



# Police and Crime Plan

## 2016 to 2021

### Closure Report

# Contents

# Foreword

In 2016, the public demanded better, more visible policing. Through public engagement and the 2016 Police and Crime Commissioner election it was clear that large sections of the public had lost faith in the ability of policing to protect them and their communities.

**At our public meetings concerns were raised about a lack of visible policing, accessibility and a broken relationship on the ground between the public and Essex Police. Essex Police had reduced in size as public sector resources were stretched. Later analysis by PA consulting showed that the community policing teams bore the brunt of these reductions, as officers were drawn away from visible, proactive preventative policing to respond to increasingly complex high harm offences.**

By April 2021, Essex Police had successfully recruited 500 officers, rebuilt their community policing capacity, and established a range of new highly visible teams focused on tackling specific types of crime that have a significant impact on communities. Anti-social behaviour had reduced from 52,732 in 2015/16 to 30,674 in 2021/22, a reduction of 42 per cent. Over the same period, burglary had gone from 13,032 reported incidents to 6,535, a reduction of 50 per cent, and theft from 25,872 to 23,112, a reduction of 11 per cent.

As Essex Police's regular and special constabulary grew, as set out in more detail later in this report, they were able to deliver a more visible community presence. Together Essex Police and my team

worked with communities and community safety partnerships to understand and address local issues. We invested more in these local partnerships; more direct funding, but also more time, commitment and focus from local officers.

Confidence in Essex Police grew as communities started to see a difference. Communities told us through the independent public survey commissioned by the Chief Constable and me that we understood the issues in their area, that they were more confident in us, and more people thought Essex Police did a good or excellent job. They also told us they wanted more. More officers, more visibility.

While we rebuilt the force and got traditional forms of crime down, the Government rightly added new crimes as our understanding of controlling and coercive behaviour and stalking developed. As victims of domestic abuse became more confident that the police would listen and deal with these crimes, more reported them. We also saw a significant change in how drugs and gangs were fuelling violence in our communities.

These shifts were reflected in a significant change in the mix of reported crimes between 2015/16 and 2021/22 with a large increase in the reported incidents of Controlling and Coercive Behaviour and

Stalking, reductions in burglary, theft and anti/social behaviour and increases in drug driven violence. Over this period the force has also improved the accuracy of its crime data and has received an outstanding rating for this by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services, so we now have a much more accurate picture of what crimes are really happening across our communities. These factors have significantly altered the mix of reported crime and contributed to a 49 per cent increase in overall crime, as can be seen in figure1(i).



As we got to grips with these evolving patterns of crime, we built new partnerships and tactical approaches to understand how to tackle them, protect the vulnerable and support victims. Our Violence and Vulnerability Unit was one of the first in the country, our domestic abuse perpetrator programme broke new ground, and the partnerships we built to deliver in these areas are strong and focused on getting these crimes down. While we have much to do to get on top of these offences and prevent crime, we have a plan, we have effective partnerships, and it is working.



# Executive Summary

The Police and Crime Plan 2016 to 2020 and the Police and Crime Plan 2020 to 2021 Extension set out a clear plan to help build the safe and secure communities the public need to thrive.

**The strategic approach set out in the plans is focused on enabling the police and the public to work together to force out crime, ensuring police collaborate effectively with councils and communities to tackle crime and prevent criminality through stopping anti-social behaviour early. During the development of the plans, through our ongoing engagement with the public and through the 2016 election result, it was clear that the public wanted more visible policing within their communities, and local policing, in particular, needed significant investment.**

As well as halting any further reduction in police numbers, the Commissioner and Essex Police engaged PA consulting group to undertake an evidenced based assessment of their capacity. This assessment showed that Essex Police was significantly under strength in its community policing and prevention focused teams. This was driven by a reshaping of the force, as it had reduced in size in the years leading up to 2016 and had been



✚ The Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner out on patrol with the Community Policing Team in Witham

required to invest heavily in its public protection capacity following an inadequate HMICFRS inspection and high profile operational failures around the investigation of child abuse.

At the same time, while crime across the country had reduced significantly from its 1995 peak, by 2014/15 crime had started to increase. New types of crime had also been identified that required new legislation, such as stalking and coercive and controlling behaviour. These new laws created new recorded offences and fuelled a significant change in the mix of crime as well as adding more demands onto policing locally. Essex Police also had to invest heavily in capacity around high harm cases driven by the inadequate HMICFRS inspection and identified operational failings. This further exacerbated the calls on policing locally.

The nature of crime was also changing. As technology had improved, so had the tools available to criminals and the amount of evidence created by digital devices. This resulted in the

investigation and prosecution of existing crimes becoming significantly more complex and resource intensive.

To tackle the impact these national trends were having on Essex Police, combined with significant challenges around the capacity of the force in 2016, the Commissioner successfully secured the public's support for increases in the Policing Precept. The Commissioner built national alignment within Police and Crime Commissioners and worked with government to successfully secure the biggest investment in policing in a decade. This initial investment was followed by an even larger investment as the government committed to recruit a further 20,000 officers nationally. These local and national investment programmes lead to the biggest ever recruitment programme for policing.

These initiatives provided the Chief Constable with the resources to increase officer establishment by more than 500 between April 2016 and the end of March 2021. This growth programme did

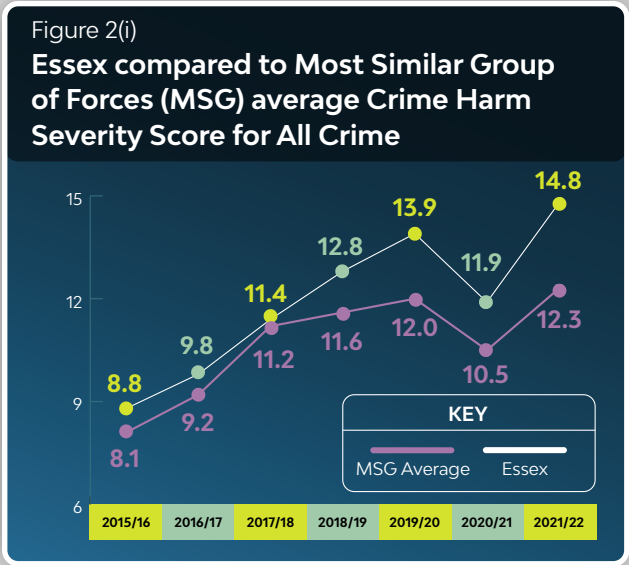


not stop at the end of this Police and Crime Plan and the establishment will have grown by a total of 900 officers by the end of March 2023, making Essex Police the biggest and strongest it has ever been. Much of this growth has been focused in community policing teams, through Town Centre Teams and specialist teams such as the Rural Engagement Team, Business Engagement Team, and Domestic Abuse Problem Solving Teams. We have also invested heavily in a network of Children and Young People Officers to engage with schools and young people in the community on the cusp of criminality. This focus is about shifting the attention back to local policing where officers work with communities to prevent crime.

In 2016/17, the Commissioner launched a significant campaign to recruit and embed Specials within the regular constabulary. This led to the growth of Specials from a base of 353 prior to the 2016 election to 520 in the 12 months to the end of March 2021. These officers not only provide additional capacity, but also strengthen the vital link between communities and the police.

While this programme of growth has been successful and has given the force greater capacity, crime across the county has continued to increase from 111,022 crimes per year in 2015/16 to 167,226 in 2019/20. Levels fell in 2020/21 to 148,135 during the COVID lockdown period and then increased to 165,518 in 2021/22. This growth has, in part, been driven by new legislation, but was also significantly impacted by improvements in the accuracy of crime data recorded by Essex Police, and a sustained and significant effort to encourage the reporting of domestic abuse, which has grown from 30,719 cases in 2015/16 to 42,802 in 2021/22.

While overall crime has increased, anti-social behaviour has reduced significantly from 52,732 in 2015/16 to 30,674 in 2021/22. The numbers did increase in 2020/21 as breaches of COVID regulations were recorded as anti-social behaviour, however, the underlying level of ASB, excluding the COVID offences, has fallen year on year throughout the period. This is down to strong proactive activity on and ground but also to improvements in crime data recording that has helped ensure that incidents are recorded appropriately and not inaccurately classified as ASB. These changes in recorded crime have impacted the crime harm score, a measure of the harm caused by all crime based on the severity of the offences as indicated by the available sentences. As shown in figure 2 (i), using this measure it is clear that there has been a significant increase in the level of harm, as both the total number of reported incidents and the severity of these incidents has increased, this reflects the change in the mix of crimes recorded discussed previously and the increased severity of incidents.



Where Essex Police have been successful in driving down crime, as in domestic burglary, theft, and anti-social behaviour it demonstrates that by working with communities, they have been able to get ahead of these more traditional forms of crime. These successes have led to the public's growing confidence in their force. In 2017, the Commissioner and the Chief Constable established an independent public survey which asked a representative sample of more than 7,000 residents each year, their views of policing in Essex.

Since this was introduced, the number of people who answered good or excellent to the statement 'taking everything into account, how good a job do you think the police in this area are doing?' has increased from 68.7 per cent in 2017/18, to 79 per cent in 2021/22. For victims of crime, this increased from 54 per cent 2017/18 to 61 per cent in 2021/22.

As a result of the COVID pandemic, the Police and Crime Plan 2016 to 2020 was extended for a further year. In developing this we undertook significant public engagement to get a good sense of what had worked for the public and areas where they still have significant concern. Through this we heard a wealth of information including that our investment in officers was making a difference, especially the Town Centre Teams, but the public wanted more. We also learnt that gangs and county lines had become a bigger concern for the public and they wanted more action taken in this area.

This Extension, while closely aligned to the previous Plan, incorporated a range of new commitments to reflect the success of Essex Police's approach to tackle traditional acquisitive crime and anti-social behaviour, but also address the growth in crime related to gangs, violence, and domestic abuse. These updated commitments are also reported on throughout this report.

# Financial Overview

Following the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011, the Essex Police Authority was replaced, on 22 November 2012, with two 'corporation sole' bodies, the PCC for Essex and the Chief Constable.

**The assets, liabilities and reserves of the Police Authority were transferred directly to the PCC. All payments for the Group are made by the Commissioner and all income and funding are received by the Commissioner. The Commissioner has the responsibility for managing the financial relationships with third parties and has legal responsibilities for discharging the contractual terms and conditions of suppliers.**

Following a full public consultation and a business case submitted to the Home Secretary in May 2017, the Home Office approved the decision for the PCC to take on the governance of Essex County Fire and Rescue Service, becoming the country's first Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (PFCC).

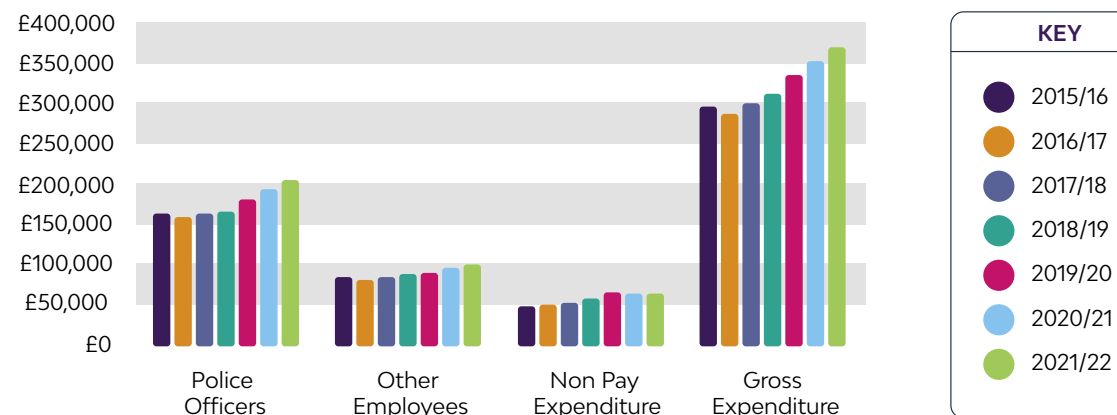
The Commissioner is also the Finance Lead for PCCs across the country. Over the last six years, he has worked hard with the Home Office and Treasury to secure additional funding for policing nationally. From the Commissioner's first budget-setting for the year 2016/17, the Commissioner planned for increased expenditure to support force growth. In 2019/20, funding was secured for the first year of a three-year programme to increase police officer numbers by 20,000 nationally.

One of the challenges Essex Police faces is that it is the lowest funded force nationally (funding from grants and council tax) and the ninth lowest in receipt of government grant per head of population. It also has the lowest spend per head of population (Source: HMICFRS 2021 Value for Money Profiles). Essex Police has a good track record of delivering cash and efficiency savings to maximise the benefit out of every penny. In 2021/22 £4.4m savings were delivered with £2.9m of these recurring annually. This approach is continuing beyond the Police and Crime Plan 2016-2021 and there continues to be an ambitious savings programme with £4.7m programmed to be delivered in 2022/23.

The graph at figure 3(i) shows the Group's gross expenditure for each year from 2015/16 to 2021/22, the increase over the six years of 25%, includes the Essex share of the first two years of the 20,000 additional officers for Police Uplift Programme (PUP). In 2021/22 as well as the additional government funding for the PUP, the Commissioner also increased the precept by 4.98% (£9.90 per year on a Band D property) allowing, the Chief Constable to recruit a further 186 Full-Time Equivalents (FTE). This has meant that Essex Police now has 700 more FTE officers, than it had in 2016 and during 2022/23 the Chief Constable has received the funds to recruit another 200 FTE. This means there will be 3,755 FTE police officers, by the end of 2022/23, which will be the highest number in the history of Essex Police.

Figure 3 (i)  
**Gross Expenditure 2015/16 to 2021/22**

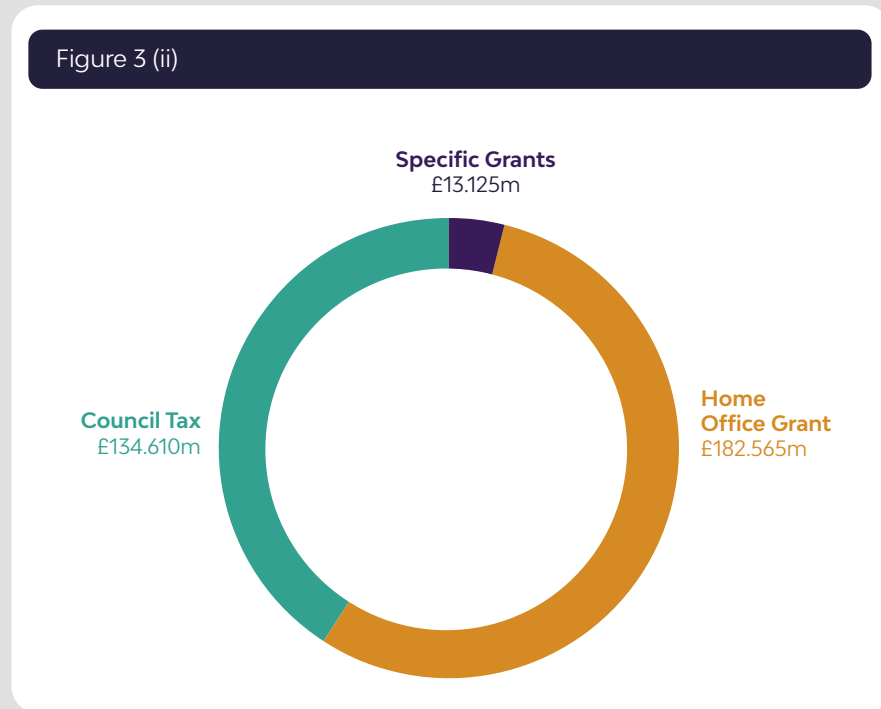
The accounts are prepared and presented in accordance with the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2021/22 (the Code). The Code is prepared under International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) which have been adopted as the basis for public sector accounting in the UK.



The significant increases in inflation over recent months, has already had an impact on the cost of supplies and services, and is expected to impact further during 2022/23 and 2023/24. The Commissioner and Essex Police has reviewed the impact of these pressures over the next two years and the sensitivity analysis demonstrates that the force will be able to manage the cost of supplies and services in the short term. However, with staff being such a significant percentage of the costs, the impact is more likely to come from pay award increases affected by these rising costs. We will continue to consider the various impacts of costs in the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) as the budget for 2023/24 is developed.

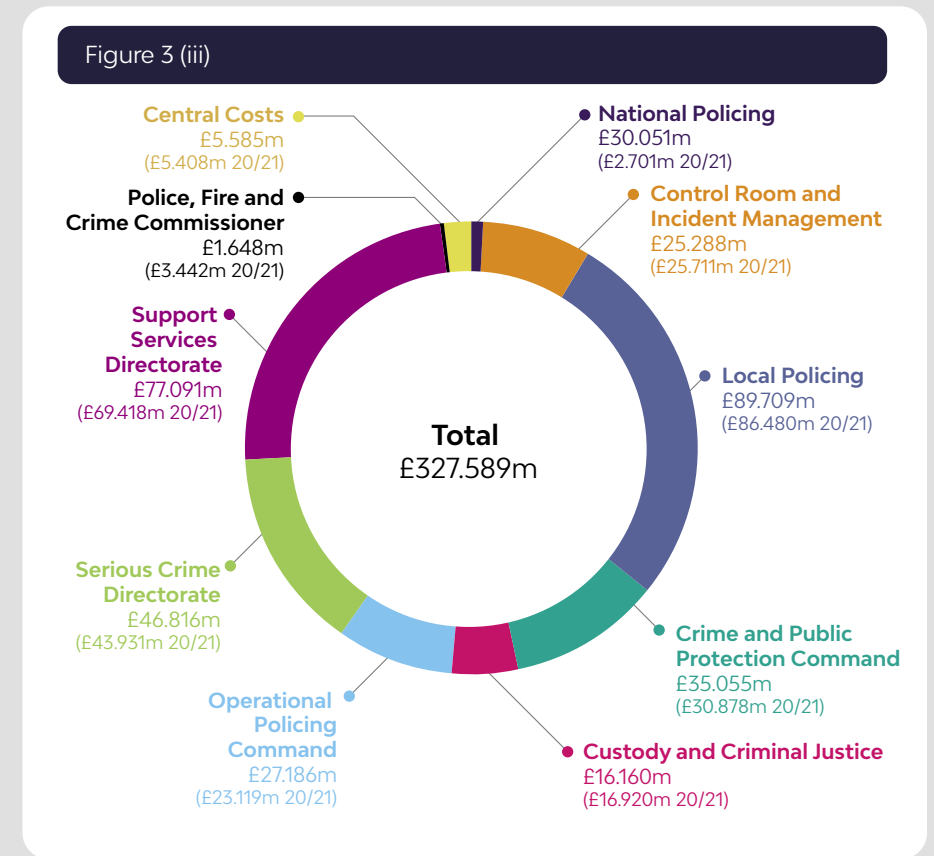
### Where the money came from in 2021/22

The chart at figure 3(ii) shows an analysis of the Commissioner’s key sources of funding in 2021/22, totalling £330.3m. The Home Office core grant paid to the Commissioner accounted for 55 per cent of the total funding. These grants and income raised by council tax, funded the net revenue budget for 2021/22 of £330.3m.



