

## Performance and Resources Scrutiny Programme 2020

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

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### 1.0 Purpose of Report

To provide a biannual 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

- Despite the unprecedented situation Essex Police has faced due to the Coronavirus pandemic, the CDA Team reacted quickly to the challenges it faced and has continued to function effectively and proficiently. Significantly, crime recording compliance rates have remained at a consistent level throughout this period of reporting.
- The Strategic Force Crime and Incident Registrar and his team have continued to promote and focus their efforts on ensuring that victims of crime continue to sit at the forefront of everything we do. They have done this through a blend of

communication strategies, including video conferences, telephone calls, and where possible face-to-face socially distanced meetings with key internal and external stakeholders.

- The Deputy Chief Constable has continued to apply strong leadership and effective oversight through her regular CDA Boards, which in turn has promoted and contributed towards a healthy, victim focused culture throughout the force.
- A revised Crime Data Accuracy Annual Strategy report was presented to and agreed by the DCC at the CDA Board on the 15<sup>th</sup> June. The report set out and highlighted the importance of maintaining the high standards the force has set in relation to CDA. It also focused on the need to closely monitor the impact that the Covid-19 situation may have on the overall crime recording compliance and on the delivery of CDA training throughout the force.
- The rolling programme of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) Crime Data Integrity inspections throughout the country has now finished, with Essex police being one of only three forces in the country to be graded as outstanding without having to be part of a further reinspection.
- It is now known that the next tranche of inspections to be carried out by the HMICFRS will encompass a much broader examination of the journey of the victim. Operating under the banner of the Victim Service Assessment (VSA), the HMICFRS inspection will assess victims' experiences of the service they receive from the first point of contact, the police response, crime recording, crime allocation, the quality of the investigation right through to the final outcome.
- Against this backdrop, considerations are now underway for the Strategic Force Crime and Incident Registrar to conduct a joint audit process which will run in tandem with the force's Audit and Inspection Team. This joint effort will allow the force to gauge how effective they are in ensuring that victims of crime are receiving the appropriate support and help. It will also enable the force to provide guidance and learning with regards to the quality of Investigations and ensure crimes are being accurately recorded at the first point of contact.
- The Strategic Force Crime and Incident Registrar has utilised the services of LPA SPOCs to monitor the use of outcomes throughout the force, to ensure that they are being applied appropriately and effectively during the finalisation process of an investigation.
- A review of<sup>1</sup> Outcome 16 was carried out by the CDA Audit Team during this period of reporting. Encouragingly, in the majority of the cases reviewed the correct outcome had been applied. However, in some instances, officers had failed to inform the victim and properly record the fact that the matter had been filed as an Outcome 16.

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<sup>1</sup> Outcome 16 Evidential Difficulties – Named suspect Identified but victim does not support (withdrawn support from police action).

- Internal reviews conducted by the CDA Audit Team has identified that in some cases officers are failing to listen carefully to the responses made by victims of Domestic Abuse during the risk assessment process. This has meant that in some instances rapes are not being correctly recorded and victims are being denied the opportunity to receive the appropriate support and help they need.
- CDA training remains a priority for Essex Police. A new CDA training course is currently being designed. The plan intends to introduce a simpler 'one package fits all' course which will allow training to be delivered in a more consistent and standardised format.

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

## **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.

### **4.0 Current Work and Performance**

#### **4.1 Performance**

##### **4.1.1 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** below shows the incidents reviewed by the NSRT and compliance (Mar- Aug 20)

Month	Incidents Reviewed			Compliance Rate
	Pass	Fail	Total	
Mar	3016	717	3733	81%
Apr	2761	618	3379	82%
May	4799	1058	5857	82%
Jun	4432	963	5395	82%
July	3984	747	4731	84%
Aug	3680	762	4442	83%

