

## Performance and Resources Scrutiny Programme 2021

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

<b>Title of Report:</b>	<b>Vulnerable Groups Annual Report</b>
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<b>Chief Officer:</b>	<b>T/ACC Kevin Baldwin</b>
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<b>Report from:</b>	<b>Essex Police</b>
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>28 July 2022</b>
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<b>Date of Approval:</b>	<b>1 July 2022 – ACC Baldwin</b>

### 1.0 Purpose of Report

This paper is a summary of activity from Essex Police relating to vulnerable groups over the time period April 2021-April 2022.

### 2.0 Recommendations

The board is invited to note the contents of the report and the actions being progressed by Essex Police.

### 3.0 Executive Summary

This paper will focus on five areas:

- Management of Sexual Offenders and Violent Offenders (MOSOVO)
- Online investigations
- Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE), Criminal Exploitation and Missing
- Mental Health
- Fraud and vulnerability of the elderly.

It is proposed to bring a detailed paper to P&RS Board in September (subject to approval on the forward plan) examining force performance on the investigation of

rape and other serious sexual violence. The slight delay in reporting against these important crime types is to allow time to adjust the internal performance metrics to fully align with the recently published national CJ datasets.

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

The reporting period of April 21 to April 22 covers a post-lockdown period in which it can be seen that some patterns of demand have started to revert to pre-pandemic levels, for example in the case of missing children; yet in other areas, such as online offending, it appears we are seeing burgeoning new trends.

The Force identified where improvements were needed in the management of sexual or violent offenders as part of our self-assessment preparations for the HMICFRS PEEL Inspection. An action plan was immediately developed and has been overseen by the ACC for Crime and Public Protection Command.

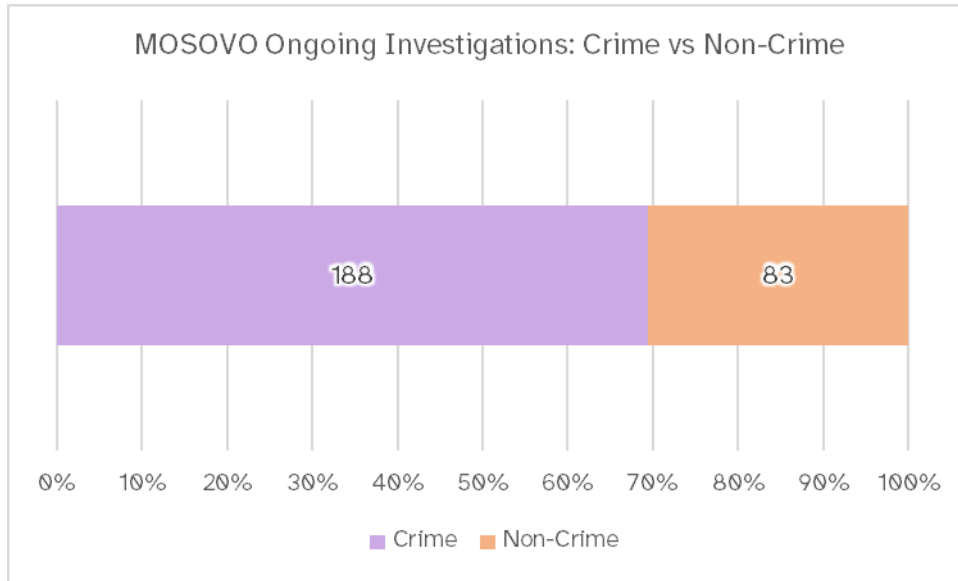
#### **5.0 Current Work and Performance**

Essex Police's Victims' Feedback Panel was launched in May 2021 in conjunction with the CPS. This twice-yearly panel has been established to engage further with victims of crime from all crime types to shape and improve our service. Each panel has a theme, with the first two panels focusing on sexual violence/domestic abuse and ethnic minorities. The Victims' Feedback Panel is believed to be the first of its kind in any force and was recognised at the national Vulnerability, Knowledge and Practice Programme (VKPP) Awards in April 2022.