### Where the money was spent in 2021/22 (and 2020/21)

The graph at figure 3(iii) shows an analysis of the Group’s net revenue expenditure totalling £327.589m in 2021/22, resulting in a surplus of £2.7m, transferred to the General Reserve and earmarked reserves





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## More Local, Visible and Accessible Policing

Local, visible, and accessible policing is essential to deliver a policing service that is properly connected to the community, where the public work with the police to squeeze out crime and, wherever possible, crime is prevented from happening.

Between 2016 and the end of March 2021, the Commissioner has provided the funding for the Chief Constable to grow the force establishment by more than 500 officers, taking the total number of established officers to 3,369 from 2,850 in May 2016. Because of the successful “We Value Difference” recruitment campaign by Essex Police and the commitment to fund increases over multiple years it has been possible to recruit beyond the establishment each year to ensure recruitment kept pace with the multi year growth programme. The growth in establishment has continued after the 2020/21 financial year with a further increase of 218 officers in 2021/22 and 200 more in 2022/23. This will take the establishment of the force to 3,755 by the end of March 2023, making the establishment of Essex Police the strongest it has ever been.

This growth in the establishment figures has been matched by the actual officer FTEs, which vary slightly due to the timing of officers joining the force and others retiring or deciding to leave. The actual FTEs are shown in the graph at Figure 4(i).

Figure 4(i)  
Police Officer Actual FTEs

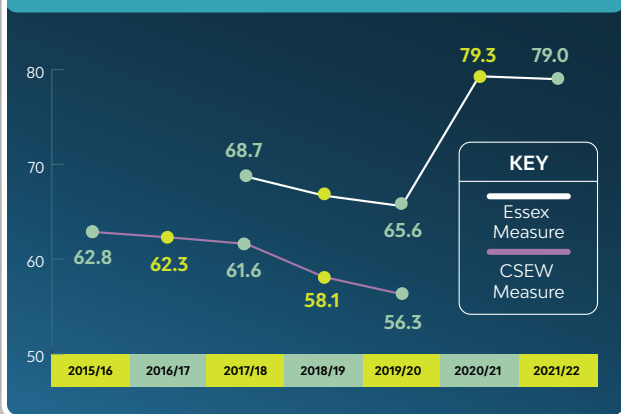


Towards the end of 2021, as the multi-year growth programme has been delivered, there has been significant increases in public confidence. Since 2017, the Commissioner and Chief Constable have commissioned an independent public survey to understand and track public confidence in policing. This survey mirrored the national confidence questions used in the Crime Survey of England and Wales and asked a representative sample of more than 7,000 Essex residents each year. The scale of the survey provides a much more detailed and robust local picture that has helped to target activity and allowed this information to be available once the Crime Survey for England and Wales, as shown in figure 4 (ii), stopped providing this information at the end of 2019/20.

As also can be seen in figure 4(ii) since the introduction of the independent public survey for Essex in 2017, the number of people who answered good or excellent to the question “taking everything into account, how good a job do you think the police in this area are doing?” has increased from 68.7 per cent in the 12 months to the end of March 2018 to 79 per cent in the 12 months to the end of March 2022 (those answering good or excellent making up the confidence percentage). This question mirrors the question asked in the Crime Survey of England and Wales (CSEW) but focuses only on Essex and uses phone calls to gather results. The introduction of the survey also coincided with the reduction of the CSEW sample size making it statistically less reliable when broken down to Essex, resident types and districts. CSEW also changed their methodology.

For victims of crime, this has increased from 54 per cent in the 12 months to the end of March 2018 to 61 per cent in the 12 months to the end of March 2022. For people who self-identify as Black, Asian or an Ethnic Minority, the increase has been from 74 per cent to 80 per cent, though there have been significant fluctuations over that period.

Figure 4(ii)  
**Percentage of people who have confidence in Essex Police**



This increased confidence and reduction in overall crime developed as the force grew. The introduction of Town Centre Teams, comprising 58 constables and ten sergeants in 2019, had an immediate impact on feedback that was received from communities and has continued to drive down business crime and anti-social behaviour.

Similar growth across community policing, local policing and some of our specialist teams has coincided with a significant increase in the public’s confidence in policing, indicating that confidence has grown as the force has become stronger and more visible. It is important to note that 88 per cent of Essex residents continue to see a visible policing presence as very important or important, compared to a national average of 78 per cent.

At the same time as the force was growing, Essex Police, supported by the Commissioner, also significantly improved their approach to public engagement. A new engagement strategy was introduced in 2017 backed by an internal governance process to help drive improvement. This has

transformed the engagement with the public providing a strong structured approach based on insight and reliable data.

Our investment in Community Safety Partnerships has also been a key element of our strategic approach to strengthening the local, visible, and accessible nature of policing. The introduction of Community Safety Engagement Officers based in Community Safety Hubs has increased capacity in terms of local engagement and continues our investment in local Community Safety Partnerships as an important way of giving local communities influence over resolving local issues. Together, these extra resources and continued investment have helped to contribute to the public’s confidence that Essex Police understand local issues.

A significant area of focus during the Commissioner’s first term was in tackling rural crime. Working with the Essex Rural Partnership and Essex Police in 2017, a partnership based Rural Crime Strategy was developed for the first time. This was supported by the establishment by the Chief Constable of a dedicated Rural Engagement Team. This team has been received extremely positively by our rural communities and was expanded in 2020/21. This team represents a dedicated investment of £623k and is now the largest Rural Engagement Team in the country. The team have made a significant difference in rural communities and focus on unauthorised encampments, hare coursing and rural theft. The work of this dedicated team has seen a reduction in the number of unauthorised encampments from 229 in the 12 months to March 2018 to 182 in the 12 months to March 2021.

In the 2016 Police and Crime Plan, the Commissioner also set out an ambition to work with businesses to tackle crime against them, so they can play an active part in creating the safe and secure communities the

public want. Following a significant amount of work with business groups, the Business Crime Team was established by the Chief Constable in February 2020. This team provide specialist advice to local policing teams and work closely with business networks such as the Chamber of Commerce, Federation of Small Businesses, and business groups across the county to prevent business crime. This model has been used as national best practice.

In early 2020, following additional funding secured by the Commissioner the Chief Constable increased the number of Children and Young People officers (CYP) from 13 to 33. These officers work to identify children and young people who are most at risk of becoming repeat offenders or at serious risk of harm or vulnerability. They engage with young people in senior schools to support a partnership approach in keeping young people safe and reducing crime and anti-social behaviour. The work being completed by the CYP officers is providing increased accessibility and visibility with school staff and children and young people and has received positive feedback.

Since 2016, the shared Joint Education Team between Essex Police and Essex County Fire and Rescue Service has grown in effectiveness and now provides a broad range of community safety advice to all school children across Essex. Following the pandemic, this team developed a range of videos, teaching plans and supporting material to help teachers, children, and parents to engage with their children while teaching from home.

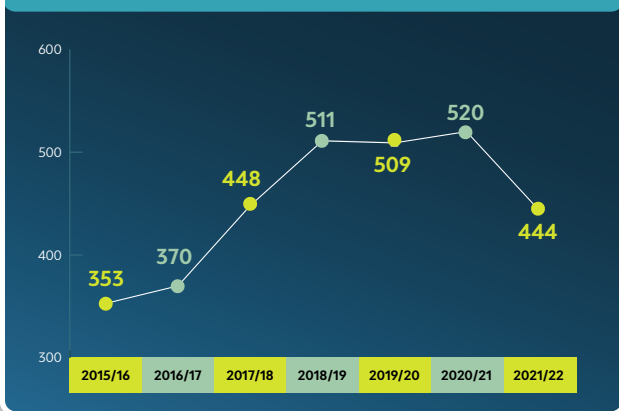
Alongside this growth in officers, Essex Police has also continued to develop and improve technology, helping officers to work more efficiently. The Mobile First programme has continued to save officers time and, in 2020/21, 50 per cent of all daily recorded crime was completed via smartphones without the need to return to a station.



This success led to the deployment of extra applications at officers' request, including What3Words, an interpreting service, bike register and, in September 2020, a stop and search module which was supported by a mobile fingerprint scanner. This has resulted in more successful arrests and helped to save officers 19 minutes per shift, on average.

When the Commissioner was elected in 2016, there were 353 members of the Special Constabulary in Essex. While there was a strong core of officers who provided consistent regular hours, the overall engagement was low. Following a review of this area and significant investment, the Special Constabulary was repositioned in the force with officers much better integrated alongside regular officers and a strong growth programme established. This work has continued to deliver strong growth and, as can be seen in figure 4(iii), by 2020/21, there were 521 Specials in Essex, and the force were the second largest and fastest growing in the country.

Figure 4(iii)  
Number of Specials



Officers out on patrol in Chelmsford

Since this redevelopment of the programme in 2016, Specials have provided much higher levels of engagement and delivered more hours per officer. So, not only has the number of Specials grown, but so too has the effectiveness of each officer. For example, in 2020/21, there was a significant increase in the number of hours delivered by the Special Constabulary, with a 11.45 per cent increase over the year to 214,503 hours, the equivalent to 122 full time officers.

This has provided a huge boost to Essex Police in terms of capacity, but also built stronger relationships between the force and the communities they serve. Importantly, the huge growth of the Specials programme has made a significant contribution to Essex Police's regular recruitment programme, with 232 officers leaving the Specials to join the regulars between May 2016 and the end of March 2021.

This strong volunteering base is also reflected in the strength of Essex Police's Police Cadet Programme, which grew from 180 in 2017 to 410 in 2020/21 making it the largest in the Eastern Region. This could not be achieved without the dedicated support of the Essex Police Cadet Leaders and, by 2020/21, it was very positive that there were 80 Leaders across Essex. Essex Police also continue to benefit from a large Police Volunteer Programme which grew from 125 in 2018 to 188 in 2020/21 and 3,546 people participating in a variety of Essex watch schemes from Dog Watch, Farm Watch, Marine Watch and Caravan Watch. There are also more than 100 watches for different business areas and allotments where individual membership is not measured. A strong element of both Essex Police's and the Commissioner's engagement with communities is the relationship with Neighbourhood Watch, who have an active membership of more than 88,000. Together, these



groups reach 100,000s of people across Essex and provide vital crime prevention advice and act as an extremely useful conduit to the public.

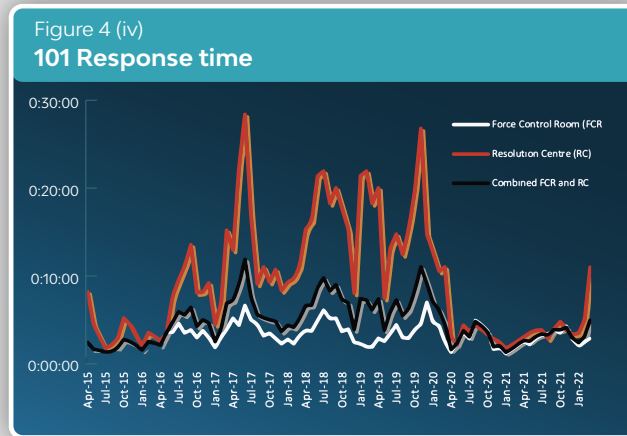
At the same time, Essex Police’s Community Safety Accreditation Scheme (CSAS) programme is the largest in the country. In 2020/21, 442 accredited people from 42 organisations worked together with Essex Police across the county in a range of roles and with a wide range of powers given to them by the Chief Constable.

Since March 2016, there has also been a significant improvement in accessibility with the introduction of online reporting, which has seen several significant phases of development over the period. A Live Chat function was also introduced on the Essex Police website, which went live in April 2020. The Live Chat received more than 10,000 conversations in the first six months. Essex Police have also successfully launched the Essex Single Online Home website, which is part of a national programme, and significantly improved online reporting systems, including a dedicated way to report anti-social behaviour.

Since 2016 the Commissioner and Essex Police have also worked with Crimestoppers to promote the service as an alternative way for the public to report crime where they do not want to be identified. The support has covered a wide range of projects including a number of annual grants, large cash incentives for information relating to high profile complex cases and more bespoke support to encourage reporting in rural communities, of hate crime and a range of other targeted crime types.

Providing a timely and effective Emergency (999) and non emergency (101) public call system remains a priority for the Commissioner and has been an area of focus since 2016. Early in 2016, clear

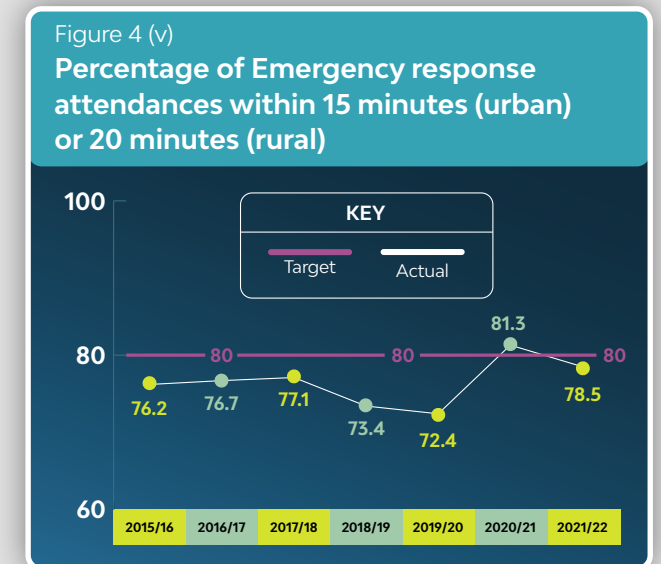
measurement systems were introduced to provide an honest assessment of ongoing service delivery. Figure 4 (iv) shows the combined time a caller would have to wait for their call to go through to the Force Control Room and onto the Resolution Centre. This shows the significant increase in the average time and the impact extra investment had on getting this number down but also the significant shift in service during the COVID 19 pandemic.



Since 2017, significant investment has been made in this service, including the introduction of a resolution centre. By 2020/21, the 101 service was averaging a pickup time of two minutes 36 seconds and Essex Police were hitting their target 50 per cent of the time. However, the resolution centre was now picking up significant volumes of work which would have previously been dealt with by the 101 service. The resolution centre picking up calls on average within 3 minutes ten seconds and achieved their five minute target 73 per cent of the time. This improved service corresponded with a significant decrease in the negative feedback about the service the Commissioner received through his public engagement programme.

While there is still much to do to provide the service that the Commissioner wants to, it is now clear that the unacceptable service levels provided in 2015/16 have improved and the main focus of improvement has been able to switch from ensuring calls are picked up to focusing on the quality of the service provided.

As part of the Police and Crime Plan 2016 to 2020 the percentage of emergency’s responded to within 15 or 20 minutes was also measured. This is shown at figure 4 (v) and indicates a dropping off of the service in 2018/19 and 2019/20 improving by 2021/22.



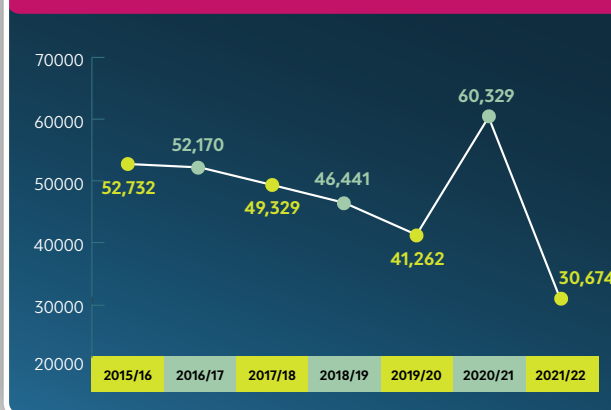
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## Crack down on Anti-Social Behaviour

Since 2015/16, there has been a significant year on year reduction in anti-social behaviour (ASB), with a 21 per cent reduction between 2015/16 and 2019/20. While this underlying trend is well established, during the period of lockdown in 2020/21 when breaches of COVID regulations were classified as ASB, there was an almost 50 per cent jump in reported anti-social behaviour

It can be seen in figure 5 (i) Anti-social behaviour reduced significantly over the period of the Police and Crime Plan; from 52,732 in 2015/16 to 30,674 in 2021/22. The numbers did increase in 2020/21 as breaches of COVID regulations were recorded as anti-social behaviour, however, the underlying level of ASB, excluding these COVID offences, has fallen year-on-year throughout the period.

Figure 5 (i)  
Number of anti-social behaviour incidents



HMICFRS assessed Essex Police as Good at dealing with Crime and ASB in 2016, 2017 and 2019. The PEEL 2021 inspection report published in October 2022 included the following comment from the HMI: 'The force is good at preventing crime and anti-social behaviour. Essex Police works effectively with other allied organisations to proactively intervene to protect vulnerable people and to reduce crime and disorder using a range of prevention and enforcement measures'. In addition, the internal data demonstrates that progress in getting ASB down and building capacity in this important area has continued. The force wide growth programme, for example, has continued to increase the resources and investment in local policing, including the

introduction of Town Centre Teams in 2019, Children and Young People Officers and Community Safety Engagement Officers. This has increased the number of resources each year that are focused on local, preventative policing.

