

Performance and Resources Scrutiny Programme 2020/2021

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

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1.0 Purpose of Report

This paper is a deep-dive assessment of protecting children and vulnerable people from harm. It sets out key headlines in respect of resourcing, key initiatives and activities, demand, performance and future work.

2.0 Recommendations

The board are invited to note the contents of this report and the actions included within being progressed by the Force.

3.0 Executive Summary

For the purpose of this paper 'Protecting children and vulnerable people from harm' will focus on the following seven key areas:

- Sexual offending (adults and children)
- Domestic rape
- Management of Sexual Offenders and Violent Offenders
- Online Investigations
- Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE), Criminal Exploitation and Missing

- Mental Health
- Fraud and vulnerability of the elderly

The report contains data covering the previous five years to April 2021¹. Over the last 5 years recorded crime of this nature in Essex is highlighted to have increased. Whilst technological and partnership efficiencies have been prioritised to create some capacity, the investment and uplift placed in these areas to continue to meet anticipated increases in demand is evident.

Key pressures are clearly identified in the Force Management Statement and will be central to the Force's planning for additional resources, including effective utilisation of both the precept and national officer uplift.

The safeguarding of children and vulnerable people is and will always be considered a high priority for Essex Police. This is reflected in its continued appearance in the Force Plan published each year. Protecting and supporting children and vulnerable people remain policing priorities. The work of the Force across the seven key areas set out within this report link to the following priorities in the Police and Crime Plan:

- Priority 3 – Breaking the Cycle of Domestic Abuse
- Priority 4 – Reverse the Trend in Serious Violence
- Priority 5 – Tackle Gangs and Organised Crime
- Priority 6 – Protecting Children and Vulnerable People from Harm

4.0 Deep dive

Over the course of the last 12-18 months, there have been a number of developments, alongside work with partners, to improve the response for children and vulnerable adults.

4.1 Sexual Offending (adults and children)

4.1.1 Key Initiatives and Activities

C&PP formalised the Rape Prevention Strategy 2020/25, in early 2020, which sets out activity within Essex Police to prevent rape and serious sexual offences. The strategy highlights the partnership approach required to tackle repeat victimisation and offending and is based on current partnership frameworks to facilitate and encourage sharing of data, resources and expertise to deliver a coordinated evidence-based approach.

A Regional RASSO (Rape and Serious Sexual Offences) Tactical Group formed in April 2020, enabling recurring issues and good practice shared, along with generating ideas to improve working practices and investigation quality. This feeds in to a Strategic Regional RASSO Group. Data provision supports the process to inform blockers to enable specific case escalation and inform understanding around longer term inhibitors. As a result of the regional RASSO Boards a CPS escalation policy and appeals process were established, consequently Essex successfully appealed a CPS charging decision enabling charges to be authorised.

¹ With the exception of the MSG data (national comparisons for Rape Offence volumes), this data is only available to March 2021.

In June 2020, the combined Op Ratify and Op Yalta Governance Board was established focussing on preventative activity. Op Ratify identifies and tackles repeat offenders and Op Yalta identifies and reduces repeat victimisation. The board focuses on identifying new subjects based on intelligence, professional judgement and data analysis; reviewing activity on subjects identified as either repeat offenders or repeat victims; and, overseeing a structured coordinated multi-agency approach where suitable.

The Rape Scrutiny Panel launched in 2019 continues, recent work from the Panel identified a gap in digital forensics training of both Police Investigators and CPS Lawyers, as a result, digital media training sessions have been delivered to frontline Police and CPS teams to build knowledge, skills and understanding of digital forensic opportunities, along with a toolkit compiled to assist. Furthermore, a Cellebrite Frontliner Project pilot is underway with C&PP HQ Teams whereby technology enables the immediate download of a victims' phone at the scene negating the need to seize their device.

The First Responders Project initiative also continues which ensures victims contacted by ISVA within 24 hours of report to police continues, with Police referrals increasing year on year, rising from 858 referrals in 2018/19 to 1,789 in 2020/21. Evidence shows that victims who receive early support remain engaged with the criminal justice process.

A critical area of focus has been to increase early advice file submissions to CPS, to agree joint action plans, build strong cases from the outset and improve timeliness of investigations. The process has been streamlined with supervisory layers removed to enable files to be submitted directly to the CPS lawyer by shift Sergeants. Joint training is being delivered to frontline teams and is intended to build a prosecution team ethos and create positive cultural change to increase the volume of cases referred by police to CPS.

A new process was put in place January 2021, with requirement for an Outcome 20² check list to be completed for all such cases ensuring a DI authorisation of any Outcome 20 where there have been previous Outcome 20's recorded and to ensure consistency countywide across all C&PP PPIU hubs, with periodic dip samples required to ensure compliance. Alongside which the RASSO SOP was updated to provide guidance to officers with this approach specifically to Outcome 20 cases involving children.

Working in conjunction with L&D, a C&PP Training and Skills Board led by the South PPIU DCI was launched in 2021, this enables the command to ensure our frontline are equipped with the necessary skills and improve identification of current and future training and skills need. A key focus on the board is to support officers and staff to self-identify knowledge gaps and expand their skills. Training delivered includes a focus on the ISVA Services, File Quality, Disclosure, Trauma and Vicarious Trauma, and, Early Advice.

4.1.2 Resource

Sexual offending against adults and children is investigated by Public Protection Investigation Units (PPIU). There are three PPIUs aligned to the Local Policing Areas of Essex Police;

² An Outcome 20 assigned to a case is when 'Action is undertaken by another body/agency (from April 2015): Further action resulting from the crime report will be undertaken by another body or agency other than the police, subject to the victim (or person acting on their behalf) being made aware of the action being taken.'

North, South and West. Each PPIU is overseen by a DCI and includes Adult Sexual Abuse Investigation Teams (ASAIT) and Child Abuse Investigation Teams (CAIT).

ASAIT investigate any rape or sexual assault by penetration offences against adults or any serious sexual offence deemed appropriate by the PPIU DI.

CAIT deal with internal and external referrals and with a wide range of offences, from physical abuse and neglect through to sexual abuse and child death.

In addition to the PPIUs, the Quest team, which became operational from February 2019, investigate cases of non-recent child sexual abuse where the victim is now an adult, including inter-familial abuse, peer on peer abuse within an institutional or educational establishment, and, where the suspect held a position of public prominence or had responsibility over the child.

Through the Force Growth Programme significant resource investment in specialist sexual offences roles has resulted in 18 new ASAIT officers (40% uplift) as well as 19 of the Detective Constables as part of the Detective Fast Track scheme who joined the teams.

4.1.3 Key internal and external influencers

From August 2020, the Force with Criminal Justice partners were tasked with implementing Section 28 of the Youth Justice and Criminal Evidence Act 1999 (YJCEA). This allows all vulnerable and intimidated witnesses who have given their evidence by way of Achieving Best Evidence (ABE) interview to video record their cross-examination before trial. The work was led by C&PP Command and required the embedding of the new process internally and with partners within tight timescales. Implementation of the Section 28 process development included extensive internal Force-wide training developed and delivered prior to go-live, following which regular meetings are held with the Judiciary and SPOCs identified for each department with compliance monitoring.

The impact of COVID-19 resulted in a reduction in reported Rape and Serious Sexual Offences, however, nationally concerns have been raised that victims were unwilling to report for fear of repercussions in instances where they had not abided by lockdown restrictions. There was no evidence of underreporting for this reason in Essex, however, as a precaution, communications reassuring victims were published in Essex.

The Government “end-to-end rape review report on findings and actions” was published June 2021, this followed the End to End Review of the Criminal Justice System which commenced in March 2019 and looked at evidence to understand how rape and sexual offences are dealt with across the criminal justice system. Many of the points raised within the Review have already been embedded in Essex Police over the past 18 months. These are reflected not just at Force level but across the Eastern region as the Force work collaboratively with CPS and regional colleagues to deliver a consistent approach to rape and serious sexual offences (RASSO). The Joint National RASSO Action Plan has 5 key elements and a regional plan supports delivery, those 5 key elements are focused around: supporting victims; casework quality; digital capability and disclosure; our people; and, stakeholder collaboration.

In the wake of the murder of Sarah Everard, nationally there has been an outpouring of support further encouraging victims to have a voice. Essex are reviewing existing data in

order to understand the potential effect any formal change in legislation around the recording of misogyny as a hate crime may have on resources and the Force's ability to respond. In addition, the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) also published the Violence, Abuse, Intimidation Women & Girls (VAIWG) Strategy clearly committing to significant work in tackling VAIWG as a priority for policing to ensure public confidence and a feeling of being safe. Highlighting the importance of partnership work and the role of policing in preventing harm, bringing offenders to justice and influencing what society deems as acceptable behaviour. The VAIWG Strategy sets out a number of key priority areas and aims to help *"create an environment where women and girls feel safe to pursue their lives free of fear and harassment from men"*. The key principles include a focus on ensuring public spaces and educational establishments are a safe space; victims are confident to report to police; and, lived experience of victims will be listened to and respected.

4.2 Domestic Rape

4.2.1 Key Initiatives and Activities

The Sexual Abuse Strategic Partnership (SASP) Board established in February 2020, agreed a Strategy for 2020-23 and set out a multi-agency framework to improve working practices through the promotion and sharing good practice and issues. The SASP Board recognises the link between domestic abuse and serious sexual violence and acknowledges the importance of links to and role of the Domestic Abuse Partnership in establishing a pathway of support for victims.

C&PP developed a Public Engagement Delivery Plan setting its out approach to enhance engagement and messaging, improve public confidence, victim satisfaction and legitimacy. C&PP Command led on the development of the Victim Feedback Panel, capturing the victims voice to enable the Force to learn and shape future services. The first panel was held in May 2021, utilising victim commissioned services within rape crisis, domestic abuse and witness care to provide bespoke feedback to frontline teams. The first panel was well received, engagement and feedback was positive as a result and feedback from victims given the opportunity to utilise this as a platform to talk about their experiences has been outstanding. Support services already having identified victims willing to be part of future panels.

4.2.2 Resource

Domestic abuse cases involving allegations of adult rape or serious sexual offences are investigated by the Adult Sexual Abuse Investigation Team (ASAIT) unless a more serious crime has occurred that is not a sexual offence in which case the Domestic Abuse Investigation Teams (DAIT) will investigate.

The Central Referral Unit (CRU) continue to be based within Crime and Public Protection Command and provide specialist safeguarding countywide to victims of High-Risk Domestic Abuse.

