

Performance and Resources Scrutiny Programme 2022

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

Title of Report:	Crime Data Accuracy - Update
Classification of Paper:	Official
Agenda Number:	7.0
Chief Officer:	DCC Prophet
Date Paper was Written:	October 2022
Version Number:	V1.0
Report from:	Essex Police
Date of Meeting:	26th October 2022
Author on behalf of Chief Officer:	PSE Ron Scott Strategic Force Crime and Incident Registrar
Date of Approval:	4th October 2022 / DCC

1.0 Purpose of Report

To provide a biannual update in relation to the progress of Crime Data Accuracy by Essex Police.

2.0 Recommendations

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

3.0 Executive Summary

- Despite high volumes of incidents and some resourcing challenges within the NCRS Support and Review Team (NSRT), high overall crime recording compliance levels as set out in the Home Office Counting Rules (HOCR) have been maintained during this period of reporting. It is important that the force continues to sustain a high crime recording level. This ensures that victims of crime continue to receive the appropriate support they need and deserve.
- The NSRT continues to provide frontline support and a quality assurance (QA) function, to support the Force in improving crime recording accuracy.

- An internal audit, conducted by the CDA Audit Team, identified that officers and staff have, in some instances, been responsible for over recording Stalking and Harassment crimes. Extra training is now being delivered to rectify the situation. A new audit process and additional training has been introduced to prevent this happening in the future.
- The Strategic Force Crime & Incident Registrar has worked closely with the ACC Baldwin and senior officers from the Crime & Public Protection Command to provide some context around why the force is an outlier regarding the number of rapes they record, when compared to their most similar group forces (MSG) forces throughout the country.
- A new criminal offence of non-fatal strangulation or suffocation¹ was introduced as legislation on the 7th June 2022. The offence will apply to any case where a person intentionally strangles or suffocates another person. This new legislation provides officers with a wider range of options to launch prosecutions against violent perpetrators, particularly victims of domestic abuse.

4.0 Introduction/Background

This report provides an overview of the Essex Police CDA strategy, and the progress that has been made against the CDA Improvement Plan. It also sets out how the force intends to sustain its compliance rates and our commitment to always put victims at the forefront of crime recording arrangements.

5.0 Current Work and Performance

5.1 Internal Audit NCRS Support and Review Team NSRT

The NSRT continue to provide frontline support and a quality assurance (QA) function, to support the Force in improving crime recording accuracy. They continue to review incidents, to ensure that crimes are being recorded in accordance with Home Office Counting Rules (HOCR).

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

When an incident has been closed and a crime has been recorded it is assigned C code disposal code as demonstrated in Table 1 below. The NSRT then review

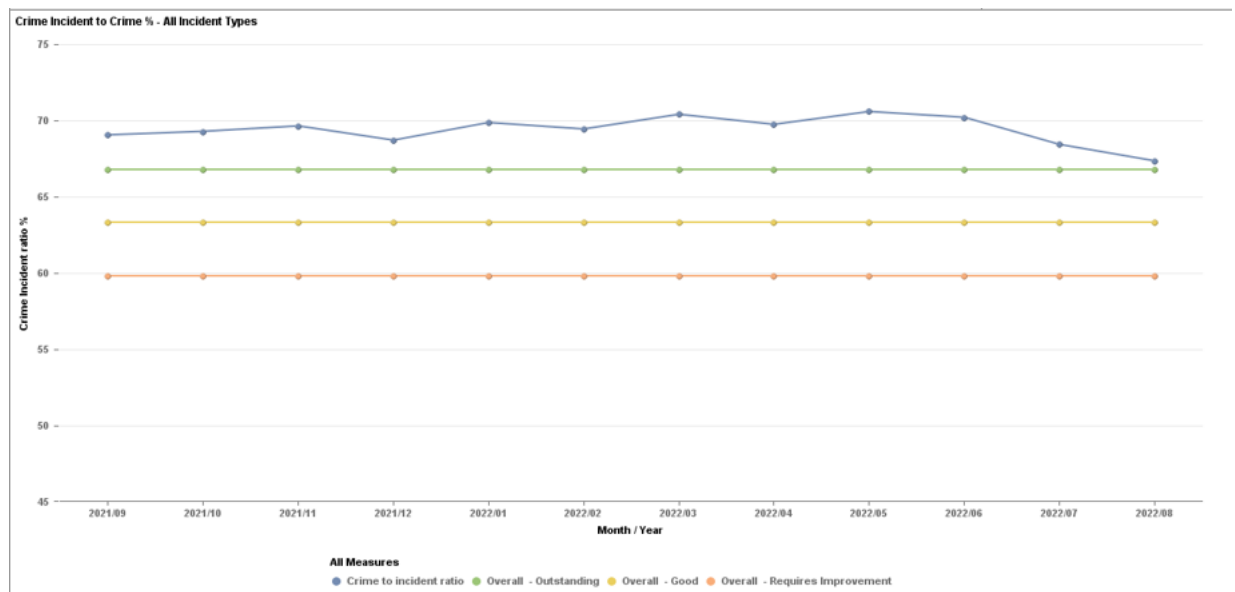
¹ Section 75A (1) (a) SCA 2015. A person guilty of an offence under this section is liable on summary conviction to a term of imprisonment not exceeding 12 months, or to a fine or both. On conviction on indictment, to imprisonment not exceeding 5 years or to a fine or both.