Anti-social behaviour is defined as "any behaviour where the victim is suffering harassment, alarm, distress, nuisance or annoyance". The responsibility for tackling it is shared between local councils and Essex Police. As such, a lot of the activity is delivered through local Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) that Community Policing Teams are represented on. In rural communities, this support is also supplemented by Essex Police's Rural Engagement Team who work closely with local police to offer specialist advice and guidance on tackling rural crime such as hare coursing, unauthorised encampments, and the theft of rural machinery.

Expert advice is also provided to Community Policing Teams by specialist ASB officers who advise on proactive tactics and guidance, as well as training and briefings on changes to legislation and assisting with Criminal Behaviour Orders (CBOs) and ASB Injunctions.

As discussed in other sections of this report, the introduction of Community Safety Engagement Officers during the 2020/21 financial year has had a big impact on the engagement at a local level. This has been further bolstered by the introduction of a stronger analytic capability which has allowed local policing teams working with Community Safety Partnerships to have a much stronger intelligence focus. This ensures resources are allocated efficiently and the biggest impact is made with the resources we have. It is also a good example of Commissioner's and Chief Constable's continued investment in local resources, through Community Safety Partnerships, to help tackle local issues identified by the community.



As well as providing additional funding to allow the Chief Constable to increase the size of the force, the Commissioner also provides direct funding to the Community Safety Partnerships in the form of annual grants. From 2016/17 to 2020/21, this amounted to £1,362,790 across Essex. Working directly with the Commissioner’s office, each Community Safety Partnership commits to a locally informed and developed annual plan with clear local priorities and objectives. This structure, designed to ensure collaboration and partnership, is at the heart of how these teams operate, with local people getting the opportunity to have their say in the priorities for their area. This local variation can be seen in the priorities for the different partnerships, with rural crime being a priority in Maldon, while issues such as gangs and street drinking appear more frequently in urban areas. Successfully preventing anti-social behaviour is often about proactive problem solving; identifying why an issue is happening and then working within the community or with individuals to resolve those underlying issues. Restorative and Mediation practices, which are delivered directly out of the Commissioner’s office, are an effective approach to tackling these issues and are becoming increasingly popular as the impact of this approach is understood.

Restorative Justice is a voluntary process which facilitates communication between somebody who has been harmed and the person who has caused that harm. It has been proven to result in a reduction in reoffending, high participant satisfaction and an improvement in victim recovery.

The Commissioner’s in house Essex Restorative Justice and Mediation Service accepts referrals ranging from community issues and anti-social behaviour to the most serious offences. The team has grown from two members of staff when the service launched in 2015, to four in 2020, managing a team

of 40 trained volunteer facilitators. Since the launch of the service, the number of referrals has increased year-on-year, from 168 in 2016/17 to 303 in 2020/21. Traditionally carried out face to face, the team had to adapt to changing circumstances caused by the pandemic in 2020/21. Even given this challenge, the team processed 297 referrals and 55 cases were carried out, using socially distanced meetings or virtual discussions leading to 156 participants being engaged in the restorative process in 2020/21.

Feedback from victims has been very positive since the service launched in 2015. Consistently, around two thirds of those asked report that the process had a positive impact on their situation and about 80 per cent said they felt better after speaking with facilitators. General feedback is equally as positive; as an example, one victim said: “I think your understanding and sensitivity in these issues is faultless.”

We have seen an increase in the percentage of people having confidence that the police response to ASB is improving, (measured via the public perception survey which began in 2017/18) as can be seen in figure 5 (ii) although it has levelled off 2021/22.

Figure 5 (ii)  
**Percentage of people who have confidence that the policing response to ASB is improving**



One of the new officers out on patrol as part of a Street Week programme to tackle persistent offenders



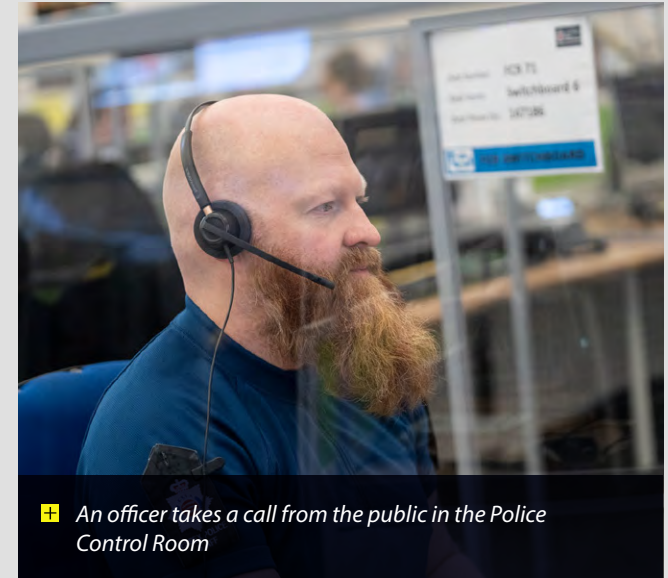
03

# Breaking the Cycle of Domestic Abuse

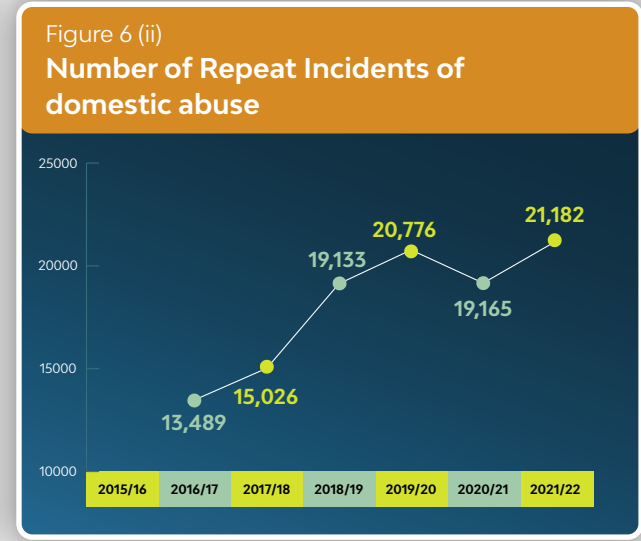
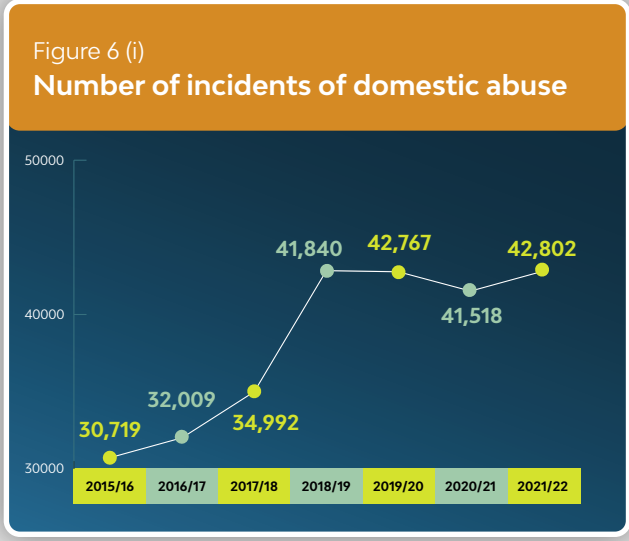
Domestic abuse accounts for about a third of all violent crime in Essex.

Between 2015/16 and 2021/22, recorded incidents of domestic abuse increased from 30,719 to 42,802. Reported incidents have grown significantly over the last six years as significant work has been undertaken to encourage victims and survivors to come forward to seek support and report crimes. Changes in law in relation to controlling and coercive behaviour and stalking have also resulted in new offences and legislation leading to more criminal incidents being recorded. In recent years, as well as increasing the support offered for victims, the Commissioner and Essex Police have increased their focus on changing the behaviour of perpetrators to prevent domestic abuse from happening in the first place and breaking the cycle of abuse.

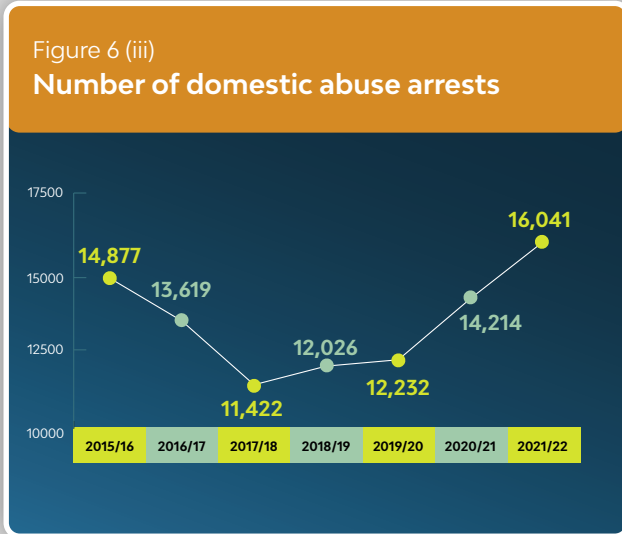
The Commissioner has sought to raise awareness of domestic abuse and encourage victims to come forward to report abuse and access help. The increase in reported incidents of domestic abuse can be seen in figure 6 (i). Similarly, there has been an increase in repeat incidents of domestic abuse, as can be seen in figure 6(ii), with the Commissioner increasing investment in perpetrator services and early interventions



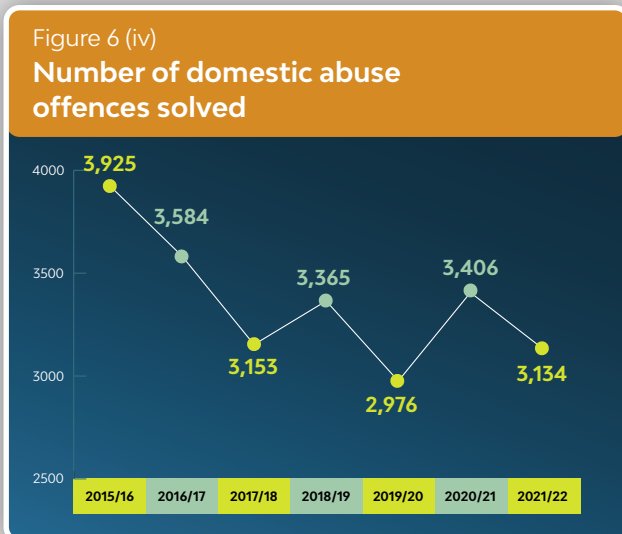
An officer takes a call from the public in the Police Control Room



The number of arrests for domestic abuse incidents initially fell between 2015/16 and 2017/18 but have since increased year on year to a peak of 16,041 in 2021/22 as can be seen in figure 6 (iii).



As can be seen in figure 6 (iv) the volume of domestic abuse incidents solved has decreased from 3,925 in 2015/16, to 3,134 abuse offences solved in 2021/22



Jane Gardner, the Deputy Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner, chairs the countywide Southend, Essex, and Thurrock Domestic Abuse Board (SETDAB). This is a partnership of organisations from across Essex, including the Commissioner representatives, Essex Police, Health, Local Authority, other Emergency Services and Criminal Justice agencies, with a focus on working together to support victims, raise awareness of abuse and reduce offending.

As part of the development of the new partnership domestic abuse strategy, the partnership commissioned an independent review of the previous strategy (2015 to 2020). The review was undertaken by Anglia Ruskin University (ARU) and reported back to the partnership in 2021. ARU’s key findings from their evaluation were that “over its lifespan, the Partnership performed in compliance with relevant best practice and national guidance, with regards to partnership work on the joint commissioning of services, shared processes (such as MARACs and DHRs), safeguarding, activities to address the behaviour of perpetrators, and the development of a joint communications strategy”.

**In May 2020, SETDAB launched its new, ambitious five-year strategy which focuses on delivering five key outcomes:**

**Outcome**

**1** Children and young people can recognise and form healthy relationships.

**Outcome**

**2** People experiencing and at risk of experiencing domestic abuse are supported to be and feel safe.

**Outcome**

**3** Everyone can rebuild their lives and live free from domestic abuse.

**Outcome**

**4** Supporting and disrupting perpetrators to change their behaviour and break the cycle of domestic abuse.

**Outcome**

**5** Communities, professionals and employers are able to recognise domestic abuse at the earliest opportunity and have the confidence to take action.

On behalf of the Board, the Commissioner takes the lead on outcome 2.

SETDAB has recently embarked on a commissioning discovery exercise exploring how best to respond to domestic abuse systemically, understanding needs and assets and considering joint commissioning opportunities around victim and perpetrator services interventions.

To support people experiencing, and at risk of experiencing domestic abuse, a wide range of support services are commissioned by the Commissioner, which provide specialist, tailored support when and where it is most effective.

The service currently commissioned from Victim Support represents the first level of emotional and practical support provided to victims. It offers a wide range of general support for all victims of crime. This high volume service received £1,097k between the commencement of the contract in April 2019 and the end of March 2021, to provide this important function. Prior to that, the Commissioner invested £1,850k in Victim Support over the three years 2016 to 2019.

From 2016 to 2019, Safer Places was commissioned to deliver an Independent Domestic Abuse Advisors (IDVA) service across Essex. In preparing for the recommissioning of that service in 2019, the Commissioner worked with local authorities through the SETDAB partnership to develop and commission an integrated system which improves consistency and quality of service for victims, as well as better value for money for commissioners. Specialist domestic abuse organisations Next Chapter, Safe Steps and Changing Pathways receive £2.465m p.a. as part of a jointly commissioned contract with Essex County Council, Southend-on-Sea Borough Council and Thurrock Council. This funding delivers

an integrated domestic abuse support service, including the provision of refuges, IDVAs, community based support and the delivery of a seven day a week, single point of access - the Compass helpline - which delivers advice and support for victims and professionals.

Specialist support services are also commissioned for victims and survivors of rape and sexual abuse, including historic child sexual abuse. Since taking office, the Commissioner has sought to increase reporting of these crimes, recognising data from the Crime Survey of England and Wales that nationally about eight in ten incidents of sexual abuse are not reported. There has been an increase in the number of people coming forward for help since the Commissioner inherited responsibility for the commissioning of local support services in 2014; for example, service users entering support increased from 4,690 in 2016/17 to 7,117 in 2018/19.

Local rape crisis centres have also been commissioned to provide specialist support for victims and survivors of sexual abuse since 2016, increasing investment in services as demand has increased; in 2016/17 the Commissioner invested about £840k in sexual abuse support, by 2020/21, this figure had increased to £1.1m. In April 2020, the Synergy Rape Crisis Partnership was commissioned to deliver specialist support across the county, including therapeutic support, advocacy, counselling and Independent Sexual Violence Advisors (ISVAs). Synergy also offers a single point of contact for victims of abuse to engage through, ensuring help and advice can be found in a consistent and accessible way. The contract value is about £1m per annum.

In April 2019 Essex became one of the six national areas in a Sexual Violence Local Commissioning Test

pilot. This enabled rape and sexual abuse support services in these areas to be directly commissioned by Commissioners, based on local needs, and thus not commissioned directly by the Ministry of Justice (MoJ). As part of the pilot, Essex received £808,500 in total over three years from the MoJ, which is allocated to specialist local support agencies, to enhance support offered to victims of sexual abuse.

In 2020, a new two year funding arrangement was put in place for an additional six Independent Sexual Violence Advisors (ISVAs) as part of a broader initiative to provide more support earlier in the process. This is to help victims and improve the number of cases that make it through to the courts. Between October and December 2020, the number of victims referred to ISVAs increased by 82 per cent compared to the same period a year earlier, an increase from 159 to 289.

In response to the new challenges presented by the COVID pandemic, the Commissioner secured £605,967 of extra government funding for local domestic abuse charities which increased the capacity of local services and enabled the system to respond dynamically to new risks associated with lockdown and the absence of traditional services and support mechanisms. The funding also helped to make venues and services COVID secure, so they could continue to provide vital support to victims. Sexual violence organisations were also provided with £415,000 to support their work during COVID, including the provision of extra counselling

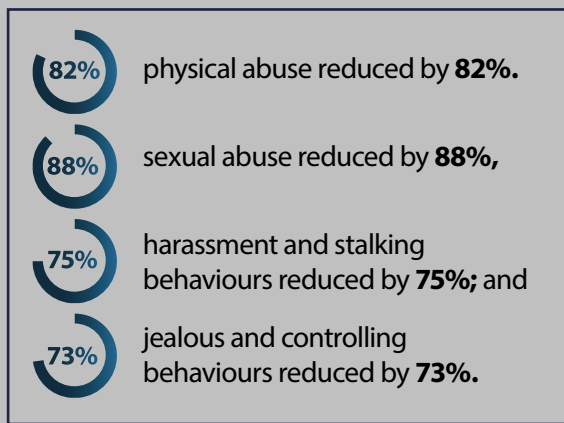
Over recent years, the Commissioner has invested in domestic abuse perpetrator behaviour change programmes to confront and change dangerous and abusive behaviour before they can cause more harm. This began in April 2016 with a national three year pilot project called Drive, which operated in Sussex,



South Wales and Essex. This was a ground breaking project, that focused specifically on high risk, high harm perpetrators, including serial perpetrators deemed to cause the most harm. Independent evaluation of the quantitative and qualitative data showed that the Drive perpetrator intervention was effective at reducing the use of abusive behaviours, increasing safety for victims and children, and doing so to a greater degree than in cases where only support to the victim is being provided.

The data also showed a more sustainable impact on safety when Drive was present. The number of Drive service users using each type of domestic violence and abuse (DVA) behaviour reduced substantially.

**For example, the use of high-risk:**



Following the conclusion of the three year Drive pilot in 2020, the Commissioner took the decision to build on the success of the pilot and invested in a local adaptation that expanded the pilot area from Colchester and Tendring to cover the whole county. Funding of £170,000 was invested to deliver behaviour change programmes, which had more than 280 referrals in 2020/21 and delivered a 95 per cent reduction in physical violence. This is important

work and vital to driving down the number of people affected by domestic abuse in the county. This increased focus on perpetrators has coincided with the rate of repeat DA offences plateauing recently, which is hopefully an indication of a longer term reduction in abuse.