4.2.3 Key internal and external influencers

The Stay Safe at Home campaign launched in April 2020, with organisations across Essex coming together to help keep residents safe while they spent more time at home during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Stay Safe at Home campaign, focused on five risks to people

during the early challenging days of lockdown, with one of the key areas of focus being domestic abuse. The campaign was developed by the Essex Resilience Forum, with brings together public sector organisations across Essex including Police, with the aim of ensuring for those victims living with domestic abuse feeling even more isolated and at risk remember there is help available. Whilst also focussing on perpetrators of DA encouraging them to recognise the signs and to seek help to change their behaviour. The Stay Safe at Home campaign featured in a circulation from the NPCC Lead for Domestic Abuse and College of Policing Crime and Criminal Justice Lead around Innovative DA practice captured nationwide in response to the challenges presented by COVID-19.

In November 2020, Government Ministers announced significant funding, including for victims of domestic abuse, in anticipation of the increase in demand over the winter months following the reports from charities regarding a sharp increase in demand during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Government committed circa £11 million towards a range of services offering practical and emotional help, alongside an additional £7 million towards a range of perpetrators programmes to prevent domestic abuse.

4.3 Management of Sexual Offenders and Violent Offenders

4.3.1 Key Initiatives and Activities

The work of the MOSOVO team is by its very nature preventative and is designed to prevent offenders from committing further offences by proactive policing, use of technology, partnership working and use of extensive risk assessments.

The National Probation Service (NPS) embedded scheme was established in January 2020, resulting in embedded Police MOSOVO officers into local NPS offices at Laindon, Colchester and Chelmsford. As a result, there has been improved information sharing, reduction of risk and a better understanding of roles. It has also resulted in improved allocation of Police resources, removal of duplication and a joint working process which clearly shows Essex Police re-establishing our role as a supporting force to NPS as the lead agency.

Standard Operating Procedures are now in place specifically focusing on Wanted Missing RSOs to ensure offenders are located more swiftly, as well as focussing on Intelligence Led Management (ILM) to ensure the most suitable offender cohort is identified and that the quality of ILM offender management. Furthermore, improved polygraph guidance has been published, enabling MOSOVO to continue to operate safely through COVID-19, as well as enabling an increased number of examinations to a higher quality to be completed.

DA Proactive Safeguarding Teams (DAPST) are now working more closely with MOSOVO and are aligned to the MAPPA process, utilising their specialist skills to manage and disrupt DA MAPPA Offenders. As a dedicated resource, DAPST has provided MAPPA with an increased toolkit of proactive and disruptive options leading to improved management of the DA offender cohort, better understanding of risk and reduction of risk due to the bespoke ownership of this crime type.

The Force secured £170,000 Home Office funding for Counter Child abuse technology to purchase market leading Monitoring Software, High end Triage equipment used by UK and US Special Forces, leading extraction software and training. This is already leading to the detection of offences and making Essex a hostile environment to operate in for the digital

registered sex offenders. A regional MOSOVO group has also been established, providing improved liaison, sharing of best practice, learning and mentoring amongst regional forces. As a result, Essex have been able to share their approach resulting in the successful funding bid and supported regional forces in also submitting successful bids.

MOSOVO now ensure that all RSOs and Violent offenders are flagged on Athena, this results in better monitoring, along with quicker identification and intelligence sharing. The flagging enables cross-departmental alerts to highlight officers and teams dealing with these offenders and helps indicate to officers outside of MOSOVO the risk these MOSOVO managed offenders pose.

4.3.2 Resource

Management of Sexual Offenders and Violent Offenders (MOSOVO) have five teams across the county with responsibility for Managing Registered Sex Offenders, Managing Registered Violent Offenders and participating in Multi-agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA).

Introduction of specific Violent Offender officers and supervisors for each of the two MOSOVO teams were introduced in May 2021 and have enabled improved management of (non-DA) Violent Offenders. These officers work in and out of MAPPA carrying bespoke safeguarding and proactive work to reduce the risk posed by the counties most dangerous offenders. The introduction of this team has reduced the risk in this area, supported NPS colleagues and added value to the MAPPA process, with close working established with Operational Support Group and Community Policing Teams to highlight local risk.

4.3.3 Key internal and external influencers

MOSOVO experienced a significant increase in demand during COVID-19. This is due to the impact of furlough, RSO's being increasingly at home and offending more online, alongside, children who would normally have been at school or nursery and safeguarded in these environments also being at home, and online, making them more vulnerable to physical or online abuse.

It is important to highlight that following successful investigations and outcomes of other areas of the command securing convictions against newly convicted sex offenders, these offenders as a result fall to MOSOVO to manage. The vast annual growth of RSOs therefore requires suitable officer to RSO ratios to ensure effective risk management of these offenders.

In 2020, joint working between MOSOVO and Stansted Airport officers commenced, under Op Barbershop. This saw the Force work with the airports, foreign law enforcement, ACRO Criminal Records Office, the Prisoners Abroad charity and Force Solicitors, receiving dangerous sexual and violent offenders at Stansted who had been deported from Australia and the United States following the end of their sentences. Ensuring they are served with Notification orders, register in this country as an RSO and work with charities to provide suitable housing. This is a completely new stream of work, which ordinarily would see such offenders arrive on charter flights to Heathrow and be dealt with by Metropolitan Police Service, however, due to cancellation of many charter flights as a result of COVID-19 offenders have come into the UK on private jets, with Stansted being the second largest

private jet receiver in the UK. Four flights have been received so far with further flights scheduled and expected to continue.

4.4 Online Investigations

4.4.1 Key Initiatives and Activities

As a result of COVID-19 in the early part of 2020 a number of POLIT low risk warrants were postponed resulting in a relatively substantial backlog. Once the initial lockdown restrictions reduced, Operation Wensleydale was initiated to deal with the outstanding warrants, enabled by financial support via the tasking process. All of those outstanding warrants have now been actioned as a result.

POLIT are increasingly utilising polygraph as a risk management tool to assess risk and identify offending pre-conviction. This has resulted in a number of occasions, of pre-test disclosures, interviews leading to admissions and offenders subsequently prosecuted and sentenced as a result for offences including: drug supply, exchanging IIOC, discussing sexual abuse of children, historic sexual assault, sexual assaults / thoughts on / about female children, undisclosed child contact and arranging to meet children following sexual communications online.

POLIT work with a number of charities that support suspects and their families after they have been arrested for IIOC offences; however, it was identified that there was no support for those who have been voluntarily interviewed. POLIT have continued working closely with Phoenix Futures and this gap has now been reduced.

All of the POLIT team are now fully accredited having passed the National Grading Training. This now ensures that POLIT staff uploading indecent images to CAID (Child Abuse Image Database) are fully compliant with the national requirements.

4.4.2 Resource

The Police Online Investigation Team (POLIT) has responsibility for investigations across the county into offences involving indecent images of children and paedophilia material held on a computer. This unit respond to referrals from other agencies (most significantly the National Crime Agency) and provide a proactive capability by utilising systems to detect those people in Essex viewing and distributing indecent images of children via the internet.

4.4.3 Key internal and external influencers

Developments in technology mean that online CSE is constantly evolving. According to Europol, mobile connectivity, growing internet coverage in developing countries and the development of pay-as-you-go streaming solutions are furthering the trend in the commercial live streaming of child sexual abuse. The NPCC highlighted criminals are exploiting evolving technology which provides tools to preserve their anonymity online more quickly than law enforcement are able to respond to these changes.

In 2020, the NCA assessed there were at least 300,000 individuals posing a sexual threat to children in the UK, this further supports the increase in demand for POLIT, with the NCA being a major referrer.

For POLIT, a change in working practices at the NCA led to more noticeable variances in the number of referrals month to month, to address this POLIT supervisors focussed on the high priority cases.

The increase in funding for Regional Organised Crime Units (ROCU) and the uplift in staffing on these teams has impacted on the work coming from these departments into POLIT. The investigations are not indecent images of children (IIOC) but online contact offences which are complex and resource intensive involving some of the most dangerous offenders to children. Most if not all that have travelled to meet a child this year have been remanded in custody.

An Athena tag has been created to capture reports generated from Online Child Abuse Activist Groups (OCAAG), this will help improve the Force's response in identifying and tracking OCAAG activity. Ownership of incidents reported to the police by Online Child Abuse Activist Groups (OCAAGs) will move from LPA's to POLIT, this will ensure that the most appropriate skilled team are managing this high-risk investigation.

4.5 Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE), Criminal Exploitation and Missing

4.5.1 Key Initiatives and Activities

A training package delivered by the Essex Police College for new recruits to the Force was developed by the Op Raptor team, focussing on CSE in relation to County Lines. This training is now mandatory for new Probationer Police Officers during their training. A CSE library has also been created on the C&PP Intranet pages. This is a document register for useful guidance to support frontline officers as well as C&PP Command for new legislation, guidance, or tactics to safeguard or suspect management.

A Virtual Regional Child Protection Knowledge Hub was created with the PPIU South DCI leading a regional working group to populate this hub which includes a focus on Child Sexual Exploitation and Child Exploitation. Focussing on capturing learning and good practice, providing a forum to ask questions, opportunity to extend to include key stakeholders within partner agencies.

The CSE team have worked alongside the PNC bureau to create a be-spoke CSE marker for both victims and suspects to assist frontline staff when the encounter such individuals. The CSE team where appropriate will use these markers in conjunction with a Trigger Plan held by the control room to ensure important information is flagged and that officers deal with the individual/s most effectively by either mitigating the risk or ensure effective safeguarding. In addition, a victim closure document has been created and piloted this enhances victim engagement and provides a victim strategy by taking a collaborative approach with partners. It ensures compliance with the new victim's code and increases referrals to support agencies, as well providing a mechanism to capture victim feedback.

For those children at most risk of harm, the CSE team utilises a criminal justice victim navigator. They can signpost professionals and charities to the individuals, to aid and support, to meet the individual needs of that young person.

Where all other options, criminally and civilly have been explored the CSE Team have created a strongly worded disruption letter approved by the legal department. This highlights the behaviour of an individual and where they can seek help to cease their behaviour and where to get help on their offending.

The Operations Centre held an Open Event with key leads in Child Services, Health and Probation on Contextualised Safeguarding, this included attendance of an expert guest speaker delivering an input to frontline practitioners, staff from CSE/Child and Adult triage teams, Children & Young Persons (CYP), Missing Person Liaison Officers and key leads in child services, health and probation.

In relation to Missing children, a multi-agency approach is taken across the board by ensuring referrals are made to the relevant local authority and partners. Utilising strategy meetings for a universal safeguarding approach. Essex Police form part of multi-agency Missing and Child Exploitation (MACE) and Risk Management Meetings (RMM) concentrating on the safeguarding and welfare of children at risk of exploitation who go missing, focussing around disruption opportunities and collection of evidence to support prosecutions, alongside wider operational activity to tackle CSE threats through analysing local trends, patterns and hotspots.