##### **5.1 Management of Sexual Offenders and Violent Offenders (MOSOVO)**

There has been a 55.7% increase in ongoing investigations for MOSOVO in April 2022 compared to April 2021 (271 vs 174 respectively). 69% (188) of MOSOVO's ongoing investigations are crime as of April 2022. This is 61 more crime investigations when compared to April 2021 (127).

The volume of non-crime ongoing investigations has risen by 77%, with 83 ongoing investigations in April 2022 compared to 47 in April 2021. Non-crime investigations make up 31% of all MOSOVO's ongoing investigations. (These are largely MAPPA investigations, with some non-crimes created upon seizing a device while we ascertain if full offences have been committed.)



Despite an increase in notifiable offences allocated to MOSOVO (658 in the 12 months to April 2022 vs 530 in the 12 months to April 2021), the solved rate has improved by 6.2% points. Of the 658 notifiable offences allocated to MOSOVO in the 12 months to April 2022, 289 (41.9%) resulted in a solved outcome compared to 35.7% in the 12 months to April 2021.

Unit	Total Notifiable Offences Allocated		Solved Outcomes		Solved Rate		Ongoing Investigations		
	Apr 22	May 21 Apr 22	Apr 22	May 21 Apr 22	Apr 22	May 21 Apr 22	Crime	Non-Crime	Total
Mosovo	45	658	15	289	48.8%	41.9%	188	83	271

### 5.2 Online Investigations

In the 12 months to May 2022, 13.9% (161 out of 1,158) of Child Sexual Exploitation investigations were flagged to be cyber/online related. This is a 41% increase when compared to the 12 months to May 2021 (47 more). This increase could be caused by better utilisation of this flag; however, it is still believed to be underused on investigations.

	12m to May 2021	12m to May 2022
Cyber/Online	114	161
Not Cyber/Online	806	997
<b>Total</b>	<b>920</b>	<b>1158</b>

POLIT recorded 499 offences during the 12 months to April 2022. As of April 2022, there were 379 ongoing investigations, 12 of which were non-crime reports. There were 303 solved offences during the same period.

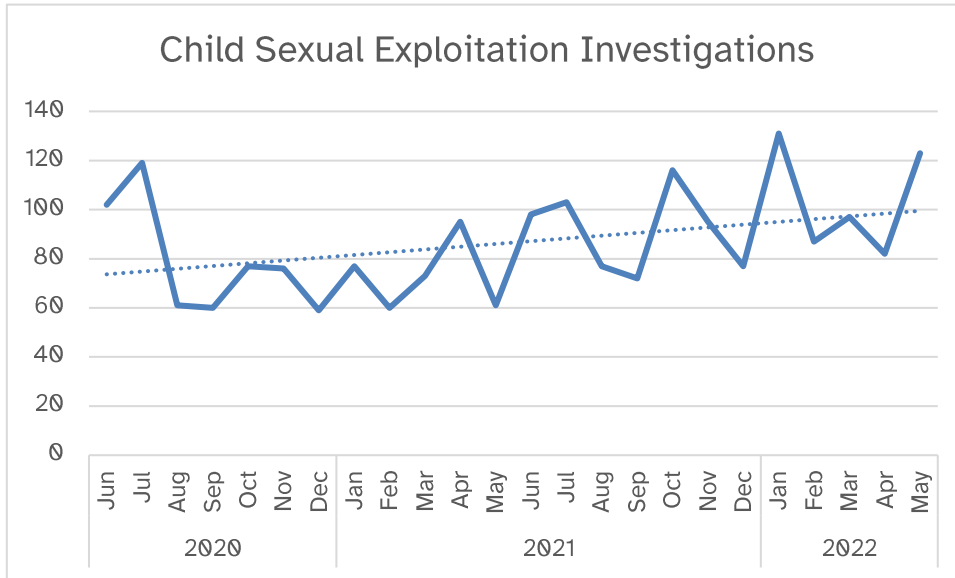
Unit	Total Notifiable Offences Allocated		Ongoing Investigations			Solved Outcomes		Solved Rate	
	Apr 22	May 21 Apr 22	Crime	Non-Crime	Total	Apr 22	May 21 Apr 22	Apr 22	May 21 Apr 22
POLIT	25	499	367	12	379	24	303	96.0%	60.7%

- The NCA Annual National Strategic Assessment of January 2022 set out the overview of the serious organised crime threat to the UK. It was noted that the use of technology in serious organised crime has increased and adapted significantly, with the rise of encrypted online platforms. The paper states that Extended Reality (XR) technology (an umbrella term encapsulating Augmented Reality (AR), Virtual Reality (VR) and Mixed Reality (MR)) is enabling more immersive platforms for offending on the Dark Web OCGs are utilising technology to offend at a far higher rate and this is predicted to rise, e.g., encrypted devices to commit child sex offences online.