The Commissioner has promoted and invested in the J9 DA Community Awareness programme which is focused on raising awareness about domestic abuse among professionals, those working in the community and residents themselves; helping them to recognise domestic abuse and respond to victims and survivors. The sessions are delivered free and equip attendees with the tools to recognise abuse, respond appropriately and help people to access the support they need. J9 training sessions in 2019/20 enabled about 350 people to be trained on how to recognise the signs of domestic abuse and gave them the knowledge of where to signpost victims. In 2020/21, because of the impact of COVID, the sessions were adapted to be delivered via a virtual platform to ensure they could continue to get this important message out.

The Commissioner continues to invest in the Goodman programme, promoting positive behaviours in young people. The five week mentoring programme is aimed at young men, at risk of entering abusive relationships, providing education about the value of respect and the characteristics of healthy relationships. The Essex Youth Service also deliver a female version, Sisters in Strength. This provision was adapted to ensure it could be delivered through 2020/21, despite the restrictions in schools.

The Commissioner has provided further funding to Alpha Vesta, a specialist charity raising awareness of domestic abuse in the workplace, ensuring employers understand the dynamics of abuse and are able to support victims to come forward.

Essex Police has been one of the most successful forces nationally at utilising Domestic Violence Protection Orders and Notices (DVPOs & DVPNs) to protect victims. Over the period 2015/16 Essex Police adopted and refined the use of these tools, increasing the utilisation of them over the period as can be seen in figure 6 (vi). In 2019/20, Essex Police implemented a pilot working with a perpetrator service and utilised tasking opportunities within MARAC to disrupt DA offenders and promoted the use Protection Orders & Notices to protect victims.

The Commissioner continues to prioritise domestic and sexual abuse as well as the broad VAWG agenda and will continue to use local and national funding opportunities, partnership working and commissioning good quality interventions to ensure victims are confident, empowered and able to come forward, report abuse and access support.

Figure 6 (vi)  
**Number of Domestic Violence Protection Notices (DVPNs) and Protection Orders (DVPOs)**



# 04

## Reverse the trend in serious violence

Violence in communities affects everyone; the vulnerable who are groomed into a life of crime, the families living without a loved one, the victims of drug driven crime and all of us in wider society who want to live free from the fear of violence.

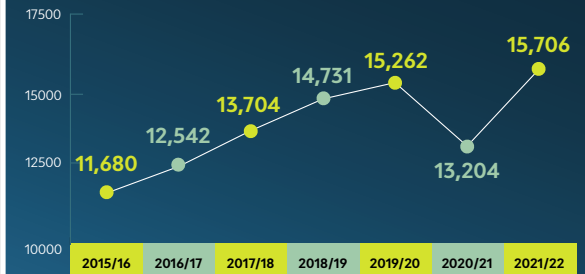
Reducing violence in communities across Essex and the impact of gangs and drug driven violence is important and a key focus for the Commissioner and Essex Police. Essex was one of the first counties to develop a Violence Reduction Unit or, as it is called in Essex, the Violence and Vulnerability Partnership. The Partnership, which is chaired by the Commissioner, and whose Operational Board is Chaired by the Deputy Chief Constable, Andy Prophet, has tested and trialled a range of interventions in recent years and through careful evaluation has developed a strategic approach that is delivering significant results in the fight against violent crime.

**Working together, the Partnership closely aligns activity to prevent violence and protect the vulnerable with strong, robust enforcement activity, led by Essex Police. Across Essex, the wider strategic approach includes:**

- Identifying and tackling organised crime gangs, County Lines, and drug supply.
- Delivering a proactive, robust local enforcement programme in partnership with communities.
- Reducing the risk of young or vulnerable people being exploited by gangs and help those involved in gangs to break away.

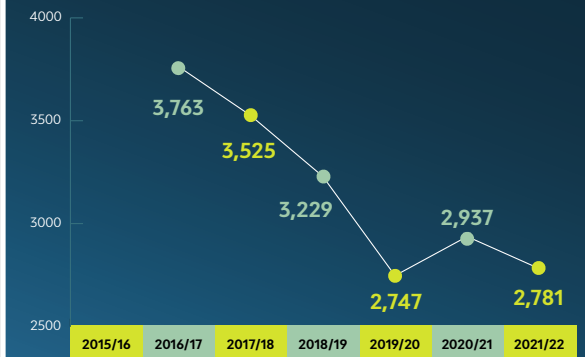
Between 2015/16 and 2019/20, the number of violence with injury offences increased from 11,680 to 15,262, as can be seen in figure 7 (i). Whilst the rate of incidents of violence with injury increased over the period of the plan. A noticeable dip occurred in 2020/21 to 13,204, due in large part to the restrictions in place in response to the COVID 19 pandemic, then rising again to 15,706 in 2021/22.

Figure 7 (i)  
Number of incidents of violence with injury

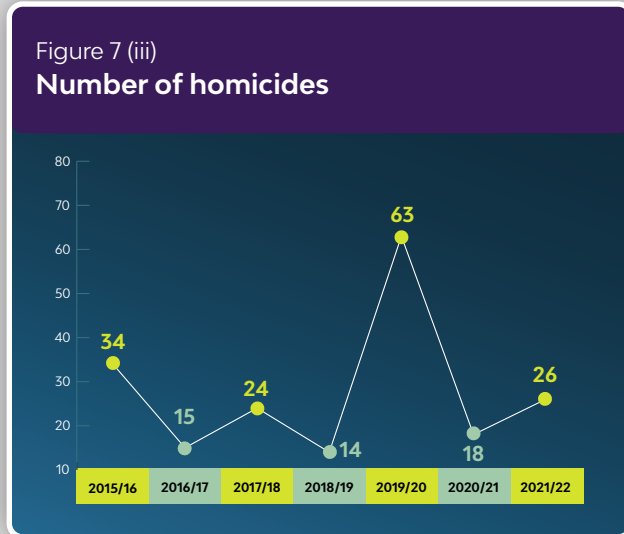


The number of offences solved for violence with injury offences has declined from 3,763 in 2016/17, to 2,781 in 2021/22, as can be seen in figure 7 (ii).

Figure 7 (ii)  
Number of Violence with Injury, Rape, and Other Sexual Offences solved



The annual number of homicides fluctuates due in part to the relatively small numbers as shown in figure 7 (iii). A noticeable spike in 2019/20 occurred due to the tragic incident when 39 people were discovered in a lorry container in Thurrock.



The crime severity score for violence with injury offences increased from 4.6 to 8.2 over the same period suggesting that an increase in offences was combined with increased severity. The rate of crime severity score for violent offences has increased in Essex and in our Most Similar Group of Forces (MSGs) over the period 2015/16 to 2021/22. Despite starting at a similar baseline, the Essex rate has increased at a slightly higher rate than the MSG over the period as shown in figure 7 (iv).



This is also evident in knife enabled crime, which increased from 755 offences in 2015/16 to 1,636 offences in 2021/22, as can be seen in figure 7 (v).

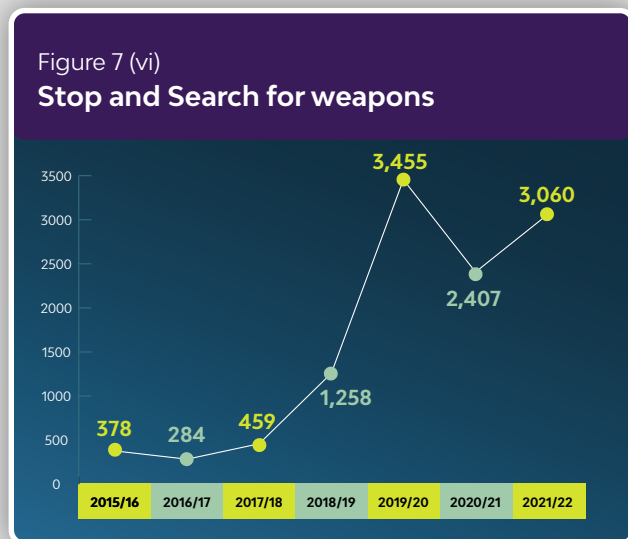


Improvements in data quality in April 2019 (NDQIS or National data quality improvement service which uses AI to identify possible knife related crime for a manual check that may have been otherwise missed) and June 2020 (mandated question completion on whether a knife involved before record completed) also resulted in increased number of these offences being recorded





Stop and Search for weapon volumes increased significantly, from 378 in 2015/16, to 3,060 in 2021/22. as can be seen in figure 7 (vi)



As the Partnership has continued to develop, so has its understanding of the specific nature of the problem in Essex and, importantly, how interventions can reduce the risk to young people by breaking the business models used by County Line gangs

There is now a much better understand of the profile of those in Essex who use drugs and whose activity fuels the violence that goes hand in hand with drugs. This has allowed the Partnership to develop interventions to focus on users, reinforcing to them the real cost and impact of their activity to society.

Through the analysis of serious violence, the Partnership now have a much better understanding of the small number of individuals who cause disproportionate levels of harm in communities. How they act and, importantly, how they can be identified early, and their behaviour tackled to prevent them from affecting communities. Programmes in accident and emergency departments is just one

example of where this level of insight has led to the development of an early intervention programme by trained youth workers. This has proven to be very successful with most young people engaged continuing with ongoing support. The ability to target the right people, in the right way, at the right time, is enabling the Partnership to change the course of these young people's lives and prevent future violence from happening.

This targeted approach has also been successfully used through the integration of safeguarding officers within Essex Police's specialist gang enforcement teams. These safeguarding officers work with partners to support young or vulnerable people who are swept up in enforcement activity against higher up County Line gang members. This approach provides the opportunity, where appropriate, to reach out and stop a young or vulnerable person from falling further into a life of crime.

Between 2016/17 and 2020/21, the Partnership also recognised the importance of building broad capacity within communities, particularly within the voluntary and community sectors. Through engaging the sector in the partnership and by using targeted funding, the Partnership has been able to foster a strong and robust network of organisations that provide a wide range of interventions in local communities across the county from youth clubs, boxing sessions to after school sport activities for at risk children. These deliver an ongoing level of capacity that reduces the risk of young people falling into a life of crime.

One example of a group that has benefited from this support is Changing Lives which was set up in Harlow in 2018 to raise children's awareness about the dangers of gangs and gang activity. The group uses a mix of physical activities and wellbeing programmes to improve young people's confidence,

decision making and resilience, and preventing them from getting involved in anti-social behaviour and criminal activity.

While these individual examples provide a flavour of the innovative and effective interventions currently under way, the real strength of the approach over the last few years has been the integrated and system wide strategy that this broader partnership has been able to deliver. By taking a holistic view of how different organisations work together to support young and vulnerable people and reduce violence, it has been possible to identify opportunities to intervene early, to make a difference and to stop people falling through the gaps.

Since the start of the Partnership approach in 2017/18, all of the partners, including the Commissioner and Essex Police, have embraced their collective responsibility to tackle violence in communities, support those at risk of being exploited and create the communities that the public want to live in. Having spotted this trend early, the Partnership has been well positioned to benefit from the Government's increased funding and focus on this vital area. This has enabled it to learn to innovate and, most importantly, to collaborate. As a result, the Partnership now knows what works in communities, what must be done together and the effort that is required to see this through.

As a key member of the wider Partnership, Essex Police has played a central role in the development of this work. This includes redeveloping and strengthening their own capacity to provide robust enforcement action against gangs and County Lines. A key development was the creation, in July 2020, of the Serious Violence Unit (SVU). The Unit uses an intelligence led approach to target gang leaders and County Lines. They have also boosted evidence gathering capacity which has resulted in an increase

in convictions and sentences. The Unit takes a broad approach to tackling gangs and is supported by expert drug witnesses who can provide timely expert advice to support prosecutions and a dedicated legal resource to target gangs through civil injunctions.

Between April 2020 and March 2021, the work of the SVU resulted in 288 arrests, 268 people charged, £300,082 of cash seized and £598,000 worth of drugs recovered. The success of the Unit has led to further investment and growth. This is funded from increases in the local policing precept and Central Government funding.

The introduction of safeguarding officers in 2019 and 2020 provided a stronger focus on vulnerability, supporting those people who are being exploited and leading to several successful charges for Child Trafficking and Compulsory Labour of Adults. A child victim navigator also works within the team to provide specialist care and support to victims of trafficking and exploitation. The safeguarding officers and the victim navigator role (designed to help victims understand the process and access relevant support) have helped Essex Police to protect and safeguard victims of modern day slavery and trafficking and helped to build a stronger prosecution for these cases.

The extra investment also helped to improve the enforcement approach, with increased focus on identifying, targeting, and prosecuting those gang leaders and County Lines. This focus led to more County Lines being dismantled and fewer restarting again after being targeted.

The SVU continues to work through the Violence and Vulnerability Unit to target and reduce the drug user market in Essex, thus reducing the scale and business model for gangs and County Lines. While this work shows progress is being made, the tragic death of Sarah Everard and the national outpouring of emotion that has happened since, has clearly shown there is much more that policing must do nationally and that there must be a change within our wider society, to challenge and address male violence against women. No woman should feel unsafe in her own community, but the sad truth is that many do.

The Commissioner has been vocal in supporting the need to create a society where women can live free from the fear of violence, which has a real psychological and emotional impact. Essex Police and the Commissioner have worked hard to encourage survivors of abuse and violence to come forward and when they have, there has been specialist support services put in place, to help them to cope and move on, while at the same time, robustly targeting offenders to break the cycle of violence against women.

In 2018/19, the Commissioner led the development and publication of Essex's first partnership sexual violence and abuse strategy. The strategy was developed through the Essex Sexual Abuse Strategic Partnership which includes representatives from Essex Police, Local Rape Crisis Centres, Health, and Local Authorities. The partnership reviews progress against the strategy at each of its quarterly meetings.

**The strategy outlines the holistic approach the partnership is taking to tackle abuse, and focuses on the following partnership priorities:**

- Prevent abuse from happening.
- Support for victims and survivors.
- Develop consistent, impactful communication and campaigns.
- Challenge perpetrators to break the cycle of abuse.
- Deliver an effective criminal justice response which bring victims justice and holds perpetrators to account.

05

## Tackle Gangs and Organised Crime

Working locally, regionally, and nationally, Essex Police take a hard line in pursuing organised crime groups, disrupting their activity, pursuing, and prosecuting those involved and confiscating their assets.

Leading this fight are dedicated Serious Organised Crime units (SOCs) based across the country, working with colleagues regionally and locally. The Chief Constable has recently been able to grow these teams due to the increased investment secured by the Commissioner through the local policing precept and national funding. They are also supported by a separate specialist money laundering team, a dedicated Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Unit and the Prevent and Protect Team who work with partners to reduce the risk of organised crime to the public.

As well as this high profile work, the force has successfully identified, targeted, and disrupted, a growing number of organised crime groups, with there being 83 in 2017/18 rising each year, to 281 in 2021/22, as can be seen in figure 8 (i).

This includes the group responsible for the tragic death of 39 people found deceased in a lorry in Grays, in 2019. After a successful international investigation by Essex Police, the trial for these offences took place at the end of 2020, early 2021. In January 2021 at the Old Bailey, seven men were sentenced to more than 92 years in total for their involvement.

The launch of the Serious Violence Unit in June 2020, which is discussed in more depth elsewhere in this report, has also increased the identification of criminal exploitation of vulnerable victims by County Lines and gangs. This has led to improved identification of the organised crime gangs who are often the controlling influence behind the activity.



Three officers out patrolling the streets.



Since 2016/17 Essex Police has received more than £3.2m from the Proceeds of Crime Act (POCA). £1.2m was invested back into Essex Police for specialist equipment, proactive operations, Essex Search and Rescue, Body Worn Video, drones, 'Method of Entry' training, digital forensics, knife arches, covert equipment, digital forensics training, fraud prevention campaigns and SCD financial investigators. £400,000 was allocated to Essex Community Foundation for investment in local charitable groups that deliver community safety projects. The remaining balance is available to Essex Police for allocation.

As well as strong, robust enforcement, Essex Police's Prevent and Protect Teams identify current and emerging issues relating to serious organised crime and proactively develop strategies to minimise their impact and tackle their criminal activity. This team focuses on cybercrime, fraud, modern day slavery and human trafficking, gangs, and organised crime gangs. The team provide education and awareness to allow individuals and businesses to protect themselves from the effects of serious organised crime, as well as preventing people from engaging in serious organised crime in the first place. Working with partners including Essex Chamber of Commerce, Barclays Bank, Anglia Ruskin University and many more, the team deliver educational events to raise awareness of types of crimes that businesses and the public are susceptible to and how they can protect themselves from becoming a victim or a repeat victim of organised crime. Over the last year, the team have undertaken more than 194 individual engagements, reaching more than 800 people.

That team also developed the Essex Fraud Alert System (EFAS) which works with partners to utilise their own communication mechanisms to deliver advice and warnings about current scams and threats. This has been extended by providing monthly alerts to local magazines. Through these channels, we estimate Essex Police are able to reach more than 370,000 residents with timely accurate fraud prevention advice. This proved to be very successful during the COVID pandemic where the force was able to react quickly to new and emerging scams.

The team have also developed work targeting romance fraud, supporting vulnerable fraud victims as well as working with key businesses to identify weaknesses in their processes and strengthen them against exploitation.

Figure 8 (i)  
Number of Organised Crime Group disruptions

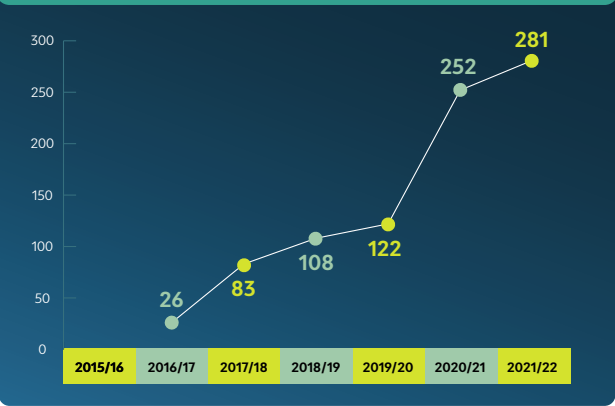


Figure 8 (ii)  
Number of trafficking of drugs arrests



06

## Protecting children and vulnerable people from harm

Protecting the most vulnerable in society is a key priority for the Commissioner and Essex Police.