selected incidents which have been closed where no crime has been recorded. It is during this process that in some instances missing crimes are identified.

Table 1- Breakdown of the percentage of all crime incidents subsequently recorded as a crime and represented in the graph below.

Crime Incident to Crime - Overall Rate			
Year Month	All	C Disposal	%
2022/03	7436	5235	70.40%
2022/04	7092	4946	69.74%
2022/05	7611	5372	70.58%
2022/06	7638	5362	70.20%
2022/07	8123	5558	68.42%
2022/08	7956	5358	67.35%

The graph below demonstrates the proxy measure of the overall crime recording compliance rate of the force during this period of reporting.



5.2 Stalking & Harassment Audit

The Home Office Counting Rules (HOCR) provide all forces with strict guidance as to how the police are required to record and classify crimes.

In relation to crimes of Stalking, Harassment and Controlling & Coercive behaviour, in “general” the guidance states whilst the conduct is ongoing (between the same victim and suspect) a new crime is **not** required for each time the victim reports a new incident and it forms part of that on-going course of conduct crime. Instead, the details of the new incident should be added to the existing crime, until such time that the suspect is charged/cautioned.

An internal Stalking and Harassment audit led by one of the Deputy Force Crime & Incident Registrars identified that officers and staff employed within the Resolution Centre have been creating additional crimes unnecessarily, and in contravention of the Home Office Counting Rules.

Bespoke guidance and PowerPoint presentations have now been provided to those working in the Resolution Centre who are the principal staff involved in the recording process.

Close contact is being maintained with senior leaders within Contact Management, to ensure that staff within the FCR and Resolution Centre are aware of the need to ensure that they have received and understand the guidance that has been circulated to prevent the '*over recording*' of behavioural crimes, such as Stalking and Harassment.

The Strategic Force Crime & Incident Registrar and the force lead for CDA, Chief Superintendent Waldie, in support of the Learning and Development Team, have now attended several training inputs to reinforce the importance of ensuring that the HOCRs are being strictly adhered to.

The learning gleaned from the results of the audit has also been communicated to the CDA Learning and Development Team by the Strategic Force Crime & Incident Registrar. They will ensure that the learning is passed on to those police officers and staff who are responsible for the recording and inputting of crimes on to police systems.

5.3 Recording of Rape Crimes

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

Essex Police is currently an outlier regarding the number of rapes they record, when compared against their most similar group (MSG) forces. Home Office Counting Rules provide the Strategic Force Crime & Incident Registrar, and his two highly experienced deputies, with clear guidance regarding the requirements of when and under what circumstances a rape should be recorded. There is no discretion in this process.

Home Office Counting Rules (HOCHR) stipulate that, unless already recorded as a crime, **every report of a rape**, suspected or possible rape must be taken at **face value** and **recorded** on the force recording crime system under this classification, irrespective of the source of the report. These reports are recorded as incidents, as set out in the following paragraph.

This includes reports made by third parties, through partnership working or from other agencies. All reported incidents of rape or attempted rape, whether from victims, witnesses or third parties that are not immediately recorded as a confirmed crime, must be recorded under a classification known as a N100 at the time the

report is initially made to the relevant force. The N100 classification is a way of ensuring that the force captures the record of a rape, even if it is not recorded as a crime from the outset.

The results of the various rape audits have been presented to the Chief Officer Group in a meeting chaired by the Deputy Chief Constable. At the conclusion of the meeting the importance of placing victims at the heart of everything Essex Police does and applying the National Crime Recording standards correctly was reaffirmed.

5.4 Non-Fatal Strangulation or Suffocation Legislation

On the 7th June 2022 a new criminal offence of non-fatal strangulation or suffocation was introduced by parliament. Prosecutors are advised to give the word '*strangulation*' its ordinary meaning which is to deprive a person of air which affects their normal breathing. Methods of non-fatal suffocation could include:

- Putting a hand over the mouth and nose
- Compressing the chest
- Any other force or suppression applied to cause a restriction of breath.