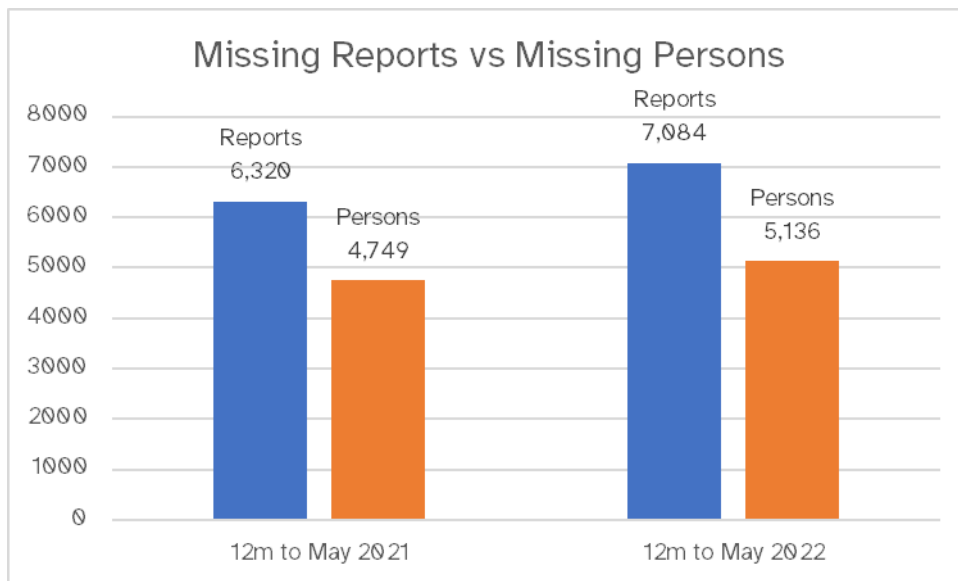
The Force Police Online Investigation Team (POLIT) took over as operational lead for all Online Child Activist Groups (OCAG) offences as of 1<sup>st</sup> January 2022, following a decision by Chief Officers and in light of an increase in “paedophile hunter” activity and the specialist skillset within POLIT. By focusing the ownership of activity within one department it has been possible to log all instances of OCAG activity and note a distinct increase in figures since January alone – there have been 27 investigations involving OCAGs from January to the end of April. This increase is likely to be partially down to better reporting and management than a marked increase for this year. A Standard Operating Procedure has been developed for OCAG cases to ensure consistency of approach. It is too early to see improved outcomes, but we now have a consistent and standardised approach.

**5.3 Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE), Criminal Exploitation and Missing**

There were 1,158 Child Sexual Exploitation investigations recorded in the 12 months to May 2022. This is 238 more investigations than the 12 months to May 2021 (920).



In the 12 months to May 2022, there were 7,084 missing person reports (5,136 missing persons) compared to 6,320 reports in the previous year (4,749 persons). This is a 12% increase in reports and an 8% increase in actual persons. 55% of missing persons in the 12 months to May 2022 were children (2,845).



During this reporting period, the first Sunflower Suite was completed at Clacton Police Station, with work already underway for the next at Grays Police Station. Sunflower suites are welcoming and comfortable rooms in which to place children taken into police protection while we are awaiting a Social Care placement.

The Essex Police Quest team, which deals with allegations of historic child sexual abuse, has had an uplift of staff agreed in this reporting period to assist with the increased demand in relation to historic cases. When all staffing is in place, this will effectively double the size of the unit.