Significant work is undertaken with partners and across the force to ensure young and vulnerable people receive the support they need when they are the victim of crime; perpetrators are identified, investigated and, wherever possible, prosecuted and, most importantly, incidents are prevented from happening in the first place, so far as is possible. Despite such investment, however, over the period of the Plan, recorded crimes involving abuse against vulnerable people in Essex – as has been seen nationally – increased significantly.

While young and vulnerable people can become the victim of any crime, there are certain types of crime where they are particularly vulnerable. In the chapter on tackling gangs and serious violence, a significant amount of work was presented that is being undertaken to prevent the exploitation of young and vulnerable people by gangs.

Sexual violence and exploitation are also areas which can affect young and vulnerable people and, as such, an area of focus for both the Commissioner and Essex Police. The Crime Survey of England and Wales (CSEW) estimates, indicate that nationally 20 per cent of women and 4 per cent of men have experienced some type of sexual assault since the age of 16. This would represent 240,034 females and 48,007 men in Essex, experiencing some type of sexual assault. The CSEW showed that nationally about 83 per cent of victims did not report their experiences to the police.

The CSEW, which includes crimes that are not reported to the police, indicates that the underlying volume of sexual abuse has not changed significantly since 2005. In Essex, the Commissioner and Essex Police have worked hard to increase the number of victims who are comfortable coming forward to report and to seek support, which is

made available through the provision of accessible, high quality, specialist support services.

The Commissioner has a responsibility to commission services to support victims of crime, which includes victims of sexual violence and abuse. In Essex, the demand has grown significantly in recent years and between 2018 and 2020 new referrals into support services increased by 29 per cent (data provided by the Synergy Rape Crisis Partnership).

This increase is also present in Essex Police data which shows that reported child abuse offences increased from 2,404 in 2015/16 to 6,682 in 2021/22. The Commissioner has worked to improve understanding and promote awareness of child sexual abuse and exploitation, and to encourage victims to report and seek help. This, coupled with high profile media coverage of offences and court proceedings, including the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA), has resulted in an increase in offences over the period of the plan, as can be seen in figure 9 (i) and an increase in investigations over the period of the plan from 465 in 2015/16 to more than 2,682 in 2021/22, as can be seen in figure 9 (ii). Despite a dip in 2018/19, the overall trend of Child Sexual Abuse solved outcomes is upwards, from 200 in 2015/16 to 395 in 2021/22, as can be seen in figure 9 (iii). The solved rate for child abuse cases decreased from 8.32 per cent in 2015/16, to 6.29 per cent in 2021/22, as shown in figure 9 (iv)

Figure 9 (i)  
Number of child abuse offences



Figure 9 (iii)  
Number of Child abuse solved outcomes



Figure 9 (ii)  
Number of Child Sexual Abuse/ Exploitation investigations

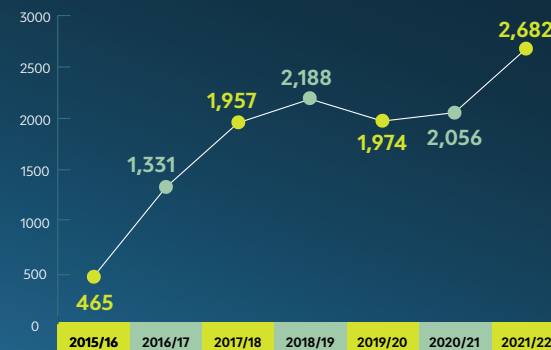
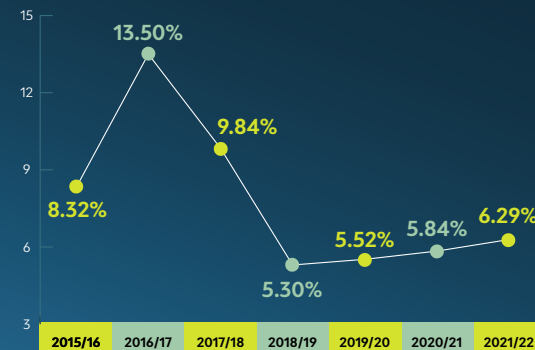


Figure 9 (iv)  
Child abuse solved rate



NHS England and the Commissioner jointly commission the Essex Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) which is a safe place for victims of sexual assault to be examined, interviewed, and referred to further support services. The SARC helps victims to understand their options and make an informed choice in deciding how they wish to proceed. SARC examinations have seen an increase in demand for services of 16 per cent between 2018 and 2020.

As discussed previously, Essex is also one of only five local areas that successfully applied to receive devolved Rape Support Funding from the Ministry of Justice. This has brought commissioning services to a more local level allowing the partnership, through the Commissioner, to tailor support to the needs of communities.

Sexual violence happens both within intimate relationships and within wider family relationships. Data from Essex Rape Crisis Partnership shows that 23 per cent of victims aged 16 and over had experienced sexual violence perpetrated by an intimate partner. An additional 33 per cent of victims had experienced sexual violence and child sexual abuse within their family, perpetrated by a family member (predominantly a father, stepfather, grandfather, or brother).

Recorded rape offences have gradually increased over the Plan period, with projections anticipating this trend continuing. As noted in the chapter on serious violence, although rape convictions as a percentage of the total caseload increased between 2016/17 and 2020/21 (from 60 per cent to 69 per cent), the total number of rape convictions in Essex reduced from 67 in 2016/17 to just 20 in 2020/21. For the 12 months to the end of March 2021, Essex had the eighth highest rate per 1,000 population of recorded rape offences nationally, and the joint highest within its Most Similar Group of forces. Only



4 per cent were solved during this period, giving Essex the sixth lowest solved rate across England and Wales. This is not where we want to be, and the Commissioner will continue to prioritise this priority and improve outcomes for victims.

The approach to tackling serious sexual violence is set out in the Essex Sexual Abuse Strategy. This was developed in 2018 and brought together a range of stakeholders including councils, charities, support organisations, health partners and the emergency services. It aims to help organisations work together to prevent the volume and impact of sexual violence and abuse in Southend, Essex, and Thurrock. It focuses on prevention, victim services, building awareness and partnership working across the criminal justice system, as well as on perpetrators. The ambition of the partnership is to ensure there is a clear understanding of consent among children and young people, that victims can access appropriate support, and the rate of sexual abuse charges and prosecutions increases as victims feel more confident in coming forwards.

There have already been some strong initiatives that have been developed through the partnership, including the First Responders project, which ensures victims of crime receive support within 24 hours from when they report the crime, and the Drink Aware initiative, which is a preventative programme safeguarding those who are most vulnerable within the night time economy, by working with local businesses, third sector agencies and the police. Essex was the first area in the UK to offer the level of service provided by First Responders, with the intention of reducing the number of victims who disengage from the criminal justice process and provide enhanced support for victims as their case progresses through the criminal justice system. Police referrals

increased from 858 in 2018/19 to 1,789 in 2020/21, with evidence showing that victims who receive early support remain engaged with the criminal justice process. While more work is under way, the development of the strategy marks an important step forward in providing a joined up and sustained approach to tackling sexual violence in communities.

Another area of crime which can affect young and vulnerable groups in society is hate crime. Essex Police and the Commissioner work closely with partners to promote the reporting, prevention, and prosecution of hate crime through the Hate Crime Partnership. Since 2018, the partnership has been implementing the Hate Crime Prevention Strategy which aims to improve victim satisfaction with the response to hate crime across Essex by dismantling barriers to reporting hate crime, improving the operational response to hate crime, and tackling hate crime by increasing public awareness and promoting positive values. To achieve these objectives, the partnership focuses on understanding and preventing hate crime, increasing reporting and support for victims, and improving shared operational response to hate crimes. Together, the partnership has worked hard over recent years to increase the reporting of hate crime by building stronger relationships with communities, better collaboration with Independent Advisory Groups and delivering more visible publicity, including a Crimestoppers online hate crime campaign that reached more than 1.2 million people and a multi-lingual Stop the Hate leaflet.

Data from the public perception survey shows an overall increase in the rates of victims stating that they were satisfied with the service they received between 2017/18 (when the survey started) and 2021/22, as can be seen in figure 9 (iv).

Figure 9 (iv)  
Percentage of victims and witnesses who have satisfaction with the services they receive

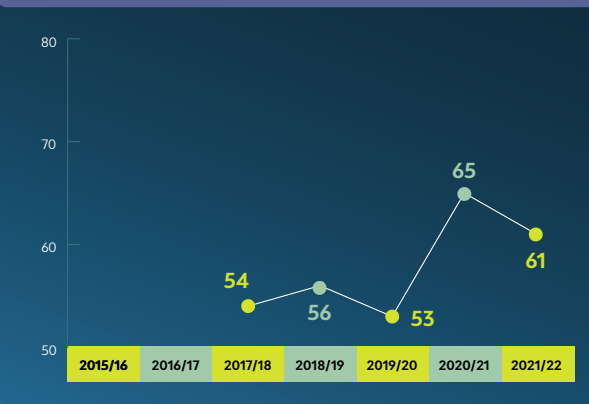
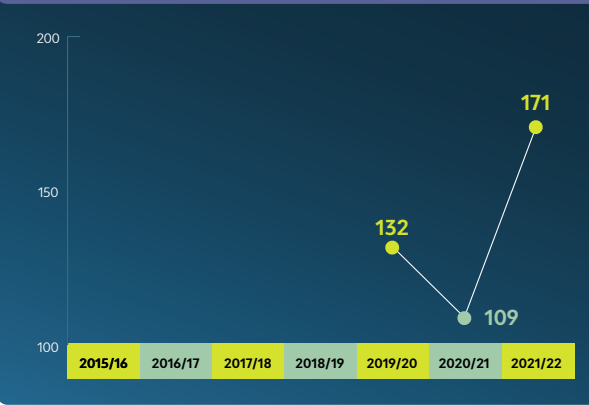


Figure 9 (v)  
Modern Slavery referrals made to the National Referral Model (NRM)



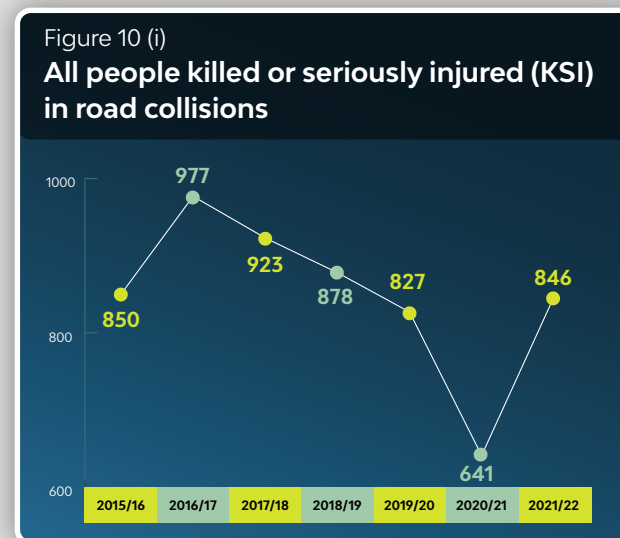
# 07

## Improving safety on our roads

10.1. More people are killed on the roads of Essex than from all other forms of crime put together. The four main driving offences – drug driving, drink driving, speeding, and driving without a seatbelt are without a doubt the biggest killers in the county.

As well as this direct impact, it is also clear that the road network is used by criminals and that effective, robust policing of the roads can help to tackle other forms of crime such as organised crime groups, drugs and County Lines, burglary, and anti-social behaviour. In 2020 alone, more than 150 people were arrested by Essex Police’s roads policing team for a range of criminal offences, including possession of weapons, burglary, violence, dangerous driving, possession with intent to supply class A drugs and high end road traffic offences. This is an increase of more than 30 arrests compared to 2019.

Working through the Safer Essex Roads Partnership, the Commissioner, Essex Police and Essex County Fire and Rescue Service have continued to work hard to make the roads safer. The number of people killed or seriously injured on Essex roads has remained relatively constant over the period at 850 in 2015/16 and 846 in 2021/22, as can be seen in figure 10 (i).



There was a long term downward trend during the period to 2019/20, which was achieved by a clear proactive strategy of prevention and education with investments in driver awareness campaigns and driver training programmes, along with a strong coordinated programme of enforcement with targeted activity by partners to focus on those most at risk, such as young men and motorbike riders, to effectively drive down deaths, as was the identification and improvement of high risk parts of the road network. There then followed a significant drop in 2020/21, which can be partly attributed to the impact of COVID lockdowns,

However, it can be seen from figure 10 (i) that, as the country emerged from the most stringent COVID lockdowns, the numbers of people killed and seriously injured on Essex roads returned to pre pandemic levels. Analysis indicates that, as the roads remained less congested than usual, high speed was a common feature in RTCs during the final year of the Plan, along with certain groups of road users and vehicle types. Overall, motorcyclists remain the most at risk group, representing 23 per cent of all recorded collisions involving death and serious injury. In response to these findings, Essex Police met with National Highways representatives to discuss the installation of measures to mitigate risk on known accident blackspots and several ideas have been taken away for development.

The Safer Essex Roads Partnership undertook a significant review of activity in 2019. This resulted in the Partnership taking the ambitious step to commit to its Vision Zero Strategy in 2020/21.

**This builds on the success over the last ten years and aims to achieve zero people killed or seriously injured on the roads of Essex by 2040, through the delivery of 38 strategic actions grouped into five themes:**

- Post-collision response and care.
- Tackling speeding.
- Ensuring safe roads and roadsides.
- Ensuring safe road users.
- Ensuring safe vehicles.

Cutting across all these themes are programmes of road user education as well as a wider communications plan.

The Vision Zero Strategy was launched at the Commissioner's conference on 24 May 2022, where workshops were held to raise delegates' awareness of the strategy and to start capturing what they and their organisations can do to implement Vision Zero. This vision cannot be achieved by one organisation; it needs the partnership and support of residents, businesses, and road users. It will require a cultural change by communities, stakeholders, and industry, acknowledging that everyone has a responsibility for safe use of the road network. By accepting that humans make mistakes and there is a shared responsibility on those who design, build, maintain and use the road network to prevent death and serious injury, it focuses efforts on creating a safe road system that can cope with human mistakes and prioritises human health and life. Going forward, the Commissioner, Essex Police and Essex County Fire and Rescue Service will continue to play their full part in delivering this new approach.

While not all KSIs result in criminal offences being recorded, a number do result in arrests and prosecutions for offences such as driving under the influence of alcohol and / or drugs or driving related mobile phone crimes. Figure 10 (ii) shows a significant reduction during 2021/22 (of 57 per cent compared with 2020/21) in the number of people driving under the influence of drugs on Essex roads, following a steady upward trend over the previous four years, but a return to the upward trajectory in the number of people driving under the influence of alcohol following a reduction during the strictest COVID lockdowns (when the hospitality industry was shut down) can be seen in figure 10 (iii).

Figure 10 (ii)  
**Number driving under the influence of drugs on Essex roads**

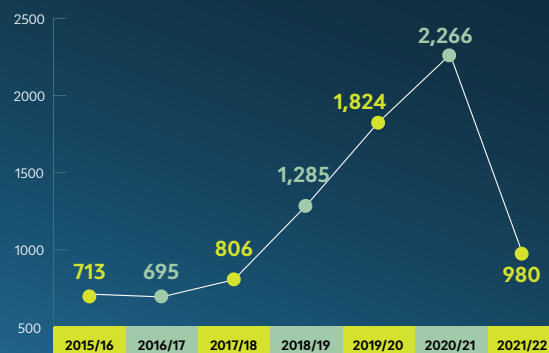
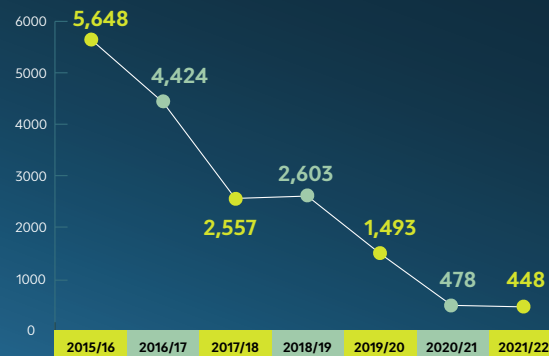


Figure 10 (iii)  
**Number driving under the influence of drink on Essex roads**



Figure 10 (iv)  
**Number of mobile phone related driving offences on Essex roads**



By contrast, the number of driving related mobile phone crimes committed on Essex roads has shown a swift, significant, and sustained reduction over the duration of the Police and Crime Plan, by some 92 per cent against the 2015/16 baseline, as can be seen in figure 10 (iv).





■ Safer Essex Roads Partnership out in the community promoting safer driving

As part of the Force Growth Programme in 2019/20, the Chief Constable recruited an additional 17 police constables, who were posted to roads policing units. These officers have had a direct impact on the number of arrests, collision investigations, stops and searches and intelligence submissions undertaken on Essex roads. This is expected to continue to develop as the officers gain further experience in their roles and the next cohort of officers start to make an impact. Following the increase in the precept for 2020/21, funding for an additional 24 officers was also allocated to roads policing. This growth provided further opportunities to increase the proactive focus on road safety and the disruption of those who use vehicles with criminal intent.

As in many areas, the year 2020, presented unique challenges to policing the roads of Essex. The first national lockdown drastically reduced traffic volumes and enabled the roads policing team to increase proactive and preventative policing patrols significantly. This increased proactive capacity helped to tackle the high end speeding offences

which increased during this period while also improving the detection of drug driving offences.