Operation Harrier sees buddi clips being provided to dementia sufferers who are at risk of becoming vulnerable missing persons. The Force provides the hardware and pass the management of the devices to the persons family, preventing and reducing the number of high-risk missing person episodes. With opportunities by Missing Person Liaison Officer's (MPLOs) through developing strong working relationships with local authorities and engaging with young people, gaining their trust and have identified children who are frequently missing and deemed vulnerable, seeking voluntary wearing of the buddi tags to reduce missing episodes and the risk exposed to vulnerable children.

4.5.2 Resource

Crime and Public Protection Command have a CSE Triage Team, acting as the 'front door' for all CSE concerns received by Essex Police. The team assess records, undertakes multi-agency liaison and ensures concerns are recorded, graded and reviewed in line with procedure. Following which a decision is made in respect of what, if any, further activity is required. This is then allocated to the appropriate team. The team also supports attendance at partnership meetings across Southend, Essex and Thurrock, working together to ensure that all identified concerns are responded to proportionately.

The C&PP CSE Investigation Team went live 13th July 2020. The team investigate the most serious, complex and organised Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE), proactively targeting suspects who are prolific abusers of children. The CSE Team was established as a result of a growth bid and was designed to supplement the work already on going within the Community Policing Teams and to deal with cross border matters.

Essex Police created a dedicated Missing Person Prevention Sgt post, this was a growth bid and was to fund a Police Sergeant post to supervise the already established Missing Person Liaison Officer posts (MPLOs). The Missing Person Prevention Sgt started in post in April 2021, the role is aimed to improve the consistency of MPLO supervision and enhanced team working through a centralised Missing Person Prevention Team (MPPT), under C&PP

command. This team will be prevention led, working across our three Local Authorities areas. The MPLOs role is to liaise with other agencies to identify a missing person's vulnerabilities, to ascertain why they are going missing and look at long-term solutions to reduce or prevent these missing episodes, rather than actively investigate or assist in locating the missing person. The MPLOs adopt a problem-solving approach with a heavy focus on 'children in care' missing and repeat occurrences from the same individuals, working with the local authority.

4.5.3 Key internal and external influencers

CSE is a broad area of policing, as technology develops the methods of offending change and investigative methods need to evolve. The focus is to ensure candidates with the right skill set are identified for placement, with a focus on the delivery of training and CPD to further enhance the abilities of officers and staff.

The Operations Centre CSE Triage team have continued to triage concerns relating to CSE, however, have also applied the same process to concerns relating to Child Criminal Exploitation. In the past two years, Children's Social Care have modified their IT systems to specifically capture the type of exploitation a child may be at risk of, criminal and/or sexual. This includes in 2018 Southend, Essex and Thurrock (SET) agreeing to change the CSE risk assessment to a Child Sexual Exploitation Risk and Vulnerabilities Assessment to incorporate the broader forms of exploitation.

Operation Hydrogen was established to monitor peer on peer abuse testimonies recorded on social media sites. In conjunction with Local Safeguarding Children's Partnerships (LSCP) an agreed referral process was created to notify relevant agencies when a site was identified enabling all relevant partnership leads to be notified quickly so a multi-agency assessment can take place and joint response agreed managed through the relevant LSCP. The approach is on supporting schools and ensuring appropriate safeguarding & welfare provision is in place. The Force are now scoping the opportunity to utilise and access joint training available for the police service that is being offered via the national board.

In August 2020, the Force created a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the local authorities in order to improve the process of identifying children and young people who are at risk of going missing and to help locate and safely return a young person as quickly as possible when they are missing. This is a significant step towards full implementation of the Philomena Project recommended as national best practice.

Op Innerste went live in Sept 2020, it is the multi-agency response to the complex issues surrounding missing unaccompanied Migrant Children. Following delivery of a briefing and guidance provided to the SET Directors, support from all three Children's Services was achieved. Migrant juveniles should not be coming through Custody suites, unless there is an absolute necessity to arrest them. The process requires the Officer dealing to make contact with Children's Services and complete a risk assessment questionnaire/welfare pack with the child if there is a delay in Social Services attending, biometrics from all children over the age of 6yrs old are also required. A skeleton compact record is created and this assists Police if the child is later reported missing. The PPU DI is required to be notified that the child is in Custody and Op Innerste is underway, prior to the child leaving Custody.

4.6 Mental Health

4.6.1 Key Initiatives and Activities

A Force Homicide Prevention Profile has been developed which highlights that mental health is a driver and linked to 21% of homicides. A 4P plan has been created in response to this with specific Mental Health related activity set out in the plan focussing around: work with Mental Health agencies to improve care for those in mental health crisis, including provision of S136 beds, to avoid escalation resulting in serious violence; evaluating street triage capability to protect those vulnerable to Mental Health crisis; and, continuing to develop profiling of Mental Health demand. A core objective of this work intends to ensure incidents where a Mental Health condition or crisis results in a homicide or severe near miss crime occurs a multi-agency review of circumstances will take place in order to identify learning and opportunities for earlier intervention by relevant partners in future.

Force analysts have completed the Force's Mental Health Problem Profile 2021 with the first iteration presented and discussed at the Force Mental Health Board in April 2021. The intention is to assess the demands on Essex Police, set out the approach and work undertaken by Essex Police and its partners, and to support and inform operational policy and decision making. Analytical techniques were used in formulating the problem profile to provide focussed, forward thinking recommendations, factoring in the impact of COVID-19 on the police response to, and provision of, mental health services.

Following four Force led multi-agency 'leaky pipe and myth busting' exercises held in December 2020 and January 2021 to check joint working protocols and process effectiveness, a Force analyst reviewed discussions and findings and recommendations were presented to the Regional Mental Health Board and Essex Crisis Concordat partnership group meeting. Follow up sessions have been arranged in June and July 2021 with those who attended the initial events scheduled to review the findings and agree and assign work stream leads to progress the recommendations.

A 24-hour snapshot was undertaken in November 2019 and more recently repeated in November 2020 in order to determine the extent of MH related activity. The snapshot featured as a HMICFRS recommendation in the 'Picking up the pieces' report and involved the collection of data on all incidents recorded over a 24-hour period from 00.00 – 23.59, including data on missing persons and those detained in custody. A manual review was subsequently conducted, which in 2020 also included a review by the Street Triage Mental Health Professional, where each incident has been reviewed against the NPCC MH incident definition, this identified further incidents that fit the criteria of a MH incident and therefore should have had some form of MH marker. Analysis however suggested that incidents not accurately identified as MH did instead have the marker of 'concern' or 'assist other agency'.

From 1st April 2021, a weekly Suicide Prevention Real-Time Suicide Surveillance System (RTSSS) data capture process commenced, the data capture serves to provide a mechanism to inform both local partnership suicide prevention activity alongside informing the NPCC Suicide Prevention Portfolio national data analysis programme. Work with partners regarding Suicide Prevention is also focused around training of our workforce, access to bereavement support and working with primary care (GPs) regarding firearms licence holders with MH issues.

4.6.2 Resource

Mental Health incidents across Essex are mainly dealt with by Local Policing Teams (LPT), who respond as part of their core business. These incidents include Section 136 detentions or any incident involving a person with mental health issues.

In support of the LPTs is the Street Triage team. This consists of police officers providing immediate joint screening assessment, with a clinical nurse, and support to those who may be experiencing a major mental health crisis. Aimed at providing an improved response to people in crisis and to reduce demand on resources by avoiding Section 136 detentions (where possible) providing an alternative framework of treatment and care. The nurse makes an assessment and can direct the mental health patient to the correct service. The Street Triage car makes all attempts to attend incidents but where it cannot the Mental Health Professional can provide remote telephone advice to officers from the control room.

The Operational Support Group (OSG) action all non-urgent requests from mental health professionals to execute Section 135 Mental Health Act warrants. Section 135 allows the police to enter an individual's home and take them to a place of safety in order that a mental health assessment can be carried out. If the matter is urgent it is referred to the Force Control Room to allocate resources.

Across the Force there are also seven Mental Health SPOCs, aligned geographically with their LPAs and linked to the Mental Health in-patient establishments in the county. The SPOCs are predominantly LPT Constables to Inspectors who have adopted the role in addition to their core duties. These teams are also supported by resource, 1 FTE, within the Crime and Public Protection Command, providing strategic capacity and capability.

4.6.3 Key internal and external influencers

The Street Triage model altered temporarily in response to COVID-19 and moved to nurses working from home providing remote support. However, on 8th September 2020, following a Contact Management command review, Street Triage resumed to a more 'normal' service, operating 1000-midnight, 1300-2300 there will be a police officer out in a triage car with a nurse, outside of these hours a nurse will be control room based and accessible.

From April 2020, people living in Essex experiencing mental health crisis requiring mental health support are now able via 111 option 2, to access a 24/7 telephone service enabling appropriate medical advice via either a 4-hour emergency response, a 24-hour urgent response or triage team tele-coaching, with a home treatment team available to provide care if required. As part of the service, a direct line for police is available to make direct contact with to refer individuals, bypassing the initial call centre. The referral pathway for police has been developed by the Street Triage Essex Health and Justice Team Lead in conjunction with Contact Management Command.

The NHS Core24 service standard is an enhanced service standard for adult liaison mental health services. Essex Police are actively engaged in the Mental Health Liaison Service Steering Group led by EPUT. The purpose is to achieve a more all-encompassing MH service, taking a holistic approach towards patients and ensure their needs are met in right way. The Force's engagement in the group provides opportunities to ensure the pathways for those in need of support include opportunities for police to refer and signpost members of the public into MH services, examples include via 'Crisis cafes' located across the county to

provide flexible, practical and emotional support in a calm safe place for people in a mental health crisis as an alternative to attending hospital as a first port of call. These may, in some circumstances, assist in preventing a crisis, and where not sufficient to alleviate crisis can provide a safe place for someone until more appropriate support is available.

The College of Policing Mental Health lead has confirmed it remains in the NHS Long-Term that £23m of funds are set aside for the provision of designated vehicles for the purpose of Section 135 and Section 136 conveyance nationally. This will result in purpose designed vehicles resourced by NHS Trusts being made available for those in Mental Health crisis, features include for example internal pink lighting to help provide a calmer atmosphere for conveyance. The rollout of the vehicles is expected to occur in 2021.

Mental health bed provision remains a national issue. Last winter, NHS England (NHSE) confirmed winter pressure funding of £50m made available from the Treasury to support better discharge from hospitals. NHSE estimate that 10-20% of beds occupied are due to local processes and care package disputes leading to delays in discharging effectively. NHS winter pressure funding resulted in access to two additional S136 beds in Basildon.