The introduction of this legislation has given the police a wider range of options when dealing with perpetrators involving victims of Domestic Abuse. Since the legislation was enacted, Essex Police has recorded 308 crimes under the provisions of the new act and charged 29 suspects.

5.5 Learning and Development Team

The delivery of CDA training continues to play a significant role in ensuring that all staff involved in crime recording are aware of the importance and correlation between accurate record keeping, and victim care.

The Strategic Force Crime & Incident Registrar continues to work closely with the Head of Investigative Skills Progression, Learning and Development and his team. This has led to the development and introduction of the Virtual Crime Academy. Latest updates have included advice and guidance regarding the new legislation regarding non-fatal strangulation, and the recording of stalking and harassment crimes.

This learning forum, which is built on the Office 365 SharePoint platform, has been designed to provide a readily accessible library, to assist police officers and staff regarding any matters relating to CDA.

It also allows for any current changes in the HOCR to be highlighted and flagged in a simple, but effective way.

There are **2,646** Officers and Staff who still require training. To date, **1477** individuals have received the training. The one-day CDA training course is now firmly established, with the remaining officers being warned to attend as directed by the Resource Management Unit

6.0 Implications (Issues)

A failure to identify and accurately record all reported crime without delay, leads to an inability to provide an effective service to victims. This, in turn, delays their access to external support services, a loss in public confidence and in our inability to understand the full demand for the service and resources required.

6.1 Links to Police and Crime Plan Priorities

Crime Data Accuracy links directly to the priorities set out in the Police and Crime Plan, ensuring we accurately record crime, identify areas of “under-recording” crime, and ensure victims have access to appropriate support services. The Police and Crime Plan also allows the office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner to provide the public with accurate information about crime in Essex.

6.2 Demand

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

The past year has seen an increase in the number of crimes recorded by Essex Police – an increase of 9.2% in the 12 months to August 2022 (167,556 crimes recorded) compared to the same period last year (153,470 crimes recorded).

In the three months to August 2022, compared to the same period last year, crime has also increased, and this increase has not been evenly distributed across crime types. Theft Offences have increased by 10.3% and Robbery by 4.0%. Sexual Offences have increased by 3.0% whilst Violence Against the Person has seen a decrease of 2.0%. Within violence, Stalking and Harassment had decreased by 12.8%, and Violence with Injury increased by 8.0%. State based crime, however, and often generated by police activity, saw a decrease of 2.9%.

6.3 Risks/Mitigation

At the April 2022 CDA Board the decision was taken to remove CDA from the Risk Register. This was due to a sustained good level of overall crime recording compliance. The risk will be kept under constant review and if necessary can be reinstated.

6.4 Equality and/or Human Rights Implications

There are no equality and Human Rights implications identified in the development of this update paper. However, the force continually monitors the Equality and Human Rights implications, to ensure services are accessible to all and to make it fair and easy to report crimes. An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) will always be undertaken when new force policies are developed, or changes are made to the operating model for public contact and reporting of crime. The force received a grading of outstanding in its most recent Crime Data Integrity Inspection, giving the force confidence in the systems and knowledge it has in place for the accurate

recording of crimes, leading to access to support services for all victims of crime to help them cope and recover.

6.5 Health and Safety Implications

None

7.0 Consultation/Engagement

Crime Data Accuracy Board Members and Chief Officers.

8.0 Actions for Improvement

The CDA Board will continue to provide governance for all strands of work that impact on Essex Police's Crime Data Accuracy. Chief Superintendent Waldie chairs the CDA board, to provide the strategic direction and ensure the ongoing management and oversight of CDA programs of work.

Areas for development will continue to be identified through the provision of NCRS data and emerging key themes, from both the quality assurance and audit functions within the force.

Against this backdrop, a focused and determined effort will continue to ensure that:

- The force continues to accurately record crimes at the first point of contact, thereby enabling victims to be identified at the earliest possible juncture.
- Stalking and Harassment crimes are being recorded correctly and in accordance with the Home Office Counting Rules.
- Officers are aware of the new legislation regarding non-fatal strangulation or suffocation.
- Officers continue to ensure that crimes of rape are accurately recorded and that victims receive the necessary support they deserve.

9.0 Future Work/Development and Expected Outcome

The Strategic Force Crime and Incident Registrar will continue to work closely with the three respective LPA Commanders and Heads of Department throughout the force, to reinforce the importance of accurate crime recording and the inextricable link towards good victim care.

A force wide CDA improvement plan will remain under constant review through the CDA board, to ensure coordinated activity and a comprehensive approach is extended across the force.

The Strategic Force Crime and Incident Registrar will also ensure that any learning emanating from the internal reviews is quickly communicated to the CDA Learning

OFFICIAL

and Development Team. This flexible approach will ensure that any emerging trends can be communicated across the force in an effective and timely fashion.

OFFICIAL