

## Performance and Resources Scrutiny Programme 2020

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>Date of Approval:</b>	

### 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

- Following on from the publication of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Service (HMICFRS)'s Crime Data Integrity inspection report which was released on 8th October 2019, the force has continued to make further progress with regards to the accuracy of crime recording compliance.

Experience has shown that whenever a force has been graded as good or outstanding by the HMICFRS there has generally been a tendency for the respective crime recording compliance rate to fall. However, it can be reported that despite a slight downturn in compliance during the month of August,

which was likely to have been due to the seasonal rise in demand, the force has continued to sustain a high level of crime recording compliance throughout this quarter.

Our ability to maintain this level of accuracy in recording crimes means that victims' needs are being recognised and responded to swiftly and victims can be provided with the necessary support and assistance from the appropriate services.

- The areas of improvement identified by HMICFRS, together with those areas recognised through our own internal audits, has allowed the force to direct its focus and resources in the most efficient and effective manner.

Section five of this report sets out how the force is addressing the areas for improvement.

- As a result of our recent outstanding grade, the force has been contacted by a number of other police forces throughout the country to establish how the governance of crime recording processes and systems are managed by Essex Police.
- The Strategic Force Crime and Incident Registrar and his team have increased their visibility and accessibility through a series of personal visits to various police stations and commands throughout the county to reinforce the need for improvement in the areas identified by the HMICFRS. This included, improving officers and staff knowledge of stalking, harassment, indecent images and modern slavery.

The additional support that has been provided to the Crime and Public Protection Command (C&PP) by the CDA Team during the last quarter has seen their compliance rates significantly improve.

- Whilst there has been some improvement in relation to the quality of outcomes being finalised by sergeants, work is continuing to ensure that the correct outcomes are applied and crimes are finalised to the correct standard.
- Following consultation with other Regional Crime Registrars a decision was reached for those instances where a victim has not confirmed an offence of forced prostitution, but there is clear evidence or significant grounds to the contrary. An agreement was made that in such cases, an additional crime of Rape will be recorded as the specific rules for Modern Slavery stipulate any other crime must be recorded in addition to the Modern Slavery offence. It is likely that the adoption of this position will invariably lead to an increase in the number of recorded rape crimes.
- The Force continues to benefit from the support provided by the NCRS Support and Review Team (NSRT). Their experience and ability to effectively and quickly quality assure crime recording decisions remains essential in ensuring the standard of crime recording is maintained at the highest level.

- The CDA plan was formally agreed at the CDA Board in September. It is reviewed and amended as necessary to take account of any issues identified through our internal audits.

#### 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 how the force intends to sustain its high compliance rates and commitment to always put victims at the forefront of crime recording arrangements.

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

##### 5.1 **Performance**

##### 5.1.1 **Internal Audit NCRS Support and Review Team (NSRT)**

The NSRT continue to provide frontline support and a quality assurance (QA) function to support the Force in improving CDA.

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 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** <sup>1</sup>below shows the incidents reviewed and compliance for the last quarter.

Month	Incidents Reviewed			Compliance Rate
	Pass	Fail	Total	
Sep -19	3535	1004	4539	77 %
Oct-19	4136	1144	5280	78 %
Nov-19	4277	1052	5329	80 %