4.7 Fraud and vulnerability of the elderly

4.7.1 Key Initiatives and Activities

In respect of fraud, age can significantly contribute to the risk of repeat victimisation. The Essex Fraud Alert System (EFAS) is a weekly alert system identifying current local or national fraud trends affecting Essex residents. It is open to individuals, organisations, groups, police officers and staff to join and is free of charge. The alerts offer fraud prevention advice and signposting to other agencies who may be able to offer additional support. Amongst the organisations registered for EFAS are a number of agencies that work closely with the older residents of the county, including Age Concern, the University of the 3rd Age (U3A) and a wide variety of parish councils. In an attempt to ensure that they reach even those who are digitally excluded, additional effort has also been made to identify local media publications and local magazines willing to publish the messaging free of charge, thereby allowing the messaging to reach those who may not have access to social media. The alerts cover a vast number of different scams that affect a variety of age groups, but many alerts are particularly pertinent to the elderly population.

Operation Signature undertaken by the LPA Fraud Coordinator team is the most significant piece of Protect work implemented by Essex Police to identify and support safeguarding vulnerable victims of fraud. Originating in Sussex, this operation is seen nationally by HMICFRS as best practice in protecting vulnerable victims from fraud, enabling a standardised reporting and recording process. Operation Signature work focuses on the protection of the vulnerable members of the community, preventing them from becoming victims of such fraud and subject to further financial loss. The impact of COVID-19 has required the majority of the Op Signature process to become online and phone contact, this can be challenging when responding to elderly victims who often feel more supported by face to face attendance of a member of staff.

Partnership working with agencies that support older residents of Essex is key to the fraud protect work being completed by the Force. The Protect & Prevent Team have excellent links with the University of the 3rd Age (U3A). As a result, there are many older residents registered

with the U3A and have a keen interest in cyber security and fraud prevention. Regular liaison with both local and national U3A contacts results in the delivery of numerous presentations to regular audiences of over 100 individuals, which allows both awareness raising and the delivery of protect messaging to a vast number of older residents both in the county and further afield.

The CRU participated with a bespoke virtual Adult Safeguarding 'Street-Weeks' deployment in Thurrock with partners, volunteers and the Community Policing Team (CPT). A well-coordinated timetable of engagements was organised throughout the week, with the theme focusing on financial abuse, Doorstep crime and the safeguarding response to financial abuse. A victim focussed success was the early identification of a High-Risk victim that had been at the receiving end of an especially swift escalation from financial abuse to strangulation when they refused to withdraw their savings for the perpetrator.

The Operations Centre delivered a webinar to over 180 Adult Care Service professionals briefing them on how Essex Police manage safeguarding cases. Through a Q&A session it led to communication improvement opportunities being identified, referral and reporting clarifications being made and dispelling myths regarding safeguarding police investigation outcomes.

The Operations Centre were also involved in the delivery of flex-training to all front-line officers providing an input that included a focus on adult referrals, identifying common areas for improvement. A key was a focus on the quality of referrals, improving understanding regarding partners roles in safeguarding and the correct pathways.

The Thurrock Adults Safeguarding Audit Board is chaired by the Essex Police Operations Centre Safeguarding DI. This group of key partners review and QA policies and check for compliance, dip-sampling adult referrals and identifying learning. A MARAC researcher/administrator has been appointed as to support the partnership and work commenced with ECFRS and EPUT to deliver a joint plan around Hoarding and Mental Health.

4.7.2 Resource

Fraud is predominantly investigated by the fraud teams of the Serious Economic Crime Unit (SECU), a department within the Serious Crime Directorate (SCD). The fraud teams have two arms: Complex Fraud and Volume Fraud. In general, fraud relating to elderly victims is dealt with by the Volume Fraud Teams. They investigate all reports referred to Essex Police by Action Fraud. Fraud may also be reported as a call for service via STORM as a live incident. These are dealt with initially by LPA officers and depending on the complexity of the case they may retain the investigation.

LPA geographically based Fraud Coordinators are in place to engage with vulnerable victims of fraud and support them via signposting, safeguarding and crime prevention work. The Fraud Coordinators provide a strategic and tactical partnership response to identify and support vulnerable victims of fraud within Essex.

4.7.3 Key internal and external influencers

According to the NCA, fraud is the most commonly experienced crime in the UK. Fraud against individuals is typically targeted at elderly and other vulnerable people.

The Banking Protocol is an industry-wide initiative, developed by UK Finance in partnership with National Trading Standards, which trains bank branch staff to identify when someone is about to fall victim to a scam and try to prevent them from withdrawing cash to give to a fraudster. After this the staff can request an immediate police response to the branch to investigate the suspected fraud and catch those responsible. The SECU Volume Fraud Team review all Essex Banking Protocol reports and fill any identified safeguarding gaps. In December 2020, the Banking Protocol evolved encouraging telephone banking staff to make an email referral to the police without the customer needing to be in the branch. UK Finance identified a need to establish a process should a vulnerable victim be identified by telephone banking colleagues and the victim's vulnerabilities did not allow them to attend a branch in order to activate the conventional Banking Protocol. As a result, in order to identify whether the transaction was legitimate, and to ensure appropriate safeguarding was in place for the potential victim, it was determined this could be achieved by police completing a home visit with the victim within a 72 hour period.

Uttlesford Community Safety Partnership (CSP) requested the creation of some COVID-19 related fraud prevention material that could be distributed to the Uttlesford district during the lockdown period. After some discussion it was identified that funding would allow a mailshot leaflet that could be distributed to all postcodes within the district providing an ability to reach those who are technologically isolated, which is increasingly the elderly residents of the county. As a result, Essex Police produced a short leaflet containing the most prevalent fraud types that has occurred over the lockdown period, along with suitable protect advice.

Work has been ongoing between Essex Police, UK Finance and major UK supermarkets since spring 2020 regarding the implementation of clearer point of sale signage on gift card stands. Elderly people often fall victim to frauds where the criminal requests that they purchase a large value of gift cards from a supermarket with the intention of obtaining the codes from the victim. Whilst supermarkets are aware of these scams and have policies in place in an attempt to safeguard vulnerable victims, there has been suggestion that there is not sufficient attention given to the advice provided on the signage within the stores. Working in conjunction with UK Finance and their national Take Five to Stop Fraud campaign, it has been suggested to supermarkets that they incorporate this branding into the signage to make it clearer to those attempting to purchase gift cards whether or not the request that has been made of them is fraudulent.

5.0 Performance and Demand Overview

5.1 Sexual Offending (adults and children)

The C&PP D/Supt Investigations holds a monthly performance meeting with the PPIU DCIs to oversee and track demand, resourcing levels and the impact on officer caseloads, this includes scrutiny around outstanding suspects, repeat offenders, bail and RUI cases.

A breakdown of CAIT's investigations, based on the 12 months to the end of April 2021, highlighted these are mostly comprised of Violence without Injury, Other Sexual Offences, Rape and Violence with Injury. ASAIT's investigations are mostly comprised of Rape offences based on the 12 months to end of April 2021.

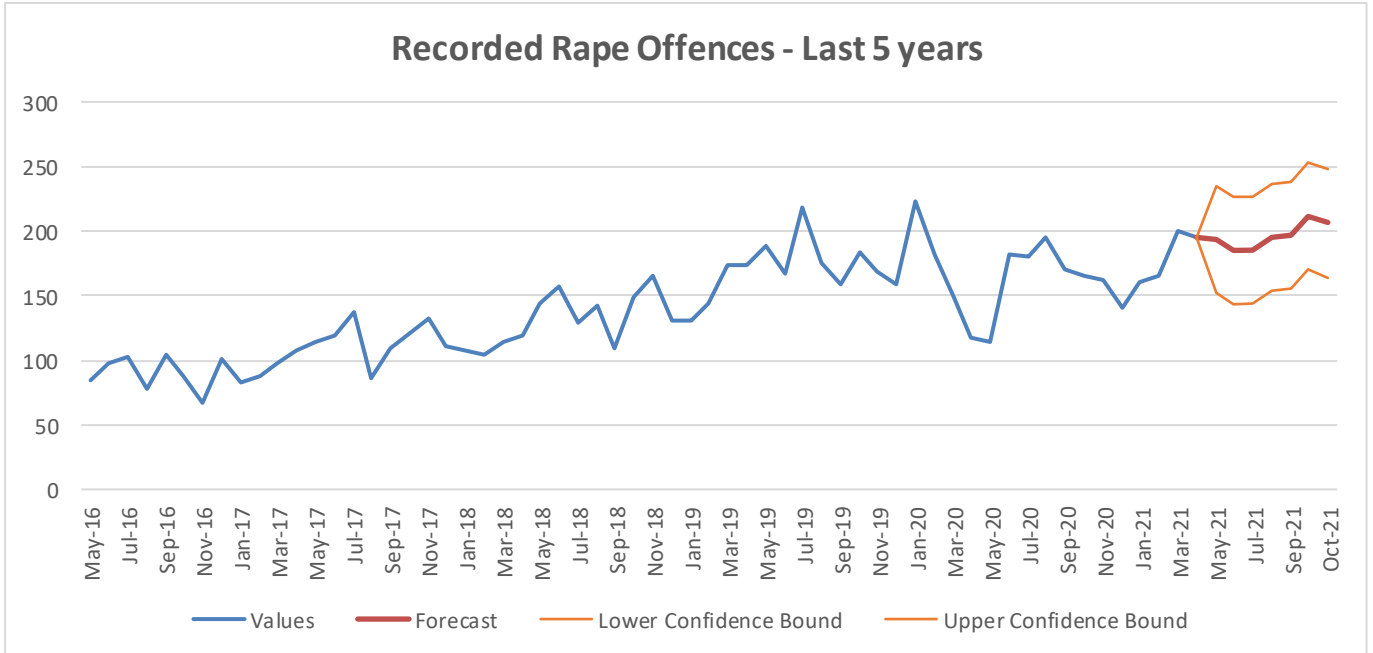
The below chart shows the total volume of offences recorded and allocated to both ASAIT and CAIT as well as the volume of solved outcomes recorded in the 12 months to the end of April 2021.

Unit	Total Notifiable Offences Allocated		Solved Outcomes		Solved Rate		Ongoing Investigations		
	Apr 21	May 20 Apr 21	Apr 21	May 20 Apr 21	Apr 21	May 20 Apr 21	Crime	Non-Crime	Total
ASAIT	174	1667	6	93	3.4%	5.6%	385	43	428
CAIT	257	2756	16	174	6.2%	6.3%	596	65	661

The below graph shows recorded Rape offences over a five-year period with a gradual increase over time. The significant decline experienced between January 2020 and May 2020 is likely to be the effects of the national lockdown in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The opportunity for such offences to occur were less impacted by the period of restrictions.