A study of collisions during the COVID period showed that, while there were far fewer collisions, the severity of those that did happen was far higher, due mainly to increased vehicle speeds. Across Essex, we saw a 15 per cent increase in vehicle speeds during the COVID lockdown period, a worrying trend that has had a real impact on people's lives. In response, Essex Police developed a new strategy referred to as Unpredictable Visibility that delivers more visible roadside activity using detection devices such as TRUCAM. Enforcement takes place in specific locations identified to maximise the overall impact of the tactic within one district. The tactic has been shown to reduce reoffending rates by 10 per cent and provide a stronger impact on drivers caught in 30 mph zones than the use of static speed cameras. To support this activity, the Commissioner has approved the purchase of three LASERCAM 4 devices in 2020/21, which also allow for activity at night.

During October 2020, two separate fatal road traffic collisions highlighted links to drivers who were driving stolen vehicles, with links to organised car theft. This led to the development of a successful target operation by Essex Police, focused on high harm cross border criminality that is conducted in partnership with the Metropolitan Police (Havering and Dagenham).

A similar proactive approach has been taken with Essex Police's approach to commercial vehicles. Historically, the focus with these vehicles was upon mechanical defects and drivers' hours offences. Whilst these offences remain critical to improving safety on the roads, opportunities are now taken to gain valuable intelligence around organised immigration crime and wider threats to national security. Both proactive and reactive operations have

been taken to target organised illegal immigration at Essex ports and key service stations.

As well as increasing the capacity of the Roads Policing Team, significant work has been done to invest in and grow public participation. An early decision was taken to grow Community Speed Watch in the county with Essex County Fire and Rescue Service taking on responsibility for coordinating this service on behalf of the public. A dedicated coordinator was recruited, and significant work was done to develop and grow the scheme, which led to the number of letters being sent as a result of the scheme growing from 15,001 in 2017 to 24,333 in 2019 (an increase of more than 62 per cent). The number of letters did decrease due to COVID, but in the first six months of 2022 were at 8,456.

Not only does Community Speed Watch provide a valuable additional resource in the fight against speeding, but also builds community participation and is vital to achieving the cultural and societal change that is essential to deliver the Safer Essex Road Partnership's ambitious goal of zero deaths on Essex roads by 2040. Unfortunately, the COVID pandemic placed significant restrictions on Community Speed Watch Groups with most groups having to suspend their activity based on national guidance. This was disappointing for members of the groups and for the Safer Essex Roads Partnership. However, the safety and health of volunteers was a priority, so it was important that the programme acted in their best interests even when there was significant enthusiasm from the volunteers themselves to get back out onto the roads. During the later stages of the pandemic, the Safer Essex Roads Partnership were able to develop ways to get as many groups as possible active again. A full review was conducted, and the scheme restarted fully in March 2021.

08

# Police and Crime Plan 2021-2024

At the end of 2020/21, many of the significant challenges faced in 2016 had been overcome, with Essex Police well on the way to becoming the biggest it had ever been, with a strong level of public confidence in policing and reductions in key crime types.

The partnership work undertaken by the Commissioner and Essex Police had also improved significantly with the establishment of Community Safety Hubs in the majority of areas across Essex, enabling joint tasking. A set of strong collaboration arrangements had been established to tackle violence and vulnerability, domestic abuse, road offences and help safeguard adults and children.

While progress in the area identified above had been made at the end of 2020/21, there were many new and complex challenges, not least the need to tackle the increase in overall crime levels and get crime down. The public have invested in policing to prevent crime and the Commissioner and Essex Police are committed to delivering on that. This is particularly important in areas such as drug driven violence, domestic abuse, violence against women and girls and road safety where the harm that is caused accounts for such a significant proportion of overall crime.

Due to several national scandals, not least the horrific, brutal murder of Sarah Everard by a serving Metropolitan Police officer, policing nationally face challenges to their legitimacy. While these challenges are not yet being seen in data about Essex Police, it is a challenge for policing nationally and a clear indication that forces must change and evolve if they wish to maintain public confidence and their own legitimacy.

This pressure on the police has gone hand in hand with a realisation throughout society that violence against women and girls has been tolerated for too long and must now be urgently challenged. This requires a societal shift, but there is also much that policing must do and the wider community safety environment.

These challenges were reflected in the 2021 election and have fed through to the Police and Crime Plan 2021 to 2024 (P&CP 2021 to 2024). At its heart, this new Plan builds on the successes of the Police and Crime Plan 2016 to 2021, extends the Commissioner's ambition, and sets out to address many of the new challenges the country currently faces.

The work that has been undertaken since 2016 has been fed into the new plan and updated to reflect the challenges of the current operating environment.





## Connections between 2016-21 priorities and 2021-24 priorities.

The Police and Crime Plan Extension 2021 (P&CP-E2021) priority to **have more local, visible, and accessible policing** is further developed in the P&CP 2021-24 under the priority for *Investment in crime prevention*

The P&CP-E2021 priority to **crack down on anti-social behaviour** is further developed in the P&CP 2021-24 under the priority for *Investment in crime prevention*.

The P&CP-E2021 priority to **break the cycle of domestic abuse** is further developed in the P&CP 2021-24 under the priority for *protecting vulnerable people and breaking the cycle of domestic abuse*.

The P&CP-E2021 priority to **tackle gangs and serious violence** is further developed in the P&CP 2021-24 under the priority for *reducing drug driven violence*.

The P&CP-E2021 priority to **disrupt and prevent organised crime** is further developed in the P&CP 2021-24 under the priority for *reducing drug driven violence*.

The P&CP-E2021 priority to **protect children and vulnerable people from harm** is further developed in the P&CP 2021-24 under two of the new priorities *protecting vulnerable people and breaking the cycle of Domestic Abuse* and *reducing violence against women and girls*.

The P&CP-E2021 to **improving safety on our roads** is further developed in the P&CP 2021-24 under the priority *Improving safety on our roads*

Two PCSOs out on patrol in the local community





# The Priorities and 'We Wills'

## 01 | More Local, Visible and Accessible Policing

2016/17 – 2019/20 Priorities



**Deliver a more visible police presence, in crime hotspots, town centres and around the night-time economy and through targeted patrols to address burglary.**

500 officers recruited between 2016 and 2021 including growth in Community Policing Teams and the introduction of Town Centre Teams.

- 2017-18 41
- 2018-19 150
- 2019-20 215
- 2020-21 151

*Further details are set out in the narrative section above.*

**Improve communications and contact between the police and local communities, so the public have access to information and advice on crime and anti-social behaviour in their area.**

- Essex Police Public Engagement Strategy Developed in 2017.
- Independent Public Confidence Survey developed by the Commissioner and Chief Constable in 2017/18 providing countywide and district level data.
- District level engagement scrutiny programme developed to share best practice, identify areas for development and track engagement with the public.
- Public Safety Engagement Officers established to support stronger engagement with the public.
- Continued strong growth in public confidence.

**Boost community volunteering, encourage the Active Citizen Programme and grow the police family – doubling the Special Constabulary, with a Special Constable in every community**

- Special Constabulary grown to 521 officers by 2020/21, the second largest and fastest growing in the country. This is against a base of 353 in 2016 and was impacted by the significant growth in full time officers with the Specials contributing 232 officers to the regulars between 2016 and the end of March 2021.
- Further details of community volunteering set out in narrative above.

**Make it easy to contact the police through Do It Online and improvements to 101 ensuring that the public get a swift and responsive service from the police.**

- Online reporting increased from 1,118 per month between September 2016 and the end of March 2017 to 1,934 per month between March 2020/21
- Further development in online reporting was identified and implemented through the 2020/21 Police and Crime Plan Extension.

**Expect every Community Safety Partnership to set local priorities for their local Community Policing Team to ensure community confidence in the police.**

- Annual visit from the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner's team and structured evaluation process established with all CSPs to understand and contribute to the local priorities set by the CSPs.
- £272,500 is provided to Community Safety Partnerships each year on the basis of local priorities being understood and actioned.

### Working with our partners, we will establish Community Safety Hubs in every policing district with police co-located with local community safety partners to deliver joined/up responses to tackle locally defined priorities.

- Community Hubs encouraged in every area and implemented in areas where this was supported by partners. Hubs were established in all but two areas (Harlow and Thurrock). Since 2021, further conversations have been had and both Thurrock and Harlow are in the process of establishing a Hub, though at different stages of development.
- Since 2016, the Commissioner has supported the Community Safety Hub Steering Group and led the development of a new Performance Framework for Community Safety Hubs which was approved by Safer Essex in September 2020.
- The Commissioner's inaugural Fire and Rescue plan (2019 to 2024) featured a commitment to increase emphasis on partnership working.
- The Commissioner invested £200,000 to the roll out of Hubs between 2016 to 2019. This enabled local partners to fund estates work, purchase IT or furniture or improve accessibility of Hubs to encourage, enable and facilitate effective partnership working.

### Give every front line police officer a smart phone or tablet, enabling mobile policing, so they can reduce time spent on paperwork and have more time on patrol.

- Programme completed in 2017 with further growth in functionality and improvement in enabling technology undertaken in following years. This led to a time saving of 19 minutes per officer, per shift.
- More information is provided in the narrative section above.

### Help the rural communities by preventing rural crime, including strengthening Farm Watch, working with the Rural Crime Forum, and recruiting more Rural Specials.

- Rural Crime Strategy developed in partnership with rural community.
- Rural Crime Team established to provide specialist advice to local policing team and lead engagement with rural communities.
- Increased investment in Rural Crime Team, so Essex has one of the largest specialist teams in the country and continued development and engagement.
- As referenced in the Domestic Abuse chapter, the Southend, Essex & Thurrock DA Partnership has developed a framework for tackling domestic abuse in rural areas.
- Further details set out in narrative above.

### Strengthen engagement with local businesses to prevent crime and to help the local economy to thrive.

- Engagement strengthened in 2016 to 2018.
- Business led Strategic Business Board established in partnership with Federation of Small Businesses and Chamber in 2019.
- Crime Against Business Strategy developed in partnership with Businesses in 2019.
- Business Crime Team established, as set out in narrative section above, and further information provided in 2020/21 priorities.

### Support increased participation in Neighbourhood Watch, Street Pastors, Active Citizens, and Volunteer Police Cadets.

- Ongoing engagement with Neighbourhood Watch from Essex Police and Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner's team with leads assigned from each organisation.
- Annual funding established with NHW in 2019/20 to fund crime prevention projects around the county.
- Specific investment in Neighbourhood Watch onboarding programmes to support continued growth.
- Strong relationships maintained with Street Pastors with specific targeted funding provided from Community Safety Development Fund.
- Clear lead assigned for Police Volunteer Programme and Volunteer Police Cadets within Essex Police leading to strong sustained growth as set out in the narrative section above.

### 2019/20 – 2020/21 Priorities

### Provide strong visible, preventative policing in crime and anti-social behaviour hotspots, town centres, neighbourhoods and around the night time economy.

- 500 officers recruited, including growth in Community Policing Team and the introduction of Town Centre Teams.
- Anti-social behaviour has reduced significantly from 52,732 in 2015/16 to 30,674 in 2021/22. The numbers did increase in 2020/21 as breaches of COVID regulations were recorded as anti-social behaviour, however, the overall trend, excluding these COVID offences, has fallen year on year throughout the period.

**Develop preventative, proactive, problem solving policing activities by working with Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs), including embedding officers in local CSPs and Hubs.**

- Internal audit of Community Safety Partnerships undertaken in October 2020 with all actions implemented.
- Force Growth Plan implemented leading to increased policing capacity in Community Safety Partnerships.
- Revised Performance Framework for Community Safety Partnerships developed and agreed by Safer Essex.

**Develop a series of shared spaces for officers to use, such as in fire stations and local community centres.**

- Drop/in centres developed across Essex with additional plan to share site in Dovercourt.
- Further work planned on fleet workshop and possible control centres.

**Work with local communities, including through the Community Special Programme, to increase visibility, boost the Special Constabulary and prevent crime in their communities.**

- Special Constabulary grown to 521 officers by 2020/21, the second largest and fastest growing in the country.
- Further details of community volunteering set out in narrative above.

**Make it easier to contact the police. Improve the 101 response time, encourage online reporting, and realise the benefits of the national Single Online Home solution.**

- Single online home implemented in 2021.
- Online reporting increased from 1,118 per month between September 2016 (the date this was introduced) and the end of March 2017 to 1,934 per month between March 2020/21.

**Deliver the next stage of Mobile First policing, so officers have better access to technology, can spend less time behind desks and more time visible and dealing with issues in their communities**

- Continued growth in Mobile First programme with 50 per cent of all daily recorded crime completed via smartphones without the need to return to a station in 2020/21.
- Deployment of extra applications, including What3words, an interpreting service, bike register and, in September 2020, a stop and search module which was supported by a mobile fingerprint scanner.

**Work with schools, voluntary and statutory youth services to engage with young people, build confidence in policing, prevent crime, and promote safe behaviours**

- Shared Education Team developed with Essex County Fire and Rescue Service leading to significant growth in school engagement and broader range of community safety messaging provided. 191,491 young people engaged in 2019/20.
- Annual youth conference established in 2018 in partnership with Young Essex Assembly, targeted engagement undertaken with other youth groups around the county.
- Youth voice included in the Violence and Vulnerability Unit and in the development of all key strategic documents and precept survey.
- Commissioned range of services and projects that engage with young people, build their confidence in policing, and divert them away from crime and risky behaviours. This has been implemented through the Community Safety Development Fund and Violence and Vulnerability Fund.

**Boost community volunteering, encouraging the Active Citizen Programme and grow the police family – doubling the Special Constabulary, with a Special Constable in every community**

- Commitment carried forward from 2016 to 2020 Plan with update provided above.

**Support increased participation in community safety by supporting schemes such as Neighbourhood Watch, Street Pastors, Community Speed Watch, Volunteer Police Cadets, and others**

- Commitment carried forward from 2016 to 2020 Plan with update provided above.



### Help businesses to recover and thrive after the impact of COVID by implementing the Crime Against Business Strategy.

- Crime Against Business Strategy developed and implemented.
- Open for Business, Closed for Crime initiatives launched to support businesses as they reopened post COVID lockdowns.
- Systems established through the business led Strategic Business Crime Board to help Essex recover from the pandemic.

### Work with our rural communities to strengthen our response to preventing and fighting crime in rural areas through implementing the Rural Crime Strategy

- Updates on progress set out in the narrative section above

## 02 | Crack down on Anti-Social Behaviour

### 2016/17 – 2019/20 Priorities



#### Tackle anti-social behaviour to prevent longer term and more serious crime

- On going support is given to Community Safety Partnerships (CSP) and Hubs in their efforts to tackle anti-social behaviour. Since 2019/20, the Commissioner has conducted annual CSP review meetings with each CSP to receive updates on the work carried out by the partnerships.
- The Commissioner has utilised his own Community Safety Development Fund and worked with other grant makers to invest in existing and new initiatives that tackle anti-social behaviour and provide positive diversionary activities. Between 2016 to 2020, the Commissioner allocated £1.176m from the CSDF via about 120 small grants.
- The Commissioner promotes early intervention programmes such as Risk Avert and the Goodman project, which enable identification of individuals who would benefit from additional support.

#### Target repeat and high harm anti-social behaviour to protect individuals and communities from distress and disruption

- Supported CSPs in local initiatives, such as ASB Week, targeting hot spots where ASB is persistent and involving RJ volunteers.
- The Commissioner has been actively involved in the consultation process for Public Space Protection Orders issued across Essex where ASB is persistent, unreasonable and justifies restrictions imposed by the notice.
- Support Community Trigger and Community Remedy, promoting use of both initiatives via our website

#### Share intelligence in relation to anti-social behaviour through the development of Community Safety Hubs to include police, community safety officers, licencing, housing, and environmental health in every policing district

- Implemented Community Safety Hubs, allocating £200,000 to roll out of Hubs between 2016/19.
- Further details set out in narrative above

### Make greater use of Restorative Justice (RJ) to help put right the harm caused by anti-social behaviour, making clear to perpetrators the effect their behaviour has on individuals and communities

- The Essex Restorative and Mediation Service received an increase in referrals of 220 per cent between 2016/17 and 2019/20, with anti-social behaviour consistently making up about a quarter of all referrals each year.
- The RJ team has grown from two members of staff when the service launched in 2015, to four in 2020, managing a team of 40 trained volunteer facilitators.
- Satisfaction rates for those who have used the service has consistently remained at about 90 per cent.
- In a 2020 review of reoffending rates for those who had taken part in RJ, 77 per cent had not reoffended within 12 months.
- ECFRS Firebreaks began to include an RJ element into their programme for young people to encourage them to take responsibility for their actions and understand the consequences.

### Ensure the public are kept informed about what is being done about anti-social behaviour by local policing teams and community safety partners.

- This information is covered comprehensively in the chapter on local, visible, accessible policing.
- The Commissioner's office supports the partnership efforts of Anti-Social Behaviour Week each year through funding and attendance of staff such as the RJ team.

### Improve the response of police and partners to anti-social behaviour by listening to local communities and drawing on evidence to increase public confidence

- The introduction of Town Centre Teams, comprising 58 officers and ten sergeants, in 2019 had an immediate impact and has continued to drive down business crime and anti-social behaviour, while coinciding with a significant increase in the public's confidence in policing.
- HMICFRS assessed Essex Police as Good at dealing with ASB in 2016, 2017 and 2019. While there has been no separate inspection since 2019 the progress shown in the inspections has continued.
- Further information on work associated with this commitment is included within the chapter on local, visible, and accessible policing.