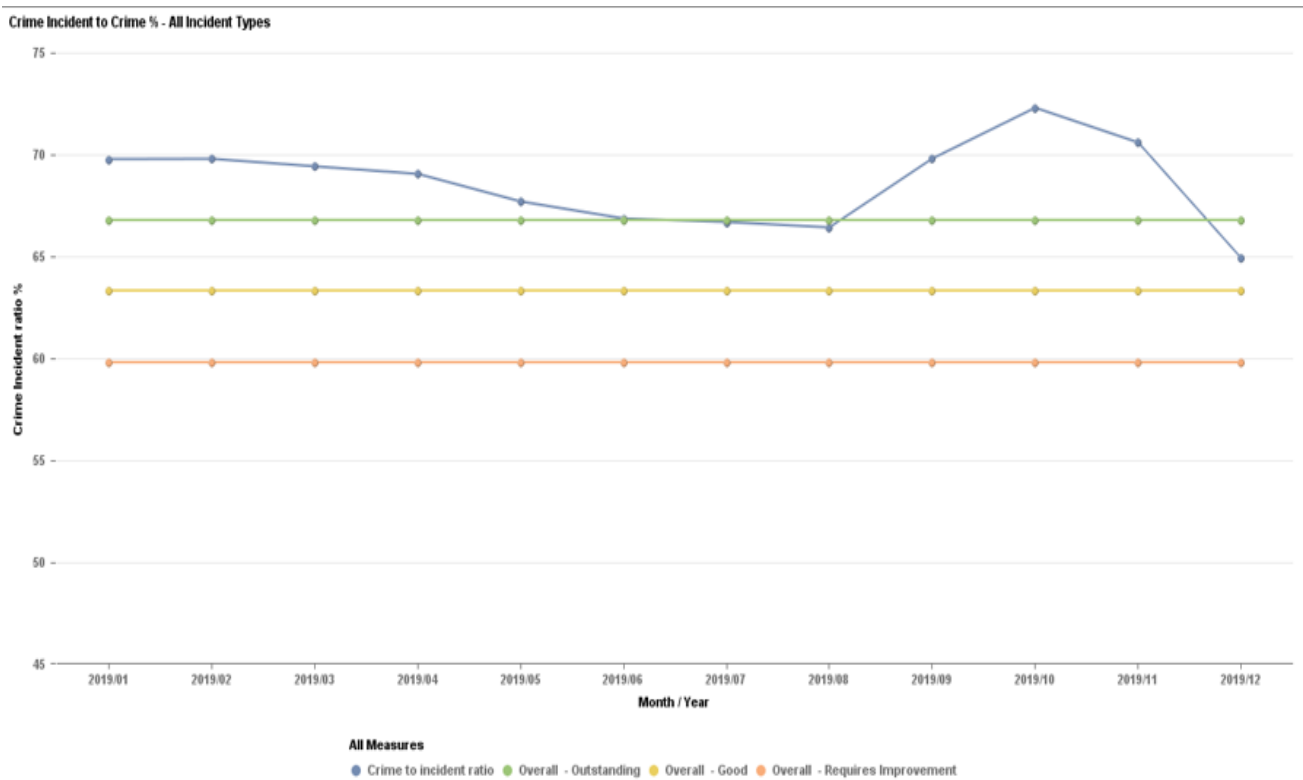
<sup>1</sup> Technical difficulties prevented the compliance rates for December being generated and available for this report. This was due to the realignment of staff, previously deployed in the Crime Bureau and their transition into the Resolution Centre. Work to rectify the situation is now underway.

Table 1 – Overview of incident reviews undertaken by NSRT

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.

Despite a slight dip in performance during the month of August which is attributable to a rise in demand during this period, crime recording compliance reached its highest point at 280% in November. This mirrors a similar pattern to last year.

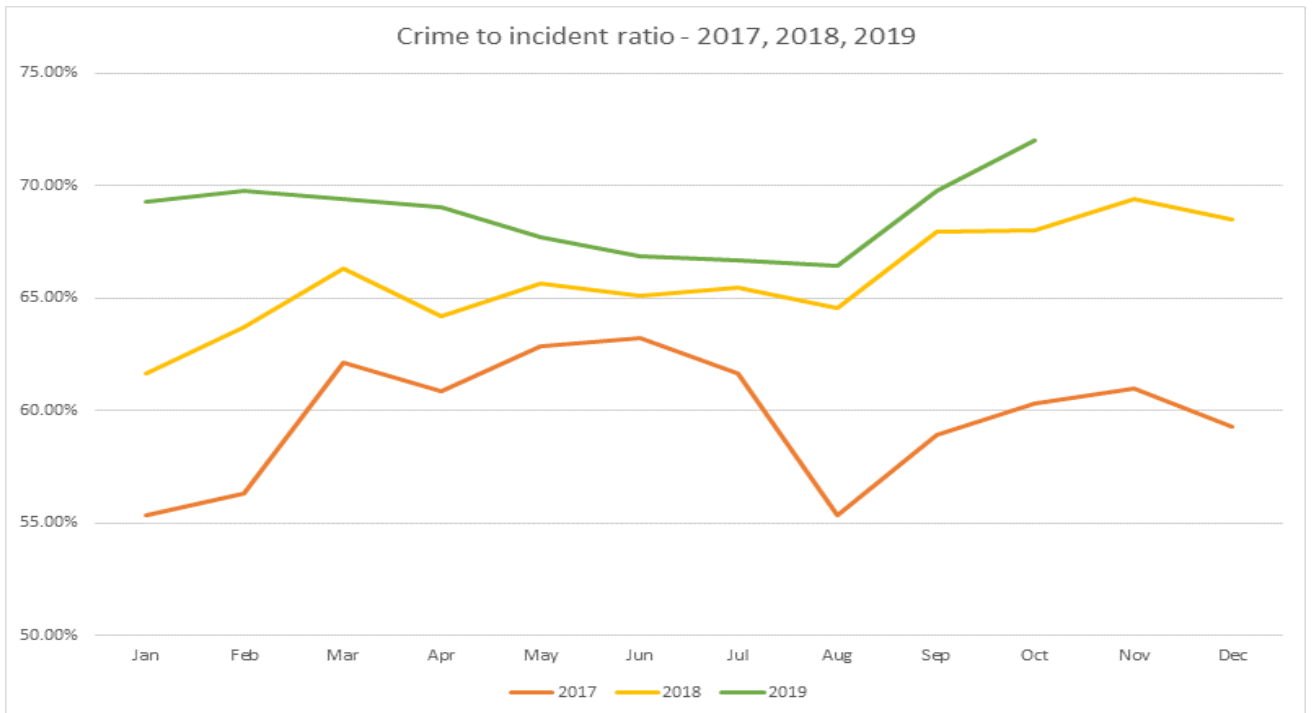
**Table 2** Percentage of Crime Incidents subsequently recorded as a crime