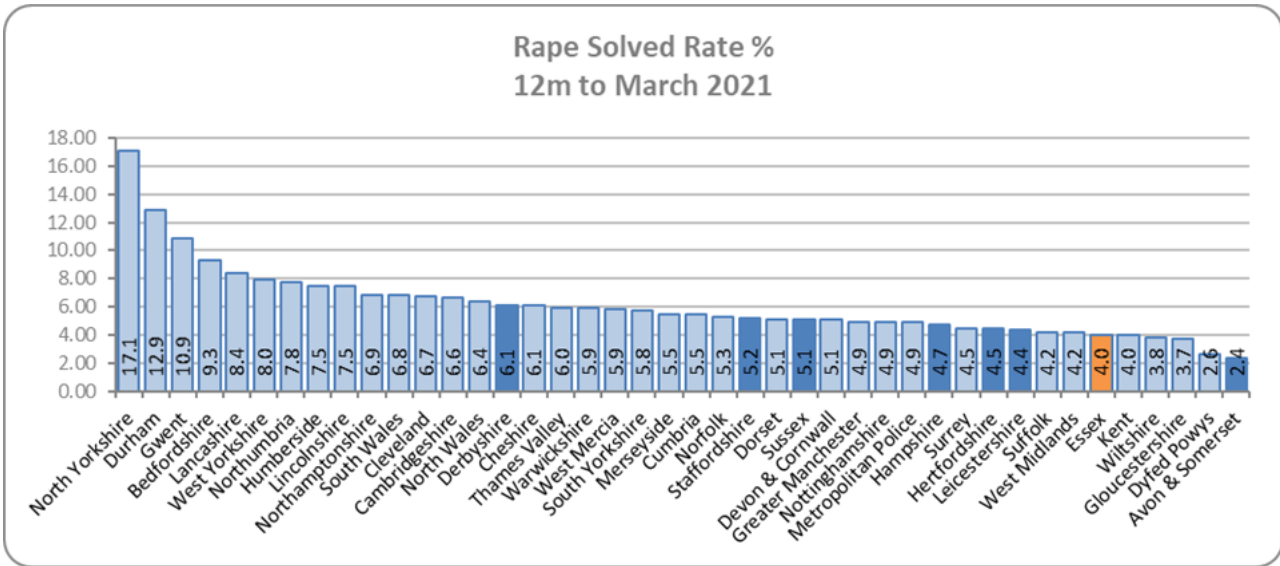
There was a further impact on the number of offences recorded as further local and national restrictions were implemented from November 2020 onwards before being eased again in the Spring 2021.

The six-month projection (presented in orange on the graph below) show offences are likely to continue to rise.



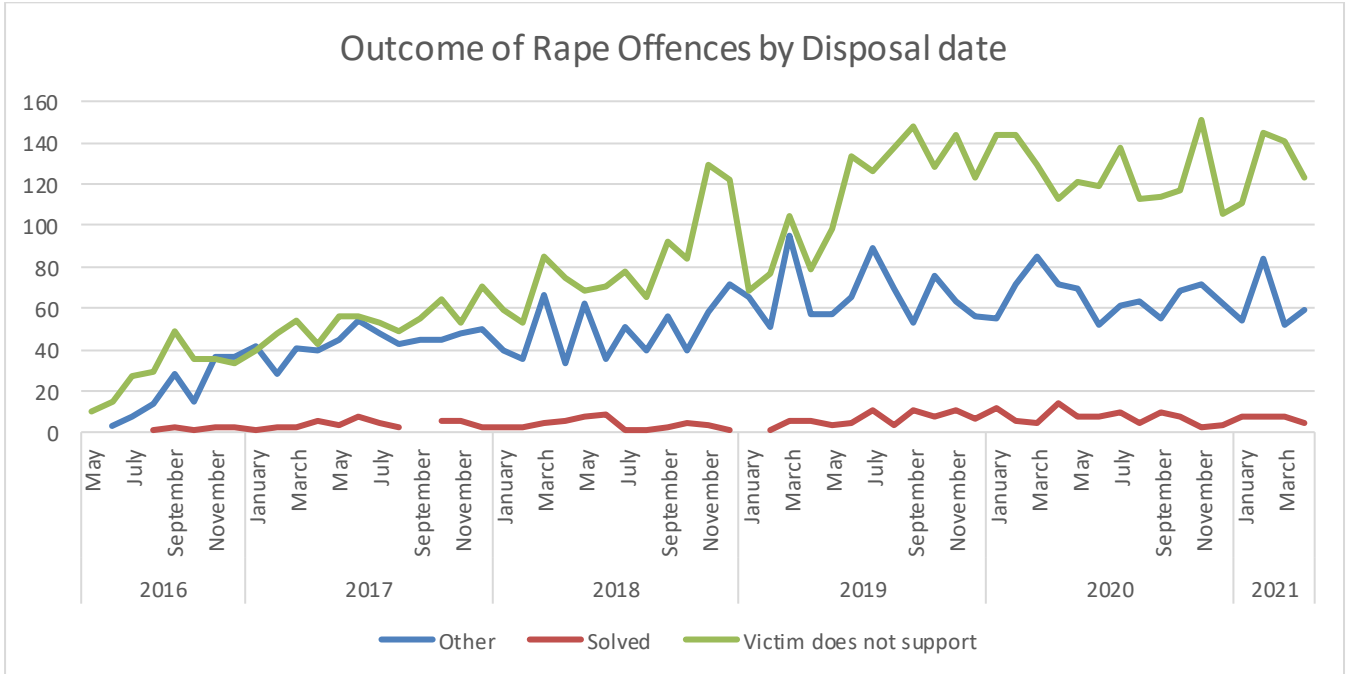
Essex has the eighth highest rate per 1000 population of recorded rape offences and are (joint) highest within their MSG, for the 12 months to the end of March 2021.

Although Essex have one of the highest rates per thousand population of rape offences recorded nationally, only 4.0 % in the 12 months to end of March 2021 have been solved making this the sixth lowest solved rate in England and Wales.



As rape offences have been increasing over time, the volume of child victims has remained at a lower volume. The increases in recorded rape offences has been driven by an increase in adult victims.

As recorded rape offences have increased over time, the “Victim not supportive” outcomes have increased. The past year was the first in the past four to not see a significant increase in this outcome group.

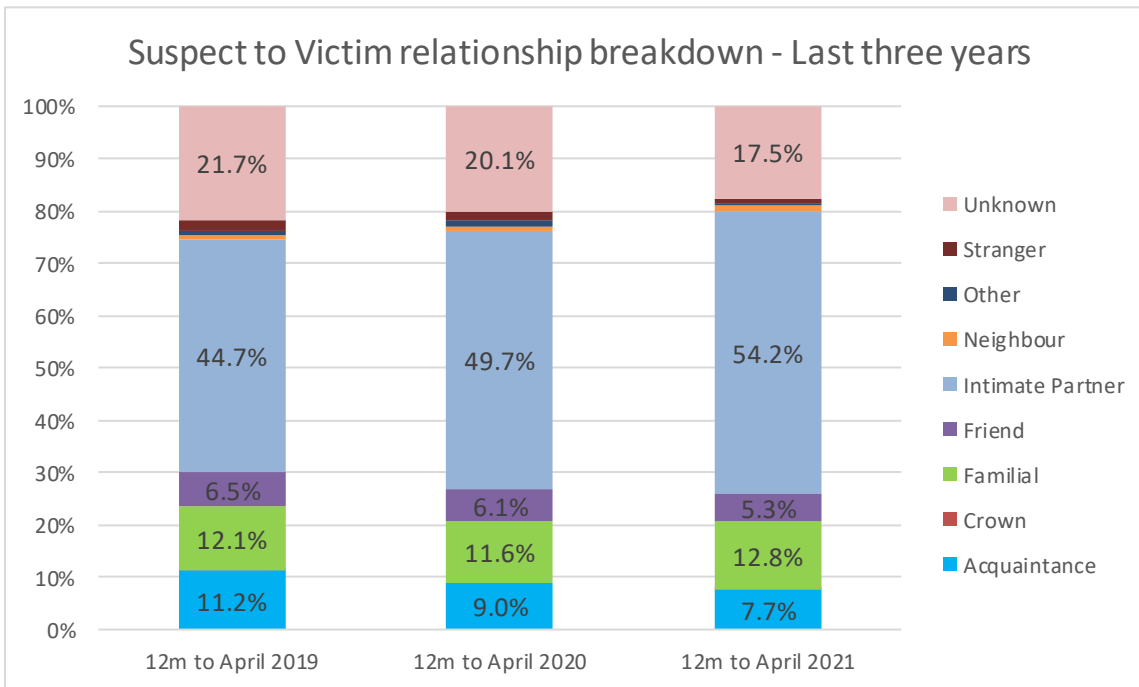


5.2 Domestic Rape

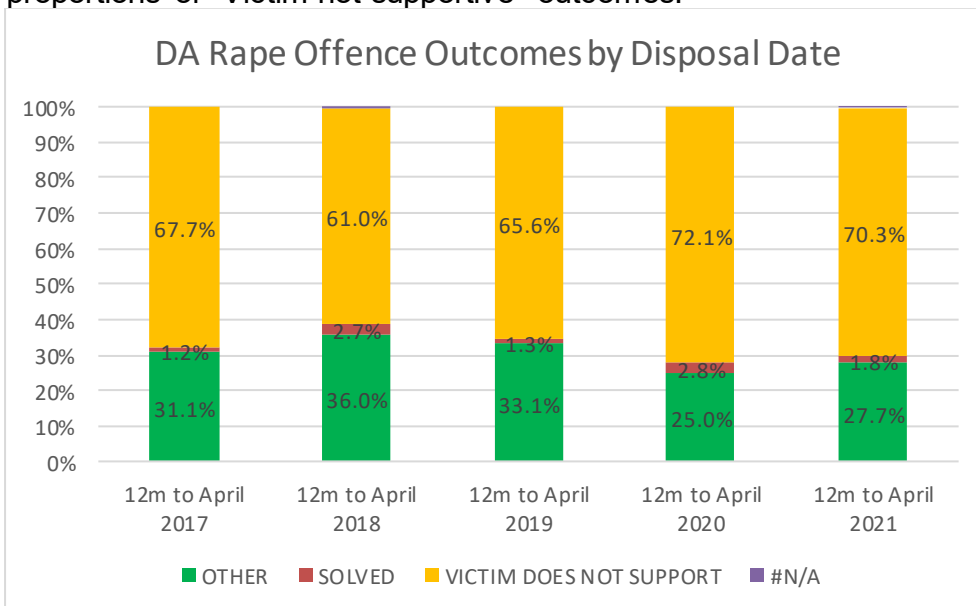
Recorded DA Rape offences have been increasing over time and did not appear to be impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic as the Non-DA related rape offences were. The

increase will be partly due to better crime recording and potentially higher levels of reporting. The volume of “Yes” responses to Q19 on the DASH risk assessment has increased over the last three years.