### Tackle anti-social behaviour to prevent longer term and more serious crime

- As documented in the narrative above, the Commissioner continued to focus on ASB which has driven a year on year reduction in incidents.
- The Commissioner continued their support to Community Safety Partnerships (CSP) and Hubs in their efforts to tackle anti-social behaviour. The Commissioner has conducted annual CSP review meetings with each CSP to receive updates on the work carried out by the partnerships.
- Utilisation of Community Safety Development Fund and work with other grant makers to invest in existing and new initiatives that tackle anti-social behaviour and provide positive diversionary activities. In 2019/20, the Commissioner allocated £300,000 and in 2020/21 £150,000 was allocated to the Coronavirus Community Safety Funding via the Essex Community Foundation. This funding enabled local voluntary and community sector organisations to continue to offer support and, where possible, adapt their services to accommodate virtual or COVID secure arrangements

### Target repeat and high harm anti-social behaviour through the continued development of Community Safety Hubs to include police, Essex County Fire and Rescue Service, community safety officers, licensing, housing, and environmental health in every policing district

- In 2020/21, the Commissioner allocated £272,558 to CSPs. As part of the evaluation of the effective use of this funding, the Commissioner reviewed CS Hub arrangements with individual CSPs.
- Actions arising for the Commissioner's office from the internal audit of Community Safety Partnerships, which was undertaken in October 2020, have been completed and implemented.
- Since 2016, the Commissioner has supported the Community Safety Hub Steering Group and led the development of a new Performance Framework for Community Safety Hubs which was approved by Safer Essex in September 2020.
- The Commissioner's inaugural Fire and Rescue plan (2019 to 2024) featured a commitment to increase emphasis on partnership working

### Support the community spirit shown throughout the COVID 19 crisis to strengthen communities, tackle ASB and ensure criminals have no place to thrive

- The Commissioner worked with and through the Essex Partners Board and the Recovery Coordinating Group to identify and respond to the impact of COVID on the local voluntary and community sector.
- The Commissioner worked closely with the Essex Resilience Forum to demonstrate leadership and provide a coordinated response to the pandemic, which included shared messaging across statutory sector agencies

### Improve engagement and communication between the police and local communities, so the public have confidence that the police understand and act on local issues, and the public have access to advice on crime and anti-social behaviour in their area

- The Commissioner worked with Essex Police to recommission the independent public perception survey which is a vital longitudinal analysis tool that provides important data on the perception of Essex Police's performance among the public. The data from the survey is received and scrutinised at the Commissioner's performance and scrutiny board as well as via Safer Essex.
- Trialled opportunities – such as the precept survey, with local media companies to reach those who were not online, using print media advertising, radio advertising and static media in public areas.
- Worked with Essex Police to drive closer relationships between the service and communities, participating actively in the scrutiny of their local engagement activities through their confidence board and the Commissioner's scrutiny programme.
- Published three communication pieces each week on Commissioner work and produced content for local media as well as the Commissioner's social media channels in order to reach those who were not online and signed up to the Commissioner's channels.

### Improve the response of police and partners to anti-social behaviour by listening to local communities and drawing on evidence to increase public confidence

- HMICFRS assessed Essex Police as Good at dealing with ASB in 2016, 2017 and 2019, and while there has been no separate inspection since 2019, the progress shown in these inspections has continued.
- The Commissioner worked with Essex Police to ensure the force was listening to communities and that they support local two way communication. The result was strong local engagement which resulted in higher levels of public confidence that EP understands local issues and that it tackles anti-social behaviour.
- Regular district meetings were organised to check in and get direct feedback from communities.
- Regular Commissioner engagement meetings ensure the communities have an opportunity to raise important issues with the Commissioner and police.
- Essex Police was able to significantly improve online reporting systems, including a dedicated way to report anti-social behaviour. The successful launch of the national Single Online Home in 2021 has seen a further improvement in the ability for online reporting to police.

### Improve engagement and communication between the police and local communities, so the public have confidence that the police understand and act on local issues, and the public have access to advice on crime and anti-social behaviour in their area

- In early 2020, the Chief Constable increased the number of Children and Young People officers (CYP) from 13 to 33 as a result of increased funding from the policing precept. They engage with young people in senior schools to support a partnership approach in keeping young people safe and reducing crime and anti-social behaviour.
- When asked whether they feel the police understand their community's issues, 71 per cent of people agreed or strongly agreed in 2020/21 compared to 60 per cent in 2019/20



## 03 | Breaking the Cycle of Domestic Abuse

2016/17 – 2019/20 Priorities



### Improve our response to domestic abuse as set out in the Southend, Essex, and Thurrock Domestic Abuse Joint Commissioning Strategy.

- The SETDA partnership uses its partnership DA strategy to manage its work programme, developing individual work plans for the outcomes in the strategy, which enables a better shared understanding of problems, challenges and how this is respond to. These action plans are owned by outcome leads and progress is reported back to the SETDA Board on a quarterly basis. The SETDAB structure, which the Commissioner supports and funds, ensures collective ownership of the domestic abuse agenda, and has led to joint commissioning exercises, a partnership approach to Domestic Homicide Reviews, shared media campaigns and consistent approaches to new and emerging challenges, such as domestic abuse in rural areas and stalking.
- An independent review of the 2015 to 2020 SETDAB strategy was undertaken in 2020, feeding back to the Board in early 2021 with the finding that the Partnership performed in compliance with relevant best practice and national guidance. Multi-agency processes, such as safeguarding, DHRs and the local MARACs were much valued by respondents and seen as key achievements in the work of the Partnership.

### Support victims and their families affected by domestic abuse to feel safe, cope and recover through targeted help and jointly commissioned services

- The Commissioner commissioned a jointly funded IDVA service between 2016 to 2019. Learning the lessons from that project, and listening to feedback from victims, the Commissioner worked through the SETDA partnership to commission a more integrated DA contract in 2020 where IDVA provision is joined up to refuge provision, community outreach and advocacy support.
- The Commissioner invested £2,573k in IDVA services between 2016 to 2020. The service provided advocacy, advice, and support to high risk victims, delivering the following:
  - 2016/17 - 3,472 referrals - average of 80 per cent of those engaged in the service saw a cessation in all types of abuse upon exiting the service.
  - 2017/18 - 2,522 referrals - average of 76.5 per cent of those engaged in the service saw a cessation in all types of abuse upon exiting the service.
  - 2018/19 - 2,294 referrals - average of 70.5 per cent of those engaged in the service saw a cessation in all types of abuse upon exiting the service.
  - 2019/20 EViE partnership held 2,848 IDVA cases

### Ensure children and young people affected by domestic abuse are informed about healthy relationships, and work with schools in the delivery of education and prevention programmes

- The Commissioner supported the development of the Risk Avert programme, and continues to promote the availability of the programme, which is free to use for local schools.
- Through the Emergency Service Collaboration programme, in 2016/17 the Commissioner facilitated the creation of joint education teams delivered by Essex County Fire and Rescue Service, providing messages about fire safety, and broader community safety issues such as road safety, knife crime and cyber safety. The provision includes an element focused on healthy relationships, delivered to Year 9 students

### Train and develop front line professionals to recognise the signs and indicators of domestic abuse and to know how and where to go to for help

- The Commissioner invested £20k in the J9 DA awareness raising project in 2019, which was matched by Essex County Council. The project included a two hour course aimed at community groups and a more detailed three hour course aimed at professionals, particularly those working in acute A&E hospital settings. More recently, the intervention has been converted to a virtual delivery to enable continuation of the work during periods of lockdown enforced due to the COVID pandemic.

### Provide more safe ways for victims to report domestic abuse and access support

- In 2019, the Commissioner jointly commissioned a new integrated domestic abuse support service which included a single point of access for victims and professionals, the Compass service. Since its inception, the service has received 8,928 victim referrals, as well as one off requests for information, advice, and guidance from:
  - 2,828 victims,
  - 2,452 professionals, and
  - 512 third parties, on behalf of victims.

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- The Compass service has sought to maximise accessibility and reporting by.
  - Implementing a contract with an interpretation service.
  - Enabling their website to be translated into any language.
  - Introducing a textphone option.
  - Scheduling timed calls for victims with narrow windows of time to engage.
  - Allowing referrals to be made over the phone or online.
  - Worked with GPs to facilitate safe spaces to call during pandemic.
  - Worked with Essex Police's Victim Panel to improve the victim journey.
- Many support services will make three contact attempts to victims before case closure. Compass return referrals to referring agencies after three attempts and then attempt twice more before closure. Compass measures its performance of making first contact within 48 hours, which is achieved for 99.6 per cent of referrals. 97 per cent of all referrals are responded to within 24 hours and an average of 80 per cent are responded to within six hours.

#### Focus on prevention through the delivery of high impact awareness raising campaigns

- The Commissioner has supported SETDAB to run targeted DA campaigns, including a perpetrator "reflect" campaign in 2016/17, an older person's DA campaign in 2017, and a stalking campaign in 2019. These campaigns were developed jointly and supported by the whole SETDA partnership, ensuring a collective and consistent message from all partner agencies are responded to within 24 hours and an average of 80 per cent are responded to within six hours.

#### Support victims of domestic abuse who have also experienced sexual abuse, ensuring they receive the specialist help and advice they need

- In Essex, the Commissioner commissions the Synergy Essex Rape Crisis partnership to deliver specialist support for victims of sexual abuse. This is a consortium of three Rape Crisis Centres: South Essex Rape and Incest Crisis Centre (SERICC), Centre for Action on Rape and Abuse (CARA) and Southend-on-Sea Rape Crisis (SoSRC). The service includes provision of ISVAs as well as counselling, therapy, and advocacy for all victims, regardless of their age, gender or when the abuse happened. Synergy offers a single point of access via telephone and their website. In 2016, when the service launched, the website received 13,000 hits in the last quarter alone. In 2016/17, the partnership received 1,240 online referrals from organisations and 238 online referrals from individuals

- The Synergy partnership has seen significant increases in demand over recent years. Services delivered have increased from.
  - 2016-17: 9,722
  - 2017-18: 12,524
  - 2018-19: 13,713

*As referenced earlier, this increase in demand is welcomed by the Commissioner as more victims are coming forward to report abuse and seek support. The Commissioner has increased investment in sexual abuse services to respond to this increase in demand.*

#### Bring more perpetrators to justice by the further rollout of body worn video cameras for front-line police officers

- In 2018 the Commissioner agreed the purchase of a new improved Body Worn Camera solution, an investment of over £3 million. This improved system provided a new camera for all operational staff, improved access to data storage solutions and improved transferability with Criminal Justice System partners. This improved the quality of evidence and the accessibility of evidence in cases.
- A 2019 review of all interviews involving DA prisoners interviewed in custody in August clearly illustrated that, where BWV was shown, there was a 20 per cent increase in the positive outcome rate (charge/caution).

#### Tackle offending behaviour through robust behaviour change programmes to break the cycle of domestic abuse

- As explained above, the Drive pilot the Commissioner supported between 2016 to 2019 delivered the following reductions in abusive behaviour:
  - physical abuse reduced by 82%.
  - sexual abuse reduced by 88%.
  - harassment and stalking behaviours reduced by 75%; and
  - jealous and controlling behaviours reduced by 73%.

**2019/20 – 2020/21 Priorities****Support victims and their families affected by domestic abuse to feel safe, cope and recover through targeted help and jointly commissioned services.**

- Given the success of the focus on this commitment in the previous Police and Crime Plan, it was decided to reaffirm the effort on this within the Extension to the Plan. The new integrated domestic abuse support contract was launched in April 2019 and saw a consortium of specialist DA providers (the Ending Violence in Essex / EviE / partnership) provide IDVA, refuge and community based support across the whole of the county. In 2019/20, the EviE partnership received 4,017 contacts and held 2,848 IDVA cases. In 2020/21, this was 4,560 contacts and 1,104 IDVA case

**Train and develop front-line professionals to recognise the signs and indicators of domestic abuse and to know how and where to go to for help**

- As mentioned previously, the J9 DA awareness initiative continued to be delivered to professionals and communities across the county between 2019 to 2021. The Commissioner promoted the opportunity to engage in the project, including a press release in October 2020 to publicise the new virtual courses, adapted, and delivered during the COVID lockdowns and agile working arrangements.
- In 2018, the SETDAB partnership invited Dale Barrett, son of Janine Mundy, to present to the partnership conference on his experience. This was an emotional and thought provoking input which also served as an opportunity to promote the J9 awareness project named after Janine Mundy.

**Support victims of domestic abuse who have also experienced sexual abuse, ensuring they receive the specialist help and advice they need**

- In 2019/20, the Synergy rape crisis partnership continued to see an increase in demand for its services, with 15,747 services delivered for victims of sexual abuse. This compares with 9,722 in 2016/17, 12,524 in 2017/18 and 13,713 in 2018/19.

**Understand the impact of the COVID pandemic on domestic abuse and help those affected to cope and recover, while ensuring the risk of offending is reduced**

- In 2020, the SETDA Board began to meet fortnightly to monitor the impact of the pandemic on the partner approach to DA. The partnership developed a response plan which was monitored via the Board.
- The SETDA partnership developed a “stay safe at home campaign” which was released in 2020. The campaign focused on five risks to people during the challenging period of lockdowns and pandemic: domestic abuse, child abuse, accidental house fires, fraud, and bogus callers.
- In 2020, the Commissioner attracted an additional £1m investment in victim services which supported local organisations to adapt their offer to continue to provide much needed support in COVID different ways. The funding was allocated to 12 different services, including one dedicated to supporting the Gypsy and Traveller community.
- The Commissioner made available £150,000 through the Essex Community Foundation to create a COVID Community Safety Fund which was allocated to 19 local community sector organisations. This funding enabled groups to tailor their offer or make changes to their business model projects to take account of the changes enforced by COVID.

**Support the Southend, Essex, and Thurrock Domestic Abuse Board by providing leadership and helping develop and embed the new strategy.****Ensure victims’ voices are heard and used to inform our service development and the development of peer support networks.**

- In tendering the integrated DA support service in 2019, the Commissioner undertook a series of engagement events to inform the partnership thinking and influence the model.
- We regularly receive victim feedback as part of the quarterly monitoring processes to understand the qualitative as well as quantitative performance of the services.
- To inform the development of the new partnership DA strategy in 2019/20, the partnership conducted face to face meetings and focus groups with a range of individuals from hard to reach communities including individuals with learning disabilities, mental health issues, young adults, victims of stalking and vulnerable domestic abuse victims identified as having high level needs. They added this feedback to that already obtained from service user engagement undertaken in February and March 2018, which informed the development of the commissioning of domestic abuse services. All feedback has been considered in the development of this strategy to ensure service user views and experiences are represented within the outcomes, key objectives, and activities. In addition, a 12 week open consultation process on the strategy took place to help inform the final product.



### **Alter the behaviour of perpetrators and reduce offending by commissioning innovative programmes.**

- As mentioned earlier, the Commissioner continued to invest with the Change Project (£180k in 2020-21) to deliver DA perpetrator behaviour change projects. The Commissioner also continued to support the Goodman and Sisters in Strength projects (£70k in 2020-21) in school and community settings as an early intervention that supported those at risk of engaging in abusive relationships.
- SETDAB also developed a VAWG perpetrator pathway project from 2017-20, funded by Home Office, which allowed the partnership to explore different programmes of work, including a prison-based intervention.

### **Develop clear consistent pathways for children and young people to report domestic abuse concerns.**

- SETDAB ran a young people's campaign in 2016. Risk Avert continued to be provided in school settings across the county, promoting resilience and healthy relationships. As mentioned previously, the Commissioner continued to support and invest in the Goodman and Sisters in Strength work with young people.

### **Expand earlier intervention at primary school level/Early Years settings and have specific interventions on healthy relationships available along with support service pathways.**

- As referenced elsewhere, the Commissioner's support for the Risk Avert programme supports delivery of this commitment. In 2019-20, Risk Avert was expanded into primary schools, working with 20 secondary schools and 65 primary schools that year. In 2020/21, (despite school COVID disruptions) the programme engaged with 39 secondary schools and 64 primary schools.

### **Promote our commissioned domestic abuse services' single point of access to ensure victims get the support they need to cope and recover.**

- As described in detail above, the Compass service improved the consistency of access to support for victims of domestic abuse.

### **Work with the Criminal Justice System to monitor the use and effectiveness of the legislation and processes in managing domestic abuse offenders.**

- In 2018/19, SETDAB established a Perpetrator Delivery Group to target work disrupting and supporting perpetrators, which includes criminal justice and voluntary sector partners. Through the Commissioner-chaired Essex Criminal Justice Board, a DA subgroup was established during the life of the 2016-20 Police and Crime Plan which eventually merged with the CJB Victims and Witness Action Team (VWAT). CJ partners also established a task and finish group in 2018 to review and report back on the national DA Best Practice Implementation Plan, which looked at how all CJ agencies and relevant support services dealt with DA in Essex.

### **Deliver targeted domestic abuse campaigns on key topics, including promoting domestic abuse awareness within communities and the business sector, encouraging healthy working environments**

- As mentioned previously, the Commissioner continued to invest in the community J9 programme, Alpha Vesta DA awareness for businesses and the Stay Safe at Home campaign during the COVID pandemic.

### **Use body worn video to improve successful outcomes in domestic abuse cases and ensure more perpetrators are brought to justice**

- The introduction of BWV provided a new camera for all operational staff, improved access to data storage solutions and improved transferability with Criminal Justice System partners. This improved the quality of evidence and the accessibility of evidence in cases

### **Understand and tackle the specific nature and impact of domestic abuse in rural communities**

- The SETDA partnership developed a toolkit to enable organisations to improve their reach into rural communities. This included links to various assets which could be used to provide information, advice, guidance and support, examples include churches, GP surgeries, pubs, and social media platforms such as Facebook groups. It also included specific rural organisations such as Essex Rural Partnership, Essex Association of Local Councils, Farming Community Network, Essex Agricultural Society, Royal Horticultural Society, Essex Wildlife Trust as examples of locations for advertising domestic abuse support services and awareness.

### Increase the use of restorative justice (RJ) as a proven way to prevent domestic abuse reoffending and help victims to cope and recover

- During the period 2019/20, the Commissioner's in house RJ service increased the number of complex and sensitive referrals into the service to support those impacted by sexual violence and abuse and domestic abuse.
- The Commissioner proactively engaged Essex Police to amend the community resolution (CR) process to allow CRs to be given for those aged 16 and 17 for domestic offences, where appropriate. In 2019/20, Essex Police officers were unable to refer domestic related incidents for RJ alongside a police outcome. This policy was based on national NPCC guidance and is something the RJ team escalated to the Restorative Justice Council to address in order to allow all victims to access their right to RJ, where safe.
- The aforementioned DA webinar in November 2020 was attended by more than 160 people and focused on the experiences of Lucy, a domestic abuse survivor who took part in a restorative justice process. The event received glowing feedback and led to discussions around using Lucy's story in Essex Police's Domestic Abuse Investigation (DAIT) team's training package.