Table 1 – Overview of incident reviews undertaken by NSRT

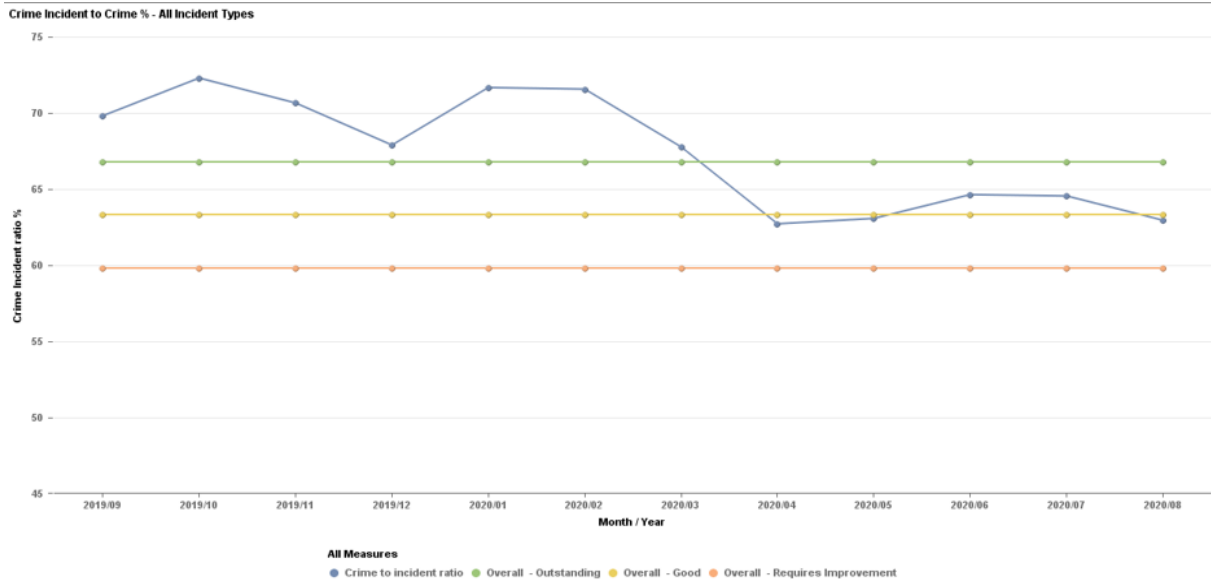
Essex Police is continuing to track crime recording performance by closely monitoring and analysing the percentage of crime incidents, which subsequently result in the recording of a crime. This proxy measure tracks those reports received by the Force Control Room (FCR) and entered as a crime incident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

It is essential that Essex Police continues to track crime recording performance. Having a high incident to crime ratio provides us with a good indication that our crime recording compliance is being maintained to a very high standard. Failures in accurate crime recording can often increase the risk to victims and the community of the denial of justice.

Table 2 Breakdown of the percentage of All Crime Incidents subsequently recorded as a crime

Crime Incident to Crime - Overall Rate			
Year Month	All	C Disposal	%
2020/03	5723	3878	67.76%
2020/04	5159	3235	62.71%
2020/05	6286	3964	63.06%
2020/06	6550	4233	64.63%
2020/07	7244	4675	64.54%
2020/08	7428	4675	62.94%

Table 3 Demonstrates Crime Incidents that resulted in a Crime



#### 4.1.2 Accessibility and Visibility of CDA Team

Despite the restrictions placed on everyone during the Covid pandemic, the Strategic Force Crime & Incident Registrar and his team have adapted quickly to the changing landscape. They have continued to remain accessible and have still been in a position to deliver key messages and provide support and help to senior leaders and all staff who are involved in the crime recording processes throughout the force. They have done this by using a blend of communication strategies, including the use of Microsoft Teams, Jabber and where possible through face-to face meetings.

The key messages delivered throughout this period of reporting have included:

- The need to ensure victims of Domestic Abuse are listened to carefully and where necessary, crimes are being recorded when historic revelations are made during the risk assessment process;
- Circulating a detailed briefing to all operational sergeants, for dissemination to their respective constables, for whom they have supervisory oversight;
- A reinforcement of the importance of finalising crimes in accordance with the HOCRs and ensuring that an appropriate outcome had been assigned to the investigation.

Regular meetings have now been arranged and diarised with the Deputy Head of Contact Management to further improve the service that the staff from within the Force Control Room and the Resolution Centre deliver to victims who contact them to record a crime.

Contact has also been maintained with our regional counterparts in Norfolk, Suffolk, Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Ministry of Defence. This has ensured that good practice is shared and discussed to reinforce that there is a consistent approach being maintained across all areas of crime recording.

The Strategic Force Crime and Incident Registrar and his deputy also addressed a meeting that was attended by over 30 Children and Young Persons (CYP) police officers, police staff and partner agencies, which included representatives of the Youth Offending Service, Essex Youth Voluntary Service and the Boys and Girls Club.

