifying stalking and harassment crimes;
- Officers and staff not identifying crimes relating to taking or distributing indecent images;
- Not recognising some crimes processed through MARAC;
- Some slavery crimes not being recorded by frontline officers;
- Improve collection of equality data; and
- Identify how to use this data to better inform its understanding and response to crime as it affects different communities.

Section five of this report sets out how the force intends to address the areas for improvement identified by HMICFRS and from the internal audits conducted by the Crime Data Audit (CDA) Teams.

An internal communications plan has been produced to highlight the areas identified by HMICFRS along with a mandatory e-learning package to support the development of staff who are involved in the crime recording process.

As set out in the previous quarterly report, the Force continues to benefit from the quality assurance provided by the NCRS Support and Review Team (NSRT) who work under the umbrella of the Force Control Room. HMICFRS complimented the work of the NSRT and described how they worked quickly and effectively to quality assure crime recording decisions.

A new CDA plan was presented to the CDA Board on 19th September 2019, chaired by the DCC. The plan, which was formally agreed, sets out how the force will deal with the areas of development highlighted by HMICFRS and continue to focus on victim support and ensure that Essex Police does all that it can to help vulnerable people stay safe, and provide a consistent service for those individuals who report a crime to police.

Further areas as set out below have been identified during this last quarter as a result of the audits conducted by the CDA Audit Team:

- National standards not being met in respect of the finalisation of outcomes applied by sergeants;
- Temporary impact on the delivery of CDA training during next quarter, due to staff absences;
- Additional support to continue to be provided to the Crime & Public Protection Command (C&PP) to improve the accuracy of their crime recording.

Plans to address the areas highlighted above are set out in section five of this report.

#### **4.0 Introduction / Background**

This report provides an overview of the Essex Police CDA strategy and the progress that has been made against the CDA Improvement Plan. It also sets out the next steps following the formal acceptance of the newly revised CDA Improvement Plan which was presented to the CDA Board on the 19<sup>th</sup> September 2019, and the findings of the HMICFRS CDI Inspection which were published on 8<sup>th</sup> October 2019.

#### **5.0 Current Work and Performance**

##### **5.1 Performance**

##### **5.1.1 HMICFRS Inspection Results**

**Essex Police were adjudged to be outstanding in their overall crime rate.**

HMICFRS stated that Essex Police has made significant progress with its processes, ensuring it now records more reports of crime in accordance with the Home Office Counting Rules (HOCR).

They examined crime reports from 1<sup>st</sup> August 2018 to 31<sup>st</sup> January 2019. They estimated that the force recorded **95.8** percent of crimes that were reported between this time. They said; ... **“the force is determined to get crime recording right, to understand clearly how crime affects its communities and to respond appropriately to this demand”**.

The results of the key areas inspected are set out below for ease of reference:

## Violence against the person

The HMICFRS discovered that **95.6 percent** of violent crimes reported to the force had been recorded. They said “This recording rate is very good and better than most forces we have inspected to date. It is indicative of the improved recording standards achieved by officers and staff and of the scrutiny given to our reports of violence since our 2014 report. This is particularly important as many of these crimes are very serious in nature and cause significant harm to their victims”.

## Sexual Offences

The HMICFRS found that **95.8 percent** of sexual offence crimes reported to police had been recorded. They said, “This is a good standard of crime recording accuracy. This recording rate shows the close attention the force gives to reports of sexual offences. It ensures victims generally receive the service and the support they deserve”.

## Rape

During their audit of rape reports they found that **73 of the 75 rape reports** had been accurately recorded. In one of the cases reviewed Essex Police had failed to provide support and safeguarding. Additionally, an effective investigation had not taken place and the victim had not been appropriately referred to any partner organisations. As a result of their findings the force has now introduced a daily word search facility which is monitored by the National Crime Recording Standards Support and Review Team (NSRT). The process enables the team to search all reported incidents and crimes to ensure that where the word ‘rape’ is found, it is carefully assessed to ensure that a crime is recorded if deemed necessary.

## 5.2 Current Work

### 5.2.1 Internal Audit NCRS Support and Review Team (NSRT)

The last report explained the role of the NSRT in detail. In summary, the team provide frontline support and a quality assurance (QA) function to support the Force improve CDA. The QA function focusses on crime incidents that have not resulted in the recording of a crime for the previous 24 hours. The HMICFRS were complimentary of the NSRT’s work and said; “Analysis of the NSRT’s effectiveness and value has shown that its work contributes significantly to the crime recording standards the force is achieving”.

The results of the audits conducted by the NSRT are supplied to the Performance Analysis Unit (PAU). The PAU are then responsible for analysing the data. Their analysis helps inform the respective senior managers to identify those individuals and teams who are responsible for the greatest volume of errors during the crime recording process. It also allows respective managers to provide constructive feedback to individual officers and assist them to improve in this critical area of their business. The results are then included in the Force Balanced Scorecard.