Rape offences in the 12 months to end of April 2021 show that the victim was an “Intimate Partner” in 54.2% (782) of the recorded crimes. This proportion has increased over the three-year period from 44.7% (558) in the 12 months to the end of April 2019.

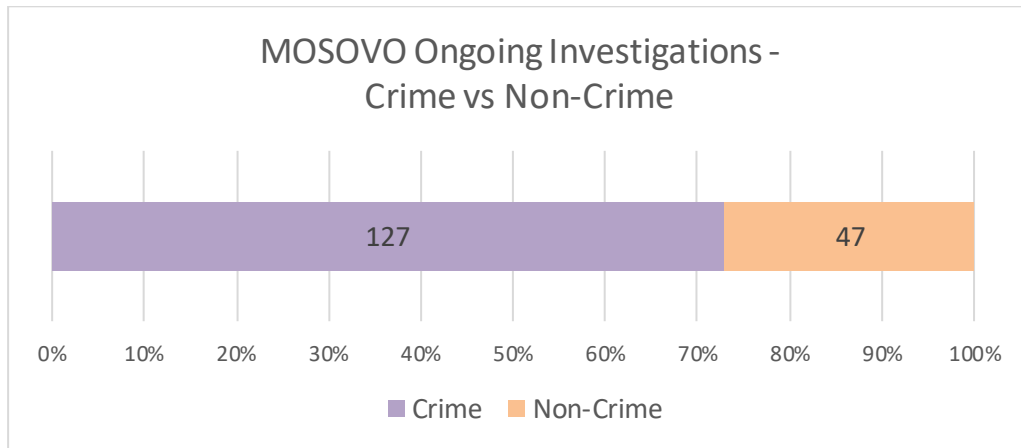


Domestic Abuse Rape Offences experience similar patterns of outcomes, with slightly higher proportions of “Victim not supportive” outcomes.



5.3 Management of Sexual Offenders and Violent Offenders

73% (127) of MOSOVO’s current ongoing investigations (in the 12m to April 2021) are Crimes and 27% (47) are Non-Crime.



Of the 530 notifiable offences allocated to MOSOVO in the 12 months to the end of April 2021, 189 (35.7%) resulted in a solved outcome. The majority (71.7%, 380) of allocated offences to MOSOVO during this period were “Failure to comply with (Sexual Offence) Notification Order”.

Unit	Total Notifiable Offences Allocated		Solved Outcomes		Solved Rate		Ongoing Investigations		
	Apr 21	May 20 Apr 21	Apr 21	May 20 Apr 21	Apr 21	May 20 Apr 21	Crime	Non-Crime	Total
MOSOVO	48	530	18	189	37.5%	35.7%	127	47	174

5.4 Online Investigations

In line with the National trend the Force have observed an increase in self-generated images of children during lockdown and an increase in NCA referrals requiring the development of intel into arrest and warrant packages for the POLIT teams.

In the 12 months to the end of April 2021, 12.5% (118) of recorded CSE offences were flagged to have been an “Online Crime” and/or “Cyber-related”. It is expected that the online / cybercrime flags are being underused on Investigation records.

POLIT recorded 414 offences during the 12 months to April 2021. This includes 41 non crime reports. There were 287 solved recorded all offences during the same period.

Crimes recorded:

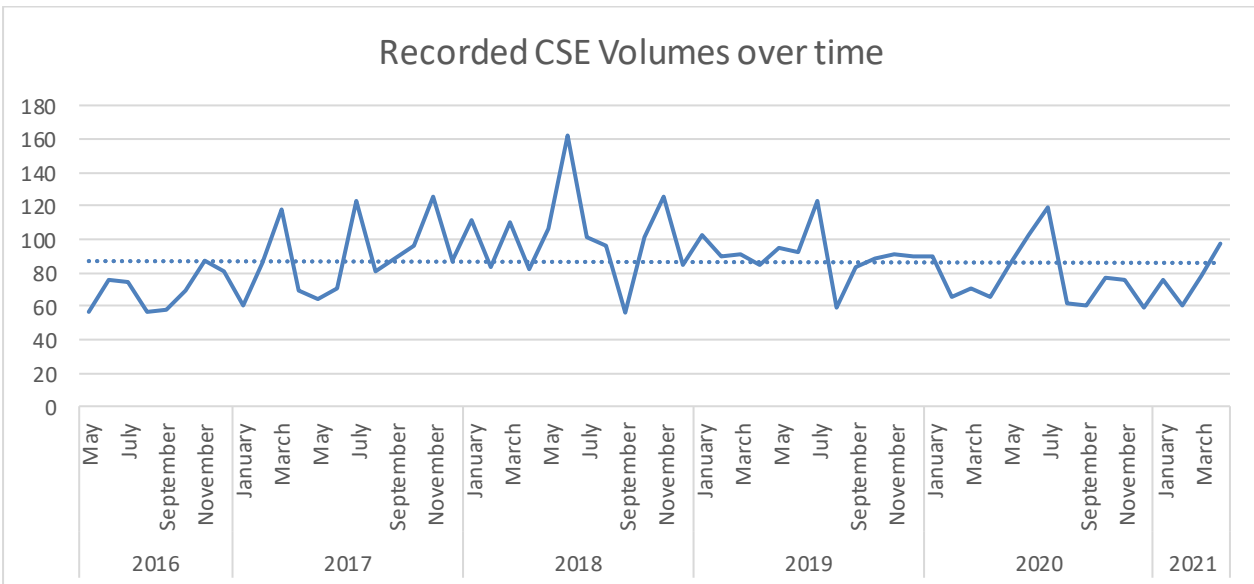
POLIT RECORDED	Q1 2020/21 (Apr-June 20)	Q2 2020/21 (Jul-Sept 20)	Q3 2020/21 (Oct-Dec 20)	Q4 2020/21 (Jan-Mar 21)	12 months total
All Offences	99	81	94	140	414
Non-Crimes	2	3	18	18	41

Crime outcomes:

POLIT SOLVED	Q1 2020/21 (Apr-June 20)	Q2 2020/21 (Jul-Sept 20)	Q3 2020/21 (Oct-Dec 20)	Q4 2020/21 (Jan-Mar 21)	12 months total
All Offences	65	87	43	92	287

5.5 Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE), Criminal Exploitation and Missing

The chart below illustrates that the volumes of CSE recorded offences have reduced slightly in each of the past two years.



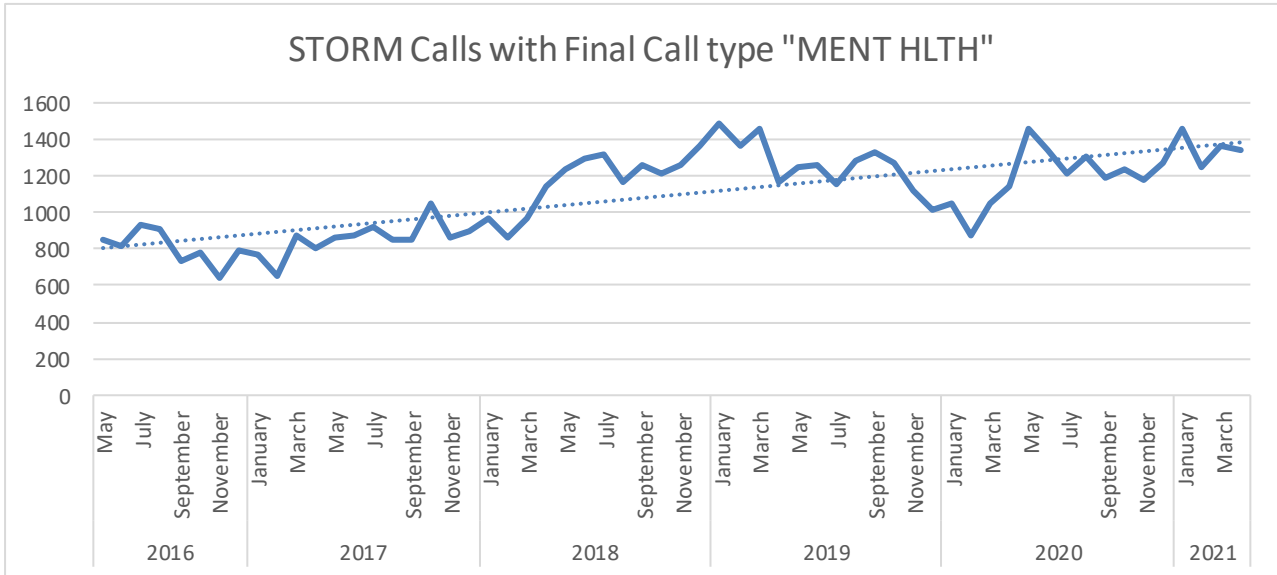
Data indicates the majority of missing persons reports relate to children, with looked after children forming a large proportion of missing reports, in particular looked after children account for having a higher proportion of repeat missing episodes.