The force has established the relationship between the accuracy of crime recording and demand; when demand is at its highest point, there tends to be a drop in compliance. This pattern is mirrored in each year irrespective of the level of accuracy (Table 3).

**Table 3** Percentage of Crime Incidents subsequently recorded as a crime -2017/18/19

<sup>2</sup> The HMICFRS bands in table 2 were designed to provide the force with an estimate of our overall compliance rates.



### 5.1.2 Accessibility and Visibility of CDA Team

The Strategic Force Crime & Incident Registrar and team have attended a number of police stations and other operational commands throughout the force as part of a drive to further enhance the importance of accurate crime recording.

They have engaged with a number of frontline officers and police staff and were 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 was placed on:

- Improving the quality of the finalisation of outcomes completed by sergeants;
- Identifying modern slavery offences, need to record additional crimes;
- The need to record stalking and harassment in addition to other crimes;
- Procedures for recording the distribution of indecent images.

The visits allowed the team to answer a series of questions, it also gave them the opportunity to reinforce the need to ensure that victims remain at the forefront of everything we do, and the importance of getting crime recording right at the first point of contact.

In addition to the various visits throughout the county, the Deputy Chief Constable, supported by the CDA Team, organised an internal question and answer session using Jabber. The session was opened up to the entire force and attracted a number of interesting and pertinent questions from officers and police staff of all ranks.

### 5.1.3 Support to Crime & Public Protection Command

During this quarter, the Strategic Force Crime & Incident Registrar and members of the CDA Audit Team have continued to provide additional support to the Crime and Public Protection Command (C&PP) to assist them with their crime recording processes. This included the CDA Audit Team conducting concentrated audits which 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.

As a direct result of the internal audits conducted by the CDA Audit Team and the supervisory oversight by senior officers within the C&PP Command there has been a significant improvement in the accuracy of crime recording across key areas of this command. Regular meetings between the Strategic Force Crime and Incident Registrar and senior officers within the command have continued throughout this quarter to ensure that the momentum gained continues.

### 5.1.4 Modern Slavery and Prostitution

- The specific Home Office Counting Rules (HOCR) for recording Modern Slavery (MS) and Human Trafficking offences stipulates that:

***All referrals made by the police into the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) must be subject of a recorded crime of MS unless it is determined that all MS criminality occurred outside England and Wales and any other crime(s) disclosed must be recorded in addition to the MS crime by applying the relevant rule.***

Against this backdrop and having consulted with the National Crime Registrar and Regional Force Crime Registrar counterparts, in cases where police suspect or believe that a victim is being forced into prostitution but the victim may not have explicitly confirmed this to police, there is an expectation that in addition to the MS crime, an additional rape crime will now be recorded.

Whilst this will inevitably lead to an increase in the number of recorded rape crimes' the decision has been made to further enhance Essex Police's victim orientated approach for victims of crime, especially in cases as serious as rape. It also ensures that the victims of modern slavery who have been forced into prostitution are safeguarded from the outset and are given protection and support from the most appropriate service.