**Table 1** below shows the incidents reviewed and the compliance found for the last quarter.

Month	Incidents Reviewed			Compliance Rate
	Pass	Fail	Total	
Jun-19	2911	823	3734	78.0%
Jul-19	3048	903	3951	77.1%
Aug-19	3627	976	4603	78.8%

Table 2 – Overview of incident reviews undertaken by NSRT

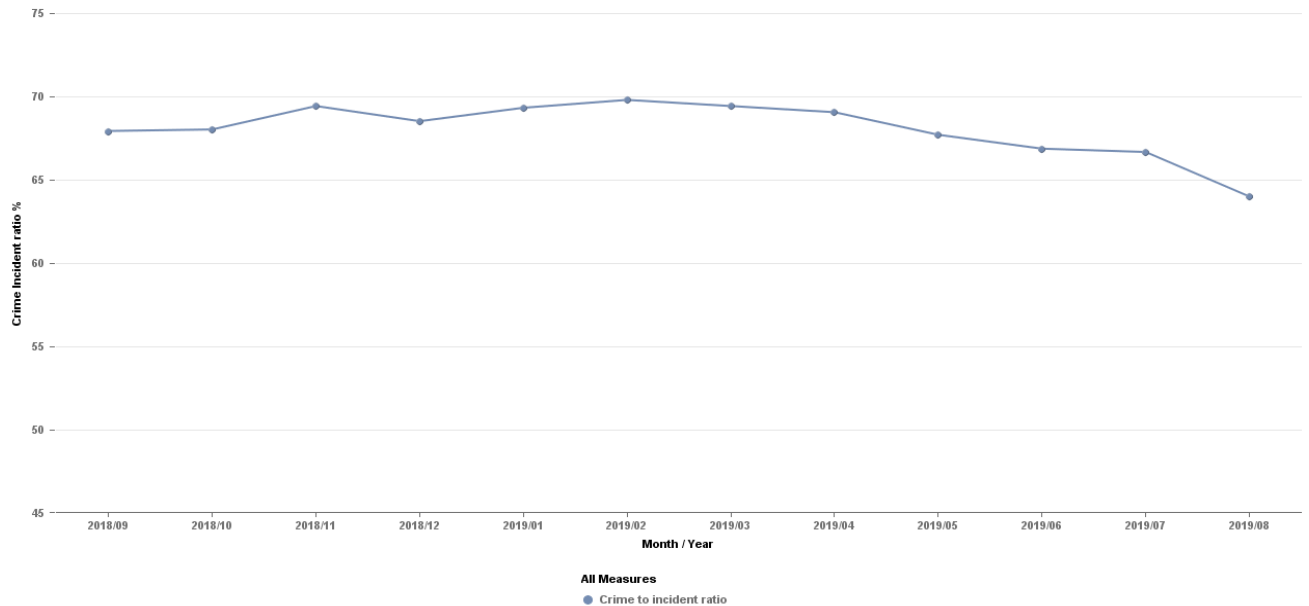
Chief Officers have agreed this temporary team will remain in place until January 2020 when the situation will be re assessed.

Essex Police is continuing to track crime recording performance by closely monitoring and analysing the percentage of crime incidents, which subsequently result in the recording of a crime. This proxy measure tracks those reports received by the Force Control Room (FCR) and entered as a crime incident onto the Command and Control system (STORM), which following the resolution of the incident, result in the formal recording of a crime.

During this quarter there has been a slight downturn in crime recording compliance. This mirrors a similar pattern to last year and it is likely that this can be attributed to the seasonal rise in demand and a temporary reduction in available resources within the NCRS Support and Review Team (NSRT).

Table 2 below demonstrates Crime Incident to Crime %

Crime Incident to Crime % - All Incident Types



### **5.2.2 Accessibility and Visibility of CDA Team**

The Strategic Force Crime & Incident Registrar and team have now started to deliver a series of CDA surgeries throughout the force. This initiative has been put in place to raise the profile of the CDA Team and reinforce the need ensure that victims are at the forefront of crime recording decisions. This provides the opportunity to upskill sergeants and other members of the force who are responsible for crime recording. Additionally the team has been able to deliver key messages and offer support and advice around some of the areas of development which were highlighted in HMICFRS' CDI Inspection report. A particular emphasis has been placed on improving the finalisation of outcomes, identifying modern slavery, stalking and harassment and distributing indecent images.

### **5.2.3 Support to Crime & Public Protection Command**

As set out in the previous quarterly report, the Strategic Force Crime & Incident Registrar (FC&IR) and members of the Audit Team continue to provide additional support to the Crime and Public Protection Command (C&PP) to assist them with their crime recording processes. This has included concentrated audits which has allowed the auditor to inform supervising officers within the C&PP Command where best to concentrate their efforts and provide support and learning to improve quality.

### **5.2.4 Communications Plan**

In support of the Strategic Force Crime and Incident Registrar's plan to increase the visibility and accessibility of the CDA Team, a structured internal and external communications plan has now been produced. The plan has been designed to reinforce the need to ensure that all personnel get crime recording right at the first point of contact.