The presentation centred on the most effective and ethical way of finalising an investigation without **pursuing a prosecution through the judicial arena**.

During the delivery of the presentation, a particular emphasis was placed on the use of outcomes, and when applied appropriately and effectively, how they can be used to ensure that children who have, for whatever reason chosen to commit crime, can be offered help and guidance through an alternative diversionary or educational route.

Significantly, close links have been maintained with Head of Learning and Development. This has allowed for the current course content of the CDA training material to be revised. A new training “one package fits all” is in the process of being designed, alongside suitable methods for delivery.

The Strategic Force Crime and Incident Registrar also attends the Investigation Improvement Board which is chaired by an ACC. This attendance ensures that any learning gleaned from the internal audits conducted by the CDA Audit Team are shared. This process ensures that the inextricable link between the quality of investigations and crime data accuracy are assessed together.

A productive meeting was also held between the Strategic Force Crime and Incident Registrar and the newly appointed HMICFRS Force Liaison Lead for Essex, Kent, Suffolk & Norfolk Constabularies, Superintendent, Lee Presland. He was already aware of the importance that the force places on Crime Data Accuracy and was extremely complimentary with regards to the processes and the robust governance structure that the force has in place to ensure it remains an ongoing priority.

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

Rape is one of the most serious crimes a victim can experience. It is, therefore, especially important that reports of rape are recorded accurately. It helps to make sure victims receive the service and support they deserve whilst assisting the police to identify the nature and extent of sexual violence in their local area.

When officers attend a Domestic Abuse Incident, they are required to complete a risk assessment with the victim. The CDA Audit Team review responses that are made by victims of Domestic Abuse to ensure that any reports of crime have been accurately recorded.

During the audit process it has been discovered that in some instances officers are failing to recognise hidden crimes. This was particularly evident in allegations of rapes between existing partners and the issue of what constituted consent.

In order to enhance the service that is already provided to victims of rape and raise the awareness of all police staff and police officers, the Strategic Force Crime and Incident Registrar has held a series of meetings with the Head of Crime and Public Protection and other senior leaders throughout the force.

During the various meetings, the importance of ensuring that officers who attend the scene of a Domestic Abuse Incident and complete a risk assessment as part of their investigation, listen carefully to any responses that are made by the victim to ensure that any crimes disclosed can be accurately recorded in accordance with HOCRs.

This position was further emphasised by the Head of Crime and Public Protection, who chaired a meeting which was attended by senior officers from each of the respective LPAs, Contact Management and the Strategic Force Crime and Incident Registrar and his deputy.

A briefing has now been circulated to all sergeants throughout the force. The briefing sets out the expectation of officers who they supervise, and the need to ensure that there is a robust supervisory process in place to ensure that any hidden crimes are captured and accurately recorded.

To augment the important advice and guidance already provided in relation to the recording of rapes, the Internal Communications Team published an article on the force's intranet page. The news article extended the advice to all members of Essex Police, and provided some guidance regarding what constituted an offence of rape.

#### **4.1.4 Support to Force Control Room and Resolution Centre**

It is essential that when a member of the public contacts the police to report a crime that they are provided with the best possible service. Quite often this will be the first time they have had cause to communicate with the police.

During this period of reporting the Deputy Head of the Contact Management Command has held a number of meetings with the Strategic Force Crime and Incident Registrar.

As a direct result of these meetings, a new CDA forum chaired by the Deputy Head of Contact Management has been set up. This is attended by key individuals across all positions within Contact Management and is now scheduled to take place every six weeks.

Against this backdrop and acting on the data supplied through the NSRT audits and the analysis provided by the Performance Analyst Unit (PAU), staff and officers within Contact Management who have been identified as requiring further support and guidance in relation to accurate crime recording can now be provided with bespoke training through this newly formed forum.

#### 4.1.5 HMICFRS Victim Service Assessment

The rolling programme of HMICFRS Crime Data Integrity inspections throughout the country has now finished. It is now known that the next tranche of inspections will encompass a much broader examination of the Victim Service Assessment (VSA).

On the 26<sup>th</sup> August 2020 the Strategic Force Crime and Incident Registrar and deputies were invited to a regional address by the HMICFRS. The HMICFRS set out their intentions in terms of how their audits would be conducted moving forward and what it would mean for Essex Police.