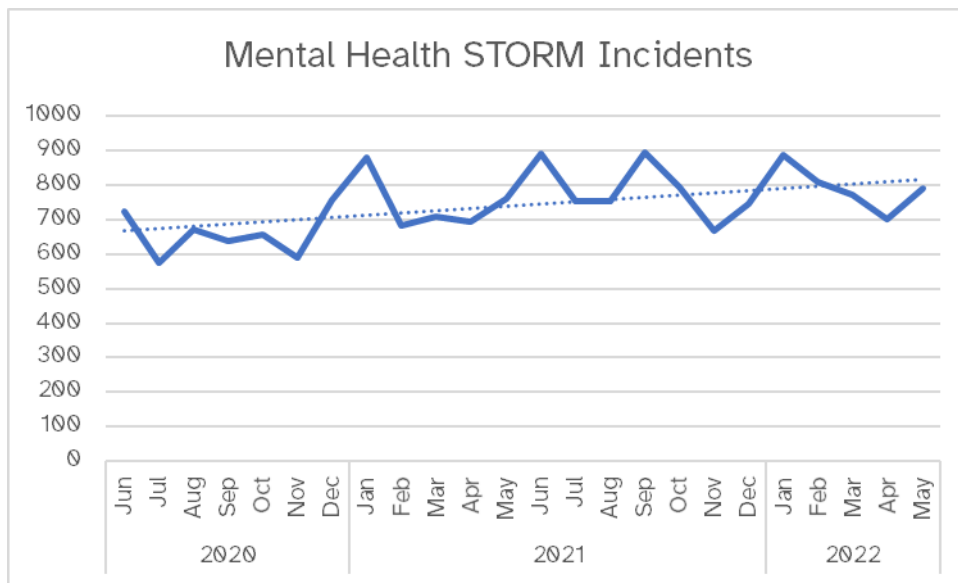
Operation Henderson has been reinvigorated during the past year, with a day of action in April 2022; this is a partnership-led CSE operation heavily supported by

Essex Police that targets specific transport network hubs in the county. Children being exploited, or vulnerable to exploitation, use transport hubs; it's estimated 40% of those transporting drugs for county lines use train networks. Op Henderson raises awareness with transport workers and taxi drivers and gives them tips on signs to look out for, as well as information on what to do if they have concerns about a child.

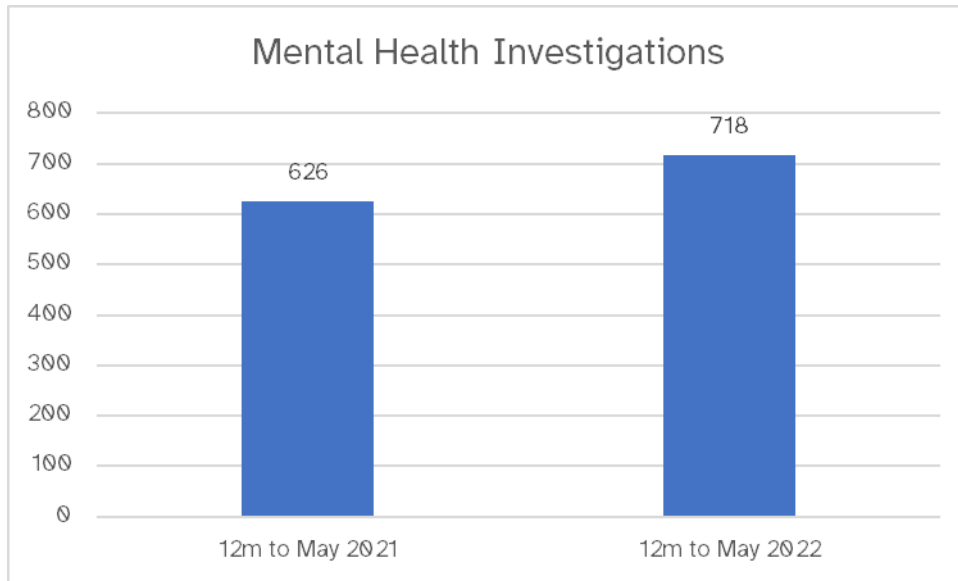
### **5.4 Mental Health**

Calls received with a Final Call Type recorded to be "MENT HLTH" have continued to increase over the past two years.