5.6 Mental Health

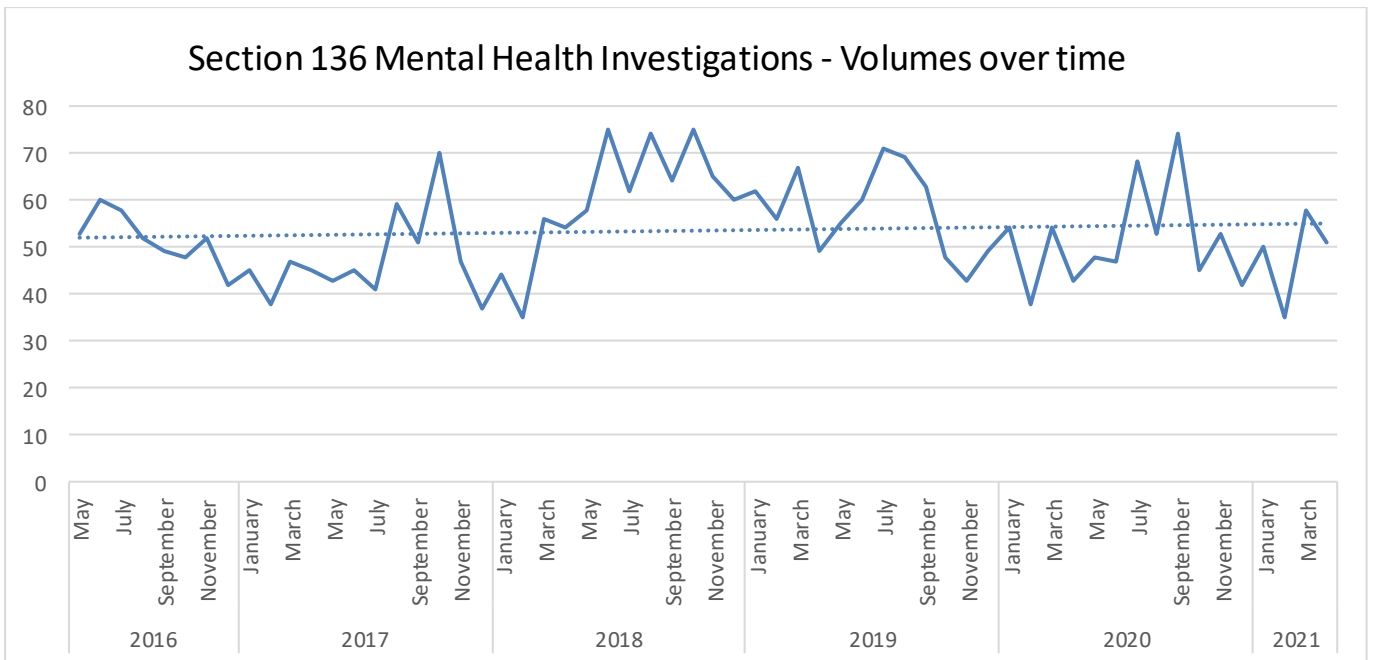
Calls received with a Final Call Type recorded to be “MENT HLTH” have been increasing over the five years with a significant rise between mid-2018 and mid-2019.

There is a dip in the volumes from September 2019 onwards for about four months but then volumes rise back up again to normal levels after February 2020. It could be possible that a

process change and renewed emphasis on recording mental health incidents was a driving factor for the 2019 figures as it returns to normal levels again in 2020. It is also possible that the COVID-19 pandemic may have increased the volumes of Mental Health calls which is a possible reason why the volumes go up at around the same time when national restrictions come into effect in around March 2020.



Section 136 Mental Health records data over time indicate a gradual increase. There appears to be seasonality to this trend with decreases in records during the winter months and peaks during the summer.

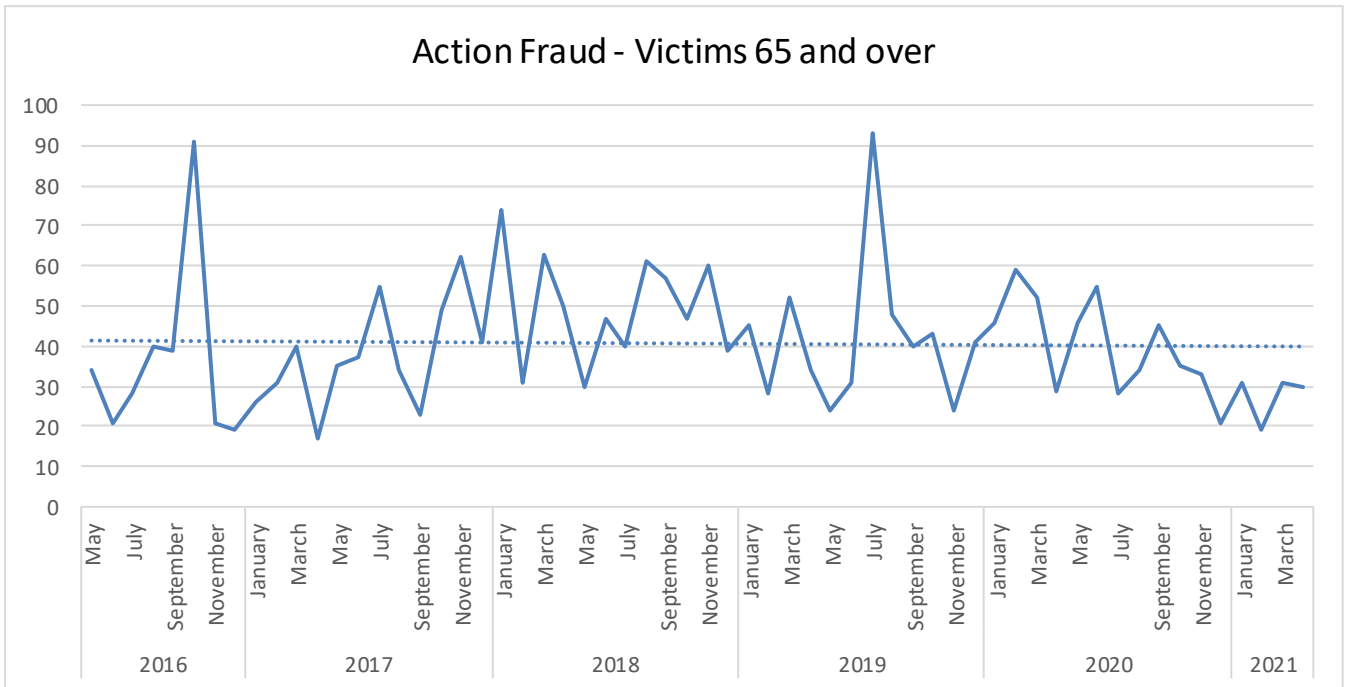


The number of Section 135 detentions have been increasing year on year over the past four years. In 2020/21, there were 154 Section 135 detentions, up from 38 in 2017/18, an increase

of 305%. Data has also indicated that the use of A&E as a place of safety due to lack of capacity at health-based places of safety continues to increase.

5.7 Fraud and vulnerability of the elderly

The graph below sets out Action Fraud investigations whereby the victim was aged 65 and over at the date the offence was committed. Volumes over time show a gradual increase with two prominent peaks in October 2016 and July 2019. The past year saw a reduction in the number of offences recorded.



In the last 5 years to April 2021 period, data based on the date of birth of the victims and the “Committed date” provided, highlights the majority (82.3%) of over 65 victims are between 65 and 85 years old. The age with the highest volume of victims is 72 with 133 victims being this age at the time the offence was committed. The average age of victims for this time period is 78 years old.

6.0 Future Work/Development, Expected Outcome and Actions for Improvement

The revised Code of Practice for Victims of Crime, launched 1st April 2021, outlining the 12 specific victims’ rights and minimum level of service victims can expect from criminal justice agencies. Vulnerable victims are eligible for enhanced rights under the Code, and the Force, Witness Care Unit and PFCC are all explicitly set out as being required to deliver the Rights under this Code.

6.1 Sexual Offending (adults and children)

The Government End to End Rape Review seeks outcome to improve public confidence in decision making and improve confidence amongst disabled, ethnic minority and LGBTQ victims. Joint CPS/Police engagement activity establishing a Community Engagement Group to meet regularly comprising representatives from Ethnic Minority, LGBTQ, Youth and

Vulnerable groups is underway. It is intended the group will promote joint CPS/Police achievements, understand barriers to under reporting, build understanding of CJ system, show complexities of rape investigations, dispel myths and encourage third party endorsement across communities.

A National ISVA Framework has been launched and work is underway to ensure all key elements are being met to ensure strong working relationships with local ISVA services. An Information Sharing Agreement is being devised to support this process.

6.2 Domestic Rape

The on-going and longer-term impact of COVID-19 on domestic abuse victims cannot be overlooked. Whilst the prioritisation of domestic abuse and other serious offence cases by the courts during the pandemic has been pledged, supported by significant Government investment in a range of measures to reduce delays and deliver speedier justice for victims, case and trial delays may result in victims becoming disengaged and increasing numbers of cases being discontinued.

6.3 Management of Sexual Offenders and Violent Offenders

Joint working between MOSOVO and Community Policing Teams intend to focus activity over the summer months on proactive work to tackle Registered Sex Offenders at holiday locations and large events in the county to protect residents and tourists ahead of the busiest year for UK Holidays.

Op Platypus is an operation to protect women and girls from sexual violence by reducing the number of outstanding visits on the NPS led RSO cohort, which increased due to COVID-19 Court backlog. This joint working enables detailed and timely safeguarding visits, supporting the detection of offending, reduction of risk, and improved joint working established by embed scheme.

A focus will remain on adequate resourcing of MOSOVO in line with demand requirements in order to remain compliant with national guidelines in respect of Officer to RSO case load ratios in light of continued increasing numbers of RSOs. Supporting the focus around reducing the number of Outstanding Investigative Home Visits and reducing reports of crime regarding RSO's due to tighter and better management and deterrents.

Increased use of Polygraph providing valuable insight into offenders. The increased use of Protective Civil Orders is intended through use of more Violent Offender Orders, better quality SHPO and SRO's and closer working with the Force Legal Department.

6.4 Online Investigations

C&PP Command commenced a Staff Welfare Project with Thurrock Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) aimed at improving staff and officer health and wellbeing, a pilot involving POLIT officers is underway providing swift psychological support as required. The project further aims through reviewing of national research and documentation and undertaking focus groups with staff and clinical specialists to inform improved practices within the command. In particular recruitment into high-risk roles, screening and coping mechanisms available to staff, and, guidance and training available for supervisors.

6.5 Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE), Criminal Exploitation and Missing

An Achieving Best Evidence (ABE) Quality working group has been established to improve the process of interviewing children and vulnerable persons not only within LPA's but Crime and Public Protection also. The Force recognise that conducting high-quality interviews with children is attained through Achieving Best Evidence (ABE) training and completion of high-quality supervisory reviews. It is deemed that the interview quality in Crime and Public Protection is good, however, the quality can vary in LPAs, therefore an ABE Quality working group has been established in order to improve this process.

With lockdown restrictions easing some migration from online CSE offending to contact offending is anticipated. There are several operations actively trying to educate people to spot the signs of at-risk children and act accordingly to provide safeguarding, along with support to children. These include:

Operation Kirn (Makesafe) is a joint initiative with Essex Safeguarding Children's Board around educating hoteliers and similar accommodation providers within the County, around recognising the signs of Child Sexual Exploitation. Those establishments identified by local policing teams as being most suitable will be contacted for training and on completion will be given a certificate, signed by a senior Police officer from Essex, to confirm staff have been suitability trained. They can then promote that accreditation on their advertising and display the certificate within their premises.

Operation Henderson is a coordinated initiative to identify and engage with children who may be at risk of Child Exploitation and who are using the transport networks within the County. Children who may be involved in County Lines or are knowingly missing are known to use public transport. Civilian staff from the transport networks will work alongside Officers from Essex and BTP at transport hubs to engage with children and educate other members of the public who themselves may then raise concerns.

An identified gap in understanding and the transfer of data and information held on Local Authority Children and children in general who move out of Essex Local Authority Care or move into Essex. The development and introduction of a standardised form and Memorandum of Understanding between agencies and partners is planned to improve this current approach.