Their overarching plan is; **...to assess victims' experiences of the service they receive from the point of contact, through the police response, crime recording, crime allocation, investigation and outcome. This will allow for a much broader assessment of the service victims receive when engaging with the police, and through their own eyes. It is intended to give the public confidence in crime recording arrangements, as well as the service they receive at all stages of their involvement with the police.**

The HMICFRS has already indicated that whilst they will have the ability to remain agile during their examination process, ostensibly, their audits will include:

- Case file reviews across a raft of investigations, including rape, serious injury, burglary; and stalking and harassment crimes.
- Force's response to Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) reported incidents;
- A focus on the use of Outcome 16;
- The use of Community Resolutions and Cautions.

As a direct result of the HMICFRS announcement, arrangements are now in hand for the force's Audit and Inspection Team and the CDA Audit Team to start planning for a joint inspection with the force's Audit and Inspection Team. It is intended that the inspection will be aligned to the methodology that is being used by the HMICFRS. The overarching aim will be to carefully examine the journey of the victim from their first point of contact with the police through to the finalisation process.

Any learning gleaned from the internal audit will enable the force to further improve their ability to ensure that victims of crime can continue to receive the most appropriate service they deserve and expect.

#### 4.1.6 Outcomes

The Strategic Force Crime and Incident Registrar and his team have continued to focus their efforts on ensuring that the most effective and appropriate outcomes are being



applied during the finalisation process of an investigation. Home Office Counting Rules dictate that all recorded crimes must be assigned an outcome.

Working with the respective LPA Commanders and Senior Officers throughout the force there has been an increased emphasis to ensure that officers and police staff who are involved in investigations, fully understand the importance of ensuring the correlation between accurate crime recording and providing victims with support and guidance.

An internal audit carried out by the CDA Audit Team looked to examine whether the appropriate outcomes across **all options** were being applied correctly, and whether they had been finalised in accordance with national standards. It was discovered that generally, the correct outcomes were being applied. However, the audit did reveal that in a number of the cases they reviewed with regards to Outcome 16, there were some weaknesses and deficiencies.

As a direct result of the findings of the Outcome Audit as described above, the CDA Audit Team focused on how Outcome 16 was being applied at the finalisation of an investigation. ***Outcome 16 should be used when there is a named suspect identified, but the victim has decided not to support the police or has withdrawn support from police action.***

The audit identified that in the majority of investigations the correct outcome had been applied during the finalisation process. However, it also identified that officers were failing to record the fact that the victim had been kept informed of the final outcome of the case.

The results gleaned from the respective CDA Team's internal audits and the audits conducted by the SPOCs continues to be communicated to the respective LPA Commanders and other senior leaders throughout the force. In addition, a detailed briefing note, setting out the requirements for finalising an Outcome 16 has been circulated to all operational sergeants who will cascade to officers under their command.

Significantly, each of the three LPA Commanders and the Head of Crime and Public Protection have now sanctioned the deployment of a CDA SPOC. The SPOCs now look closely at the use of Outcomes, and how they are being applied and finalised by officers within their own commands on a day-to day basis.

The SPOCs perform an important role, and act as the conduit between the CDA Team and officers who operate from the LPAs and other commands throughout the force.

#### **4.1.7 Learning and Development Team**

The dedicated CDA Training Team has continued to deliver training to personnel who are involved in crime recording throughout the force in order to maintain the force's existing high standards.

The Strategic Force Crime and Incident Registrar sits on the regularly held CDA Training sub-group. Through this forum he is able to influence the content, prioritisation and the delivery of CDA training throughout the force.

During this period of reporting, a proposal document has been developed in relation to a single training product for all officers and staff which strives to maintain the excellent standards of training. It incorporates the learning from the organisation in relation to Crime Data Accuracy. The report also takes in to account the training for this subject area delivered to date.

Significantly, CDA training for probationary constables and sergeants resumed fully on the 26<sup>th</sup> June and is currently being delivered via Microsoft Teams, and where possible through face-to face.

The CDA training team has recruited a new member of staff. That person is now going through the formalities of the joining process and should be appointed imminently.

The CDA probationary constable and tutors training has witnessed 248 probationary constables and 44 tutor constables receive their CDA training.

The CDA sergeants course has had 349 active sergeants complete the training which equates to 67% of the target audience group, acknowledging that the Acting Sergeants audience is constantly changing.