There were 1,119 more STORM incidents with the Mental Health call type in the 12 months to May 2022 than the same period the previous year (9,471 vs 8,352 respectively). This is equal to a 13% increase in incidents.



In terms of Mental Health Section 136 non-crime investigations, there were 718 in the most recent 12 months (to end of May 2022), which is 92 more than the same period the previous year.



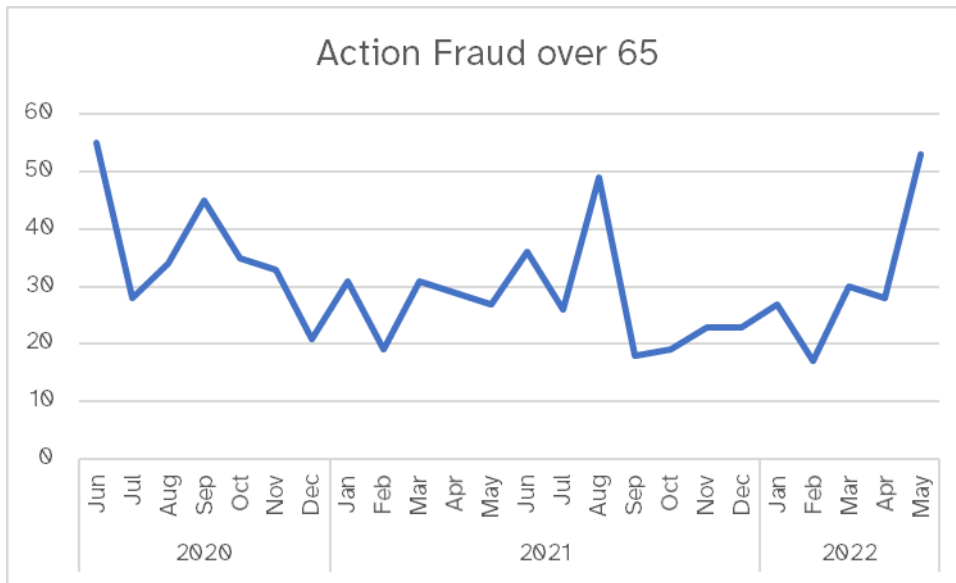
Mental health is an increasing area of business. The Essex Police Strategic Aims regarding mental health are in line with the Force Plan 2022/2023:

- **Prevention** – Understand the themes and work in partnership to reduce the escalating risk of serious violence in:
  - Repeat contact cohorts
  - Repeat victim cohorts
  - Repeat suspect cohorts.
- **Investigation** - Understand the themes and work in partnership to:
  - Op Cavell – Reduce and prevent serious violence in NHS Professional settings
  - Victims/Witnesses – Improve the investigative approach, quality, and victim confidence
  - Suspects – Improve the investigative approach and quality.
- **Response** - Understand the themes and work in partnership to:
  - S136 – Reduce the unnecessary amount of S136 detentions
  - MHST – Improve service delivery of MH services through the MHST and EPUT teams
  - S135 – Improve the THRIVE risk assessment and response to S135 detentions
  - Escalation – Challenge partnerships operationally and strategically to release officers from unnecessary abstractions.

**5.5 Fraud and vulnerability of the elderly**

In the 12 months to May 2022, there were 349 Action Fraud Investigations with a victim aged 65 or over. This is 10% fewer than the same period the previous year (388).

The age with the highest volume of victims is 74 with 42 victims at that age at the time of date committed.



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 and Volume Fraud. In general, fraud relating to elderly victims is dealt with by the Volume Fraud Teams, who 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 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.

**6.0 Implications (Issues)**

As previously mentioned, the force identified where improvements needed to be made regarding MOSOVO and a supporting improvement plan was developed and overseen by ACC Baldwin. Following an HMICFRS review and 6-8 weeks of intensive focus, marked improvements have been made; however, the action plan will continue to drive down outstanding visits and risk assessments in the coming months alongside further improvements in process.