Ordinarily where there is no victim confirmation a crime is not required to be recorded. However, there is clear provision within the HOCRs that if the police believe there is clear evidence or significant grounds to show that a victim-based crime has been committed, a force **must** record even though the victim has declined to confirm or cannot be found. For example, there are occasions where individuals may fail to even recognise that they are victims in relation to some crimes. This would very often be the case for those victims that have been forced into prostitution through Modern Slavery.

A further level of scrutiny is also provided by the Crime Data Accuracy Team. They currently monitor all modern slavery incidents on a daily basis to ensure that where additional crimes are discovered they are properly recorded in accordance with the Home Office Counting Rules (HOCR) and provide the victims with support and safeguarding when appropriate. Any learning that is identified through this process is communicated to the officer in the case and their supervisor.

### **5.1.5 Outcomes- Finalisation by Sergeants**

The Strategic Force Crime & Incident Registrar is continuing to work closely with the respective LPA Commanders to ensure that supervising officers understand and appreciate the importance of ensuring that the appropriate outcome is applied to the crime that has been recorded.

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.

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

It was agreed during the CDA Board on the 12<sup>th</sup> December 2019, that the CDA Audit Team will carry out a detailed Outcomes Audit in January 2020. This will test whether the appropriate outcome was applied from the outset and/or whether it was finalised in accordance with the national standards. The audit will allow the force to identify any gaps and learning required to ensure sergeants utilise the outcome process effectively.

### **5.1.6 Dissemination of Good Practice to Outside Forces**

Since the publication of the HMICFRS CDI report the force has been approached by a number of forces throughout the country keen to establish how the force attained one of the highest crime recording rates. Although the list is not exhaustive some of the common questions being asked are set out:

- The governance structure for CDA;
- How officers and supervisors are held to account for poor performance;
- Training structure and how it is delivered throughout the force;
- How crime is recorded and validated;
- The structure of the audit process throughout the force.

Against this backdrop the Strategic Force Crime and Incident Registrar has now delivered a number of bespoke briefings to share our good practice. This has been done through attending a variety of regional Crime Data Integrity meetings and personal contact with individual forces throughout the country.

### **5.1.7 Learning and Development Team**

The dedicated CDA Training Team continues to play a pivotal role in the delivery of CDA training.

During the last quarter the team lost two of their experienced trainers in addition to the absence of the CDA training supervisor due to sickness. Two new staff have now been recruited although both will require time to learn both the role and the content of the various courses. Interim support for the team is currently being provided by the Crime Training Detective Sergeant and the situation is being closely monitored.

The remaining experienced CDA Trainer is leading on the training delivery with the two newly appointed staff shadowing her. The training and development for the new staff, remains the priority for the team.

The majority of courses are continuing to run as planned with only a few changes being made in response to the current situation:

- One sergeants' CDA course has been cancelled in January 2020. The remaining experienced CDA trainer is on annual leave on the relevant dates and the new trainers will not be fully proficient in role to deliver this course.
- Crime Training are delivering the CDA input on ICIDP courses to support the CDA team at this time.

At this time, it is not envisaged that any other training dates will need to be cancelled, however this will be subject of regular review and impact assessed at the CDA Board chaired by the DCC.

## **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 to 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 already set out in the body of this report, demand continues to have an impact on the level of crime recording compliance. It is anticipated that demand will increase during the month of December.



### **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 on the 12<sup>th</sup> December 2019 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 are continuing to focus and concentrate their efforts on ensuring that the momentum gained during the last quarter is sustained.

The force is continuing to look at ways in which we can improve our crime recording processes. The recommendations and areas for improvement highlighted by HMICFRS are now being implemented, and we continue to reinforce the need to place victims at the forefront of everything we do. We will do this by:

- Scrutinising the outcomes process conducted by sergeants, and providing further support to sergeants involved in this process;
- Carrying out an internal audit around the quality of outcomes;
- Continuing to increase the visibility and accessibility of the CDA Audit Team;
- Assessing the impact of the delivery of CDA training, caused by a reduced trainer capacity;
- Continuing to raise the visibility and accessibility of the CDA Audit Team;
- Continuing to monitor and review the effectiveness of NSRT.

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

Accurate crime recording is vital in order to investigate crimes properly, bring criminals to justice and provide the best outcome for victims. The force is committed to maintaining the high standards it has set in respect of crime recording, while seeking to improve where we can thereby providing the highest quality service to victims of crime.

The team will continue to apply proven audit methods in order to identify performance trends. 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 get crime recording right at the first point of contact.

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.