The Government has recently published 'reforms to unregulated provision for children in care and care leavers' which means that no child under 16 can be placed in independent or semi-independent settings from September 2021. There will also be investments into increasing placements. Much of the monitoring of this will be conducted by Ofsted, who will be given additional powers. Although this is a direction from Government, it should be noted that the force played a role in the consultation phase, providing evidence to support the decisions made. These reforms will also assist with the Philomena project as all children under 16 will be in registered settings.

A national issue with the COMPACT computer system and compatibility issues has been identified in that COMPACT does not work with ATHENA. There is progression in that a mobile device version is in development which would prevent officers from having to return to the police station whenever COMPACT needed updating. Although not confirmed, funding

has been requested for document storage to be added to the Force's version of COMPACT which would provide a central storage location for the missing persons care provider assessments.

Op Orochi which focuses on pro-active and reactive investigations into County Lines is extending its focus around children at risk of missing and CSE, with a clear criteria being set out to identify those individuals suitable for inclusion in the operation.

6.6 Mental Health

Challenges remain in terms of demand; the Force are not alone in that it is reliant on effective intervention from primary and secondary NHS care to prevent the need for a policing crisis response. Capacity issues and other difficulties in health organisations undoubtedly creates a knock-on effect in respect of demand placed on policing in this area.

Research undertaken for the Force Mental Health Problem Profile 2021, indicates that in Essex, estimates show there are around 150,000 residents known to be living with mental illness and many others not known about. Public Health research suggests rates of anxiety and depression may rise as a result of COVID-19, with rates of depression amongst adults doubling and anxiety levels increasing, this would increase the total population of those with common mental health concerns in Essex. The effects of this has already been seen by mental health services, in addition, calls to the Essex Police 999 system with a primary category of Mental Health have increased. The Centre for Mental Health has used a model to predict, in England, up to 10 million people (almost 20% of the population) will need either new or additional mental health support as a direct consequence of the COVID-19 crisis. 1.5 million of those will be children and young people under 18.

Access to beds for children is a challenge, in particular where there is a requirement for a Tier 4 Psychiatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU) bed, due to limited availability nationally. As a result, the Force have experienced instances whereby vulnerable children experiencing MH crisis have been left in the 'care' of police whilst partners struggle to find a suitable bed. This challenge was most certainly exacerbated by the impact of COVID-19 with MH units unable to accept additional children.

Due to the issues with flagging on Athena, clearly and accurately measuring and understanding current demand is for mental health incidents, as well as accurately forecast future demand remains a challenge. Some of this risk is being mitigated by the introduction and development of a Mental Health dashboard in 2020.

It is important to highlight the additional challenges placed upon the Force in respect of navigating and engaging with partners within the complex landscape in respect of those responsible for the MH care of residents of Essex.

Essex Police were one of two forces working with the College of Policing and Nottingham University to devise a template for all Forces to self-evaluate their Street Triage function in order to assess effectiveness. An independent review by the College took place in October 2019 and the College of Policing Street Triage Evaluation Toolkit Framework was released to forces at end of November 2020. The Force are working to finalise a Terms of Reference for the Force's evaluation process to commence. This review will require engagement with a number of key internal and external stakeholders. It has been identified that an Information

Sharing Agreement (ISA) for Street Triage is required, a copy of an ISA in place in another force area has been obtained as a best practice example and reviewed to determine whether it is reflective of Essex practice and provides a base product for Essex to work with.

The Force has completed a homicide prevention profile; showing that 21 percent of homicides are linked to mental health. A 4P plan has been created in response to this data. The force has made links with the CPS mental health SPOC to provide expertise at an early stage of investigation, this has proved particularly effective for cases involving persons in mental health units. The force now has opportunity to refer mental health cases for early advice where the force might be struggling to progress locally. In 2020 the Crisis Care Concordat resumed, however, due to COVID-19 this is likely to be progressed later this year. This is a national agreement between local services and agencies involved in the care and support of people in mental health crisis. It sets out how organisations will work better together, to make sure people get the help they need when they need it.

A standardised countywide A&E Voluntary hand over form is being developed to alleviate the issue of people in mental health crisis being delivered to A&E by police, who subsequently go missing and are reported as a missing person.

It has been identified that an Information Sharing Agreement (ISA) for Street Triage is required, a copy of an ISA in place in another force area has been obtained as a best practice example and reviewed to determine whether it is reflective of Essex practice and provides a base product for Essex to work with.

Following the HMICFRS '*CJJI – Mental Health Thematic Inspection into the experience of suspects with MH conditions within the CJS*' in 2020, an action log has been created with oversight from Strategic Change to capture the specific actions requiring improvement as a result of the inspection. Action owners have been assigned with updates and progress managed through the Force MH Board.

Due to COVID-19 the partnership Essex Crisis Care Concordat Group meetings were postponed from early 2020, however, in May 2021, the group resumed. A focus at the meeting was the multi-agency Pan Essex Policy in respect of section 135 / 136 requiring review and updating, the Force return will be provided via the Force Mental Health tactical lead.

The Force have engaged with partners to work on the development of an Adult Self-Harm Toolkit which aims to focus on early detection and prevention to stop escalation in adults. The Self-Harm Task & Finish subgroup completed a series of virtual workshops on MSTeams in March and April 2021, whereby a selection of Essex Police officers and staff attended to provide an input. In May 2021, the first draft of the Toolkit was circulated for comments and expected to be live for use in late 2021.

A focus for the Real-Time Suspected Suicide System data collection work will be to develop a technical solution to support improved data capture and analysis without the need for labour intensive time-consuming processes being instigated. In addition, following the approval of a data sharing policy document by the Force Data Protection Officer, the Force will commence monthly data sharing with ECC Public Health colleagues enabling ECC to analyse Police data alongside partners data, i.e., BTP, RNLi, Health and Ambulance services, to better understand the real-time trends and patterns presenting in respect of 'suspected' suicides in

order to provide an improved public health response regarding provision of services focussed on suicide prevention to support those at risk of and those bereaved by suicide. Furthermore, the Force Director of Strategic Change and Performance and Head of Analysis are exploring opportunities within the Essex Centre for Data Analytics (ECDA) focusing on suicide prevention, in particular opportunities to understand attempt suicide data that police and partners may possess in order to better understand any specific risk or protective factors. A scoping document is being developed to submit to ECDA for consideration. Discussions are also underway with Public Health colleagues regarding access to and referrals for Bereavement Support. Suffolk and North East Essex (SNEE) Suicide Prevention Programme have commissioned Victim Support to provide a Suicide Bereavement Support Service across Suffolk and North East Essex due to commence in June 2021, providing an opportunity for police to refer families/witnesses to the service when they attend a 'suspected' suicide. This service is only commissioned to covers specific Colchester and Tendring postcode areas; however, ECC Public Health colleagues are exploring opportunities to access additional NHS England funding to seek to secure a countywide bereavement support offering.

Additional training opportunities available to the Force from partners focused on Suicide Prevention and Self-Harm have been reviewed by L&D to ascertain whether this additional training can be coordinated as training within or in addition to the Force Core Mental Health programme. It was identified that much of the content of the of the partnership training offerings are already covered in the Force Core Mental Health training, however, there is a gap for suicide prevention and more detail on specific mental health conditions and autism. There is a plan in place to cover this as part of the package on mandatory defensive skills training, alongside opportunities to engage with a virtual training offering from a Clinical Nurse Manager and Embedded Mental Health Nurse are being reviewed by the Force Tactical Mental health lead with a view to implementing further training more locally across commands where required, specifically for teams where risk factors relating suicide have been identified as the potential to cause most risk, i.e., POLIT, Custody, Rural Engagement Team and areas with high rates of suicide.

6.7 Fraud and vulnerability of the elderly

There is continuing work being undertaken with Age Concern to distribute protect messaging to their service users and upskill their staff and volunteers. Fraud prevention training has already been completed with their Advice Service team who have regular phone contact with their service users, and training to their Befriending and Emotional Support Service with an aim to embed fraud training as 'business as usual' throughout the organisation.

Romance fraud is impacting an increasingly wide range of victim ages, including those who are later in life. In conjunction with Victim Support, the Force has attempted to establish a peer support group for those victims who have been affected by romance fraud. It is believed that romance fraud victims are amongst the most vulnerable fraud victims due to the emotional impact of this particular fraud type. However, many victims will not discuss their experiences with friends or family due to the feelings of shame or embarrassment. It was identified that they may feel more comfortable discussing their experiences with others who had been through similar situations. The project is being undertaken with the DateSafe working group who are assessing the viability from a national level.

Due to COVID-19 fraud prevention events historically scheduled at branches of Barclays countywide and attended by SECU were paused. During 2020, due to COVID-19 face to face crime prevention has been difficult, however, online campaigns on key risk have been diarised and subject of Action Fraud activity, with Force Media Department engagement.

7.0 Risks/Mitigation

There are three risks currently held within the Force Risk Register owned by C&PP Command, the latest position as follows:

Risk 2448

The result of significant growth in Cat 2 and Cat 3 MAPPA eligible offenders means there is a risk that the current management of violent offenders will not cope with the increased demand leading to further serious violent offending and increased homicide. Mitigating actions in place include exploring collaborative opportunities for partnership access to Athena; and, developing a new structure detailing how the force will deal with violent offenders.

Risk 2449

On transition to Athena an issue occurred in that if a DBS applicant uses an alias name or date of birth for an Enhanced level DBS check, the risk is that the details used will not hit against force data. This may result in a clear DBS Certificate issued to an applicant where force held data indicates they represent a risk to children and/or vulnerable adults.

Mitigating actions include exploring a long-term solution through Athena forces for a permanent fix. As well instigating an interim solution to extract the relevant alias data from non-innocent nominals and complete a weekly upload of the data.

In addition, there will be a bulk of uploads which DBS will have to process to ensure nothing was missed prior to the interim solution being implemented.

Risk 2502

Due to the amount of information stored on the C&PP Share Drive without the capacity to review and dispose effectively, there is a risk that C&PP fail to comply with the force records management policy and Freedom of Information Act 2000. Resulting in potential personal data being retained outside of RM timeframes and potential for duplicate retention of information stored on multiple systems

Mitigating actions include: firmly embed retention and disposal practices in the mindset of every officer and staff, achieved through comms being re-circulated by the Head of C&PP to raise awareness; to ensure only those that should have access to the individual folders and material contained within the C&PP shared drive do, preventing unauthorised access; and, taking a forward-focused approach regarding review and disposal of 'historic' material.

8.0 Equality and/or Human Rights Implications

There are no identified impacts on equality, diversity or human rights.

9.0 Health and Safety Implications

None identified.