### **5.2.5 Outcomes- Finalisation by Sergeants**

In October 2018, sergeants were given authority to finalise specific types of crime outcome. This process removed the previous additional layer of authorisation that was causing significant delays and backlogs. In order to finalise outcomes, sergeants were required to complete an e-learning package and pass an exam.

Against this backdrop, Single points of Contact (SPOCs) are currently in place in each of the LPAs to offer support and audit the quality of the finalisation process. Internal audits within the force have identified that the national standard for the finalisation of outcomes is not being met in some cases with a number of sergeants not accurately recording or articulating the rationale for a particular outcome.

The Strategic Force Crime & Incident Registrar is working with the respective LPA Commanders to address this issue.

The compliance rates are now closely monitored through the CDA Board with support and advice being offered to sergeants and their respective supervising officers.

### **5.2.6 Collection of Equality Data**

HMICFRS reported that the force routinely captures information on a victim's age, gender and ethnicity but that it did not collect data on other protected characteristics when recording crime, unless originally identified as a hate crime. They recommended that the force should work to expand the equality data it captures when recording crime. This Area for Improvement (AFI) is not unique to Essex Police with the majority of forces already inspected by HMICFRS having this AFI.

The requirement for forces to collect all nine of the Protected Characteristics; age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership and pregnancy and maternity for all reported crimes is currently being reviewed at a national level. Essex Police await clarification and direction on any decision made with regards to Protected Characteristic Data.

Whilst Essex Police await the outcome of this review, work is underway to explore the feasibility of adding the Protected Characteristics as mandatory fields in the new Athena Express. If added this will give the force the opportunity and option to record the characteristics if required.

The force will also continue to examine the findings from the victim insight gained through the SMSR public perception survey to make it easier for victims to report their crime.

### **5.2.7 Learning and Development Team**

The dedicated CDA Training Team which was formed in 2018 continues to play a pivotal role in the delivery of CDA training. However, they are currently about to lose two of their experienced trainers which will impact on the team's ability to deliver the scheduled programme of training. The Strategic Force Crime & Registrar together with the Head of Learning & Development have prioritised the timetable for the delivery of CDA courses. Two new trainers have already been selected and once they have been embedded into the team, the delivery of training will resume.

During this quarter a new mandatory e-learning package titled 'Help us Help You' was launched by the Learning and Development Team. The learning covers many of the areas for improvement identified by HMICFRS during their inspection and from the internal audits carried out by the CDA Audit Team.

## **6.0 Implications (Issues)**

As described in the body of this report.

### **6.1 Links to Police and Crime Plan Priorities**

Crime Data Accuracy links directly the priorities set out in the Police and Crime Plan to ensure we accurately record crime, identify areas of under reporting, ensure victims have access to support services and build trust and confidence in our force.

### **6.2 Demand**

As expected there were higher levels of crime demand in Essex during the last quarter. This mirrors the position of last year. The higher levels of crime demand have historically impacted on the level of compliance, particularly during the summer months.

### **6.3 Risks/Mitigation**

There is a risk recorded on the Essex Police Strategic Risk Register relating to Crime Data Accuracy. This risk was discussed at the Crime Data Accuracy Board chaired by the Deputy Chief Constable and is reviewed formally each month as part of the risk management process.

### **6.4 Equality and/or Human Rights Implications**

None.

### **6.5 Health and Safety Implications**

None

## **7.0 Consultation/Engagement**

Crime Data Accuracy Board Members.

## **8.0 Actions for Improvement**

The Strategic Force Crime and Incident Registrar and his team will now ensure that any recommendations and areas for improvement highlighted by HMICFRS are



closely examined and implemented at the earliest juncture to sustain and maintain the high levels of compliance identified and reported.

- Provide additional support to the C&PP Command to improve compliance;
- Provide support to sergeants involved in the finalisation of crime outcomes;
- Increased visibility and accessibility of the CDA Audit Team;
- Assess impact of the delivery of CDA training, reduced trainer capacity;
- Scrutiny of outcomes process conducted by sergeants;
- Audit Team, tour of county to raise awareness;
- Continue to monitor and review effectiveness of NSRT.

## **9.0 Future Work/Development and Expected Outcome**

The results of HMICFRS Inspection and the findings from our internal audits have now provided the force with a solid benchmark to enable us to focus our efforts on the identified areas of improvement.

Working to the revised CDA Improvement Plan, the Strategic Force Crime & Incident Registrar and his team will continue to raise their profile and increase their visibility and accessibility to frontline officers and staff who are responsible for crime recording.

The team will continue to apply proven audit methods in order to identify any dips in performance. They will also work alongside the Training and Development Team to identify and deliver appropriate training to ensure officers are provided with the necessary support and advice to make sure that we strive to get crime recording right at the first point of contact and deliver an effective and appropriate service to victims of crime.