With the training reinstated, the remaining target group audience are being booked on to courses. The assumption is that 80% of the target audience is planned to be completed by 13<sup>th</sup> October 2020 and 90% of the audience group by 3rd November 2020. When the third member of the CDA training team becomes embedded, L&D will look to complete some bespoke local training to LPAs where performance has been particularly challenging. This approach should assist the LPAs with those officers that are particularly struggling with this key component of police work.

Despite the abstractions encountered within the team during the last quarter, the focus on delivering CDA training to Sergeants and Probationers training has remained a priority. Training delivery continues to progress well with 77% of the sergeant audience group having now completed the training; 744 out of the 970 officers.

One hundred and seventy-four probationer constables have now completed the IPLDP one day course.

Other commitments that continue to be met include:

- short inputs to the Initial Police Learning and Development Programme (IPLDP) courses and
- similar inputs on courses such as the Investigating Officers Course and Initial Crime Investigators Development Programme (ICIDP).

## **5.0 Implications (Issues)**

As described in the body of this report.

### **5.1 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.

### **5.2 Demand**

It is estimated that because of better recording standards and compared with the findings of the HMICFRS Crime Data Integrity 2014 inspections throughout the country, forces recorded 570,000 more crimes during 2019, including 421,000 violent offences and 34,000 sexual offences.

It is therefore inevitable that the demand placed on Essex Police will continue to increase as more victims' report crimes to police and the onus placed upon the force to record crimes in accordance with the Home Office Counting Rules.

This force will continue to monitor the demand placed upon it through the strong governance processes it has built. They will also closely monitor the impact that this may have with regards to crime recording compliance.

### **5.3 Risks/Mitigation**

There is a risk recorded on the Essex Police Strategic Risk Register relating to Crime Data Accuracy. This risk is reviewed regularly at the Crime Data Accuracy Board chaired by the Deputy Chief Constable.

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

None.

### **5.5 Health and Safety Implications**

None

## **6.0 Consultation/Engagement**

Crime Data Accuracy Board Members.

## **7.0 Actions for Improvement**

Despite the difficulties encountered during the COVID Pandemic the CDA Team will continue to provide guidance and support to all police officers and police staff who are responsible for the recording of crimes.

How crimes are finalised and ensuring that the correct outcome has been applied by the investigating officers will continue to be closely monitored by the Strategic Force Crime Registrar and his team. This in turn will ensure that more victims receive the service they rightly deserve and expect.

As a direct result of the audits which were conducted by the CDA Audit Team during this period of reporting, a focused effort will now be made to ensure that:

- officers and police staff are applying the most appropriate outcome during the finalisation process of an investigation, and
- officers who are completing a Risk Assessment at the scene of a Domestic Abuse incident, listen carefully to victims responses to ensure they have recorded all crimes;
- there is a strong supervisory footprint applied to both of the above.

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

Accurate crime recording helps forces prioritise investigations using suitably skilled staff. It also helps them manage their resources, plan effectively for the future, and give victims and the community the service they deserve.

The Strategic Force Crime and Incident Registrar and his team are committed to ensure that accurate crime recording compliance remains a priority for the force.

The force will continue to monitor the changing landscape caused by the Covid pandemic. The CDA Team will ensure that they adapt accordingly and be in a position to provide a proficient and effective service to all police officers and staff who are involved in crime recording.

Improvements in Crime Recording practices means that more victims receive the service they would potentially have been denied if standards are not maintained. Working to the CDA Improvement Plan, the importance of ensuring that officers and staff involved in the crime recording process continue to get it right at the first point of contact.

Moving forward, the CDA Audit Team plan to align their future activities with the proposals and intentions of the HMICFRS. This will include:

- conducting an audit to determine whether officers are accurately recording any crimes that are being reported following a report which has been recorded as an ASB Incident.
- Steps are also underway to consider conducting an audit which will encapsulate the journey of the victim from the first point of contact through to the finalisation of the investigation. The audit will be conducted jointly between the force's Audit and Inspection Team and the CDA Audit Team.

This audit will mirror the stance being taken by the HMICFRS and will give the force a much clearer understanding of crime and criminality. This in turn should ensure that Essex Police is using its resources in an efficient and accountable manner, and most importantly ensure that victims of crime continue to receive the appropriate and effective support at all stages of the investigation