Force finance and resources data are already provided at a high level to the PFCC's office on a monthly basis, in the form of the Financial Monitoring Report and the Police Objective Analysis. These reports are presented to the Performance and Resources Scrutiny Board and the subsequent Strategic Board

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



The work detailed above contributes to a key priority in the Police and Crime Plan 2021-2024, namely “Protecting vulnerable people and breaking the cycle of domestic abuse.” It also makes a positive impact on other priorities set out in the Police and Crime Plan such as “Reducing violence against women & girls” and “Improving support for victims of crime.” Much of this effort is driven by partnership work, which aligns with a key theme of the Plan.

## **6.2 Demand**

An uplift was received last year which enabled the creation of new posts on MOSOVO, QUEST, CAIT and the establishment of the POET team. The pandemic notwithstanding, much activity within C&PP now focuses on prevention: the POET team; the revitalised Op Yalta and Op Ratify meetings to tackle repeat victims and offenders; the pushing of an offender-centric approach in our SOP; working with the DAPST team outside the C&PP Command to problem-solve repeat domestic abuse. The nature of MOSOVO work is preventative; and the action plan put in place has vastly improved the productivity of this team. Meanwhile a review of the C&PP Command has been put in place over the past 6-9 months and the final product is expected imminently, which will suggest ways of working more efficiently within the Command. It is fair to say, however, that demand is expected to rise and new challenges will face us: whether that is the rise of online offending exacerbated by the pandemic or the increase in Mental Health-related incidents.

## **6.3 Risks/Mitigation**

There are 2 management level 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.

### **Risk 2611**

MOSOVO outstanding visits to Registered Sex Offenders. Visit and ARMS backlogs due to staff shortages and increased demand means there will be reduced investigative assessments to determine the risk a sex offender poses, less safeguarding of the most vulnerable and reductions in information and intelligence being shared between partner agencies. Following HMICFRS PEEL inspection an Improvement Plan has been created to mitigate this risk in the short term and Op Implement has been running since 2nd May where officers from across the Command have been seconded into MOSOVO to support this work. The plan consists of 34 Actions. Progress against these actions will be fed into this mitigating action. Risk score has reduced from 45 down to 10.

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

In writing this paper there are no identified equality and/or human rights implications. However continual consideration is given to these implications in the delivery of the business as usual of the command and in developing policies and working practices.

## **6.5 Health and Safety Implications**

C&PP Command tackles some of the most serious and complex crimes within our communities when victims can be at their most vulnerable. Our officers and staff have highly demanding roles in terms of the potential emotional impact on those involved and the length and complexity of the high-harm, high-risk investigations. Occupational health support and psychological screening is available to all relevant members of the Command.

## **7.0 Consultation/Engagement**

Essex Police's Performance Analysis Unit has provided statistics for this paper.

## **8.0 Actions for Improvement**

Significant investment has been made within this area in the period 2022/2023 including an increase of 10FTE staff in QUEST, 10FTE staff in CAIT and the launch of the POET team. The establishment is in the last quarter of 2022 will be 598.89 FTE. In 2015 the Public Protection Command was 276 FTE. This is an increase at the end of 2022 of 110%.

There is a current proposal in to create a dedicated Mental Health team.

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

The Force is working on a new policy for obtaining Third Party Material (TPM) following new direction from the Information Commissioner on 31<sup>st</sup> May, recommending a number of improvements to how and why forces obtain TPM, and for CPS to be aware of the parameters. This will speed up case progression and streamline rape/sexual assault investigations but will more importantly also increase confidence in policing.

Technological advances to help improve our response are being investigated and trialled, notably at the moment ways of obtaining faster extraction of data from victims' mobile phones.

Essex Police will be leading on a multi-agency conference regarding Child Death and Serious Injury in Young Children in October 2022, having identified a "silent pandemic" in non-accidental injuries in babies in Essex.

It is hoped that the C&PP Review will identify more efficient and effective ways for the Command to use its resources to better serve the public.

The forthcoming Victims' Bill, expected 2023, may create an increase in victim support services resources including IDVA and ISVA services; this will see Essex Police working closely with these services to ensure a smooth and efficient referral

service and ensure that the role of ISVAs and IDVAs is clearly understood by all. We await outcomes from the Government consultation to determine how this Victims' Bill will further impact policing.