## 04 | Reverse the trend in serious violence

### 2016/17 – 2019/20 Priorities



#### Develop a Violence Prevention Strategy across Essex and support partners to reduce the level of violence

- The Essex Violence and Vulnerability Framework was developed and agreed by partner organisations across the county (June 2018). With this strong partnership approach, the Commissioner was able to access Early Intervention Youth Funds (of £350,000) from the Home Office to progress the areas within the Framework and benefit prevention work across the county.
- Following the success of the partnership framework, a joint delivery plan addressing serious violence linked to gangs and County Lines was developed in August 2019 – Essex was identified as one of the 18 Violence Reduction Unit areas for England and Wales. With this, the Commissioner was able to access new funds with a focus on preventing serious violence and protecting children and young people. The Commissioner accessed VRU funds with the county Violence and Vulnerability Partnership of £1.16m (in 2019/20). This funding was used to invest in projects including the A&E navigator programme, mentoring programmes with young people at risk of falling out of education, community led initiatives connecting with locally embedded not-for-profit organisations, interventions for high risk individuals to prevent an escalation in their offending.

#### Jointly commission effective prevention and diversionary activity for those at risk of involvement in violent crime, in particular children and young people

- Developed A&E navigator programme in Basildon and Thurrock University Hospital – reaching 125 children and young people by the end of 2019/20, supporting vulnerable young people with mentoring and onward support via other existing services (including through local communities and initiatives).

#### Deliver education and community programmes to help to prevent knife crime

- Through the Emergency Service Collaboration programme, in 2016/17 the Commissioner facilitated the creation of joint education teams delivered by Essex County Fire and Rescue Service, providing messages about fire safety, and broader community safety issues such as road safety, healthy relationships, and cyber safety. The provision includes an element focused on knife crime prevention and gang awareness for those in Key Stages 3 to 5. This input is based on the evidence of what works

### Bring violent offenders to justice through targeted police enforcement, working closely with neighbouring forces such as the Metropolitan Police

- Recognising the benefit of working cooperatively on this agenda, Essex Police operational activity targeting high risk offenders has stepped up over the last few years, with increasing enforcement activity helping to protect the most vulnerable and target the most harmful.
- This included gang enforcement teams developed within Essex Police directly targeting the individuals causing the most harm.
- There have been specific cross border operations and activities, targeting key groups and individuals, for example Op Saturn which aimed to tackle London gangs committing crime in Essex

### Deliver coordinated responses to tackle drug and alcohol misuse – getting more people away from dependency into treatment

- In 2018, the Commissioner supported the development of the street triage initiative which intervenes early to help people with mental health, alcohol, and drug misuse issues, to stay safe and stay out of the criminal justice system, where appropriate. The Commissioner is a joint commissioner of the integrated health and justice service which encompasses street triage, liaison and diversion and custody healthcare services.
- In 2019/20, the Commissioner also supported the Integrated Health and Justice Commissioning Group to develop the Horizons project which identifies the top ten cohort of individuals in a district that have a history of offending, drug misuse and homelessness and wrap support around that individual to reduce their reliance on statutory services. Following the pilot period which saw the Commissioner invest £90k into the project between 2019 to 2021, the model was independently evaluated and developed into a sustainable countywide model by mainstreaming it with the offenders with complex and additional needs (Full Circle) project

### Improve management of dangerous offenders in the community by closer collaboration with probation and criminal justice partners

- The Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements in Essex (MAPPA) enable a holistic and coordinated approach to management of serious offenders.
- MAPPA in Essex ensures that Category 3 nominals are aligned to relevant specialist departments to ensure those who have the correct training, skills and attributes have a stronger management of these offenders. This includes alignment (as appropriate) to Domestic Abuse Investigation Teams, Serious Violence Unit and MOSOVO

### Ensure victims of rape and sexual violence receive the help and support they need, and work with criminal justice partners to ensure that perpetrators are convicted

- Tackling male violence against women has been a key priority for the Commissioner and, over recent years, they have listened to the experience of victims and survivors, as well as recognising the increasing demand on these services, and in response have increased the funding for support services such as counselling, advocacy, therapeutic support, and Independent Sexual Violence Advisors (ISVAs). This is evidenced by the Commissioner investing £3,750,600 in sexual abuse services between 2016/17 and 2020/21.
- In April 2019, Project Goldcrest launched. This is an initiative designed collaboratively by Essex Police and partners, including SARC and safeguarding partnerships. Input was also provided by young people, obtained via focus group discussions. This project enabled young people, who have already been identified as being at risk of CSE, to take their own forensic samples at home, with someone with parental responsibility (or an appropriate adult) as a witness. Their information, along with their bagged exhibits, are provided to the police and can be stored for up to 25 years. The young person remains anonymous to the police, unless they later decide they want to formally report. However, the forensic samples enable the force to gain and record valuable information, intelligence, and evidence

### 2019/20 – 2020/21 Priorities



### Ensure victims of rape and sexual violence receive the help and support they need, and work with criminal justice partners to ensure that perpetrators are brought to justice

- As documented in the chapter on domestic abuse, the Commissioner commissions the Synergy Essex Rape Crisis partnership to deliver specialist support for victims of sexual abuse. This is a consortium of three Rape Crisis Centres: South Essex Rape and Incest Crisis Centre (SERICC), Centre for Action on Rape and Abuse (CARA) and Southend-on-Sea Rape Crisis (SoSRC). The service includes provision of ISVAs as well as counselling, therapy, and advocacy for all victims, regardless of their age, gender, or when the abuse happened. Synergy offers a single point of access via telephone and their website.

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- The Synergy partnership has seen significant increases in demand over recent years. Services delivered have increased from.
  - 2016/17 9,722
  - 2017/18 12,524
  - 2018/19 13,713
- Since taking office, the Commissioner has sought to increase reporting of sexual abuse, recognising data from the Crime Survey of England and Wales that around eight in ten incidents of sexual abuse are not reported. We have seen an increase in the number of people coming forward for help since the Commissioner inherited responsibility for the commissioning of local support services in 2014; for instance, service users entering support increased from 4,690 in 2016/17 to 7,117 in 2018/19. The Commissioner has commissioned local rape crisis centres to provide specialist support for victims and survivors of sexual abuse since 2016, increasing investment in services as demand has increased; in 2016/17, the Commissioner invested about £840k in sexual abuse support. By 2020/21, this figure had increased to £1.1m. In April 2020, the Synergy Rape Crisis Partnership was commissioned to deliver specialist support across the county, including therapeutic support, advocacy, counselling and ISVAs. Synergy also offers a single point of contact for victims of abuse to engage through, ensuring help and advice can be found in a consistent and accessible way. The contract value is about £1m per annum.

**Increase the number of successful rape and sexual abuse prosecutions and encourage more victims to come forward by improving the quality of investigation cases and the way technology is used to provide compelling evidence.**

- Essex Police has continued to focus on engaging and supporting victims, building strong prosecutive cases, ensuring evidence available digitally is used effectively and investing in more capacity and strong collaboration with partners such as the Crown Prosecution Service.
- Through the Essex Criminal Justice Board, the Commissioner has maintained a focus on improving the prosecution and conviction rates for perpetrators of sexual offences, including via the Case Management sub group.
- In 2021, the Frontliner programme was tested which enabled Essex Police to connect with a device and share files without the need to physically seize or remove the device. The application includes a consent form and allows police to provide a report showing the data received in an evidential format. This responds to feedback from victims that they will avoid reporting if it means their phone being seized/scrutinise and ISVAs. Synergy also offers a single point of contact for victims of abuse to engage through, ensuring help and advice can be found in a consistent and accessible way. The contract value is about £1m per annum.

**Deliver against the Rape Prevention Strategy.**

**The four key strategic aims of the Rape Prevention Strategy are.**

- **To prevent rape and serious sexual offences.**  
Recorded rape has increased in Essex, but this is predominantly due to increased reporting and improvements in crime data accuracy focus.
- **Ensure a partnership approach to tackle repeat victimisation and offending.**  
The partnership sexual abuse strategy, Rape and Serious Sexual Offences (RASSO) Governance Board and ISVA referral process are examples of a positive local partnership approach.
- **Utilise current partnership frameworks to facilitate and encourage sharing of data, resources, and expertise to deliver a co-ordinated evidence-based approach.**  
Op Ratify and Op Yalta are specific operations that use framework approaches to tackle repeat victimisation and repeat offending. These produce analytical products that identify those most at risk.
- **Undertake key activity in line with force strategic objectives and under the following five key areas of focus:** Victim Focus; Offender Focus; Partnership Focus; Staff Focus; and Innovation Focus.  
A victim feedback panel has been introduced at force level, giving victims a platform to share their experiences which contribute to individual and organisational learning.

**Publish and support the Sexual Abuse Strategic Partnership to deliver the Essex Sexual Abuse Strategy and objectives, including**

- Prevent abuse.
- tackle perpetrators.
- increase communications.
- ensure an efficient criminal justice system.
- improve young people's understanding of consent and abuse.
- The Partnership published the partnership strategy in November 2019 and presented to stakeholders to raise awareness of the strategy and challenge partners to support its delivery. Presentations were made to the Criminal Justice Board, Safer Essex, Health Executive Forum and Essex Leaders and Chief Executives. The SASP Board developed an action plan to support the delivery of the strategy's shared outcomes which is reviewed at each of its quarterly meetings

### Increase the number of referrals to the Essex Restorative and Mediation Service (ERMS), to support those impacted by sexual violence and abuse and domestic abuse

- In 2020, the Commissioner published several case studies around the use of restorative justice (RJ) and sexual offences on the ERMS website, highlighting the successes of the service and the impact it has on both offenders and victims in these circumstances.
- The Commissioner also incorporated a case study / video example in standard RJ training. The case study specifically related to RJ and sexual offences, which was delivered to various teams who deal with victims of high harm offences, including witness care, detectives fast track, and a session for Essex magistrates.
- The Commissioner hosted a webinar around the use of RJ and domestic abuse during RJ Week in November 2020, which was attended by more than 160 people. This led to a 57 per cent increase in referrals in DA causes compared to the year before

### Bring violent offenders to justice through targeted police enforcement, working closely with neighbouring forces such as the Metropolitan Police

- Building on the lessons learned during the previous plan, the Commissioner reaffirmed commitment to this collaborative work. As mentioned earlier, Essex Police operational activity targeting high risk offenders has stepped up over the last few years with increasing enforcement activity helping to protect the most vulnerable and target the most harmful. This included gang enforcement teams developed within Essex Police directly targeting the individuals causing the most harm

### Deliver co-located responses to tackle drug, alcohol, and substance misuse – getting more people away from dependency and into treatment

- As covered previously, the Commissioner continued to support the development of the street triage initiative through the integrated health and justice service, taking an active role in evaluating the performance of this contract.
- The Horizons project was effectively mainstreamed into the offenders with complex and additional needs (Full Circle) service. The Commissioner continues to monitor the effectiveness and impact of this service, which reports into the Reducing Reoffending Board, chaired by the Deputy Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner.

### Improve management of dangerous offenders in the community by closer collaboration with Her Majesty's Prison & Probation Service and criminal justice partners

- MAPPA (Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements) are a set of arrangements to manage the risk posed by the most serious sexual, violent, and terrorist offenders (MAPPA-eligible offenders) under the provisions of sections 325 to 327B of the Criminal Justice Act 2003. They bring together the police, probation, and prison services into what is known as the MAPPA Responsible Authority. A number of other agencies are under a Duty to Cooperate with the Responsible Authority. These include social services, health services, youth offending teams, Jobcentre Plus and local housing and education authorities.
- MAPPA-eligible offenders are identified and information about them is shared between agencies to inform the risk assessments and risk management plans of those managing or supervising them.
- There are regular MAPPA meetings attended by relevant agency practitioners to manage cases which require more senior oversight and structured multi-agency management

### Tackle perpetrators who groom individuals or groups, with a particular focus on victims who are targeted online

- 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 responds to referrals from other agencies and provides a proactive capability utilising system to detect those people in Essex viewing and distributing indecent images of children via the internet.
- In 2021, Essex Police developed and joined the Eastern Region Child Abuse Investigations Group to share information and good practice around child death, child sexual exploitation, child exploitation, child abuse, legislation, procedure, training events

### Deliver on the priority areas for the Essex Violence and Vulnerability Unit

- In 2021, the Violence and Vulnerability Annual Report was published on the Essex VVU website, demonstrating the positive activities undertaken by the Violence and Vulnerability Unit.
- Through improved understanding of the issues for the county, including the development of a serious problem profile, understanding of the small number of individuals who cause disproportionate levels of harm in communities has grown. This includes how they act and, importantly, how Essex Police can identify and work with them at points in their journey, tackle behaviour and prevent them from affecting communities. This targeted approach has included the integration of safeguarding officers within the police gang enforcement teams. These safeguarding officers work with partners to support those young or vulnerable people who are swept up in enforcement activity against higher up County Line gang members. These links help to use the opportunity, where appropriate, to reach out and stop a young or vulnerable person from falling further into a life of crime.
- The VVU has recognised the importance of building broad capacity within communities, particularly within the voluntary and community sectors. Through targeted funding, the Commissioner has been able to foster a strong and robust network of organisations that provide a wide range of interventions in local communities across the county, from youth clubs, boxing sessions to after school sport activities for at risk children. These deliver an ongoing level of capacity that reduces the risk of young people falling into a life of crime. One example of a group that has benefited from this support is Changing Lives which was set up in Harlow in 2018 to raise children's awareness about the dangers of gangs and gang activity. The group uses a mix of physical activities and wellbeing programmes to prevent young people from getting involved in anti-social behaviour and criminal activity.
- While these individual examples provide a flavour of the innovative and effective interventions currently under way, the real strength of the approach over the last few years has been the integrated and system wide strategy that this broader partnership has been able to deliver. By taking a holistic view of how partners work together to support young and vulnerable people and reduce violence, they can spot opportunities to intervene early, to make a difference and to stop people from falling through the gaps.

### Working through the Violence and Vulnerability Partnership, we will: support staff, including front-line workers, to respond to the needs of young and vulnerable people

- The VVU led on the creation of e-learning modules to raise the skills and understanding of all those who may encounter young people at risk of serious youth violence and exploitation. This e-learning package is available for free for anyone in Southend, Essex, and Thurrock to access.
- Every Contact Counts sessions were delivered in collaboration with Community Safety Partnerships, raising awareness and upskilling staff to respond appropriately to child and vulnerable adult exploitation. This included local reporting procedures; how to disrupt exploitation; and intelligence and information sharing.
- Listen to and act on what communities want.
- The Commissioner recognises the value of hearing from communities about issues that impact upon them. As an example of how this can be done effectively, the VVU engaged with voluntary sector partners through the 'voice of communities' workstream, including devising a small grants programme for small, local, not for profit, VCS organisations to support the VVU's work.
- During this period, the VVU grew its voluntary and community networks and started to move towards co-designing key activities for its work programme.
- In 2020/21, the Commissioner created a small grants process which would ultimately allocate £130,000 of funding to 32 small charities to deliver work in local communities – supporting 1,349 children and young people.
- Through its dedicated comms and media activity, the Essex VVU has established an extensive reach for its communications work. This includes the publication of fortnightly newsletters to 6,500 recipients and media articles to a total audience estimated at more than 103,000.
  - Build awareness of how gangs operate and exploit the vulnerable, so that the Unit can improve the response.
  - The VVU has led on, and shared an improved and more sophisticated understanding of, the scale and issues relating to serious violence in the county. This has been driven through an evidence based and partnership approach embodied and facilitated by the VVU.
  - Example of this work is that more than 200 professionals were briefed on the Serious Violence Problem Profile and Drugs Market Profile in 2020/21.

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- Example of this work is that more than 200 professionals were briefed on the Serious Violence Problem Profile and Drugs Market Profile in 2020/21.
- An example of the impact of this work includes delivering a series of workshops (Operation TRESPASS) providing training and raising awareness of cuckooing in Essex (cuckooing is the term used when criminal gangs target the home of a vulnerable person(s) in order for the property to be used as a hub and/or base for drug dealing). With 40 workshops involving delegates from all areas of the community, partners engaged with the aim of making them better prepared to identify and recognise the signs of cuckooing and what they can do assist in mitigating the effects and safeguarding any individuals involved.
- target areas experiencing high levels of gang activity.
- The VVU is leading on the development of a more sophisticated and detailed picture of harm across Essex, and the different types and scale of harm across the county. The VVU continues to develop countywide approaches where it is appropriate, as well as more locally specific targeted work.
- As referenced above, in 2020/21, the Commissioner worked with the VVU to develop a new community grants programme, which would support local community not for profit organisations, to enhance the work with children and young people in communities. This funding allocated £130k to local VCS organisations to reduce the risk to young people of being exposed to or exploited by criminal drug gangs. Funded organisations included Changing Lives, UTurn4Support, The London Bus Theatre Company, Essex Boys & Girls Clubs, and Street Pastors.
- prevent vulnerable people being pressurised into returning to gangs once they leave custody.
- The VVU developed a spoken word project in HMP Chelmsford, with a focus on young men with gang affiliations, prior to release. The project explored the theme of identity as opposed to explicitly considering gangs and education skills. The project was able to focus on recognising the importance of having positive relationships in the community in the young man's own right and move away from the risk of being associated with a gang due to the perceived feeling of belonging or, in some instances, the status that gang affiliation is linked to.

- Examples of the outcomes from this approach include 14 young men achieving BTec level qualifications. We also noticed an improvement for individuals in relation to self-harm (for their own wellbeing and reduced time required from prison officers to monitor through checks for safety). The second programme offered the opportunity for three of the members of the first cohort to become mentors.
- Secure extra funding from government and use this on evidence based initiatives that are proven to tackle gangs, County Lines, and exploitation in Essex.
- The VVU has attracted significant additional investment in this programme from the Home Office and from Essex County Council, which has committed £1m between 2019 to 2021. Total Home Office funding secured from 2016/17 to 2020/21 from central government amounted to £2.8m
- In 2021, the VVU received confirmation of continued funding secured from Home Office to maintain the work of the VVU.
- Essex is learning from and adding to the national evidence base about what works in relation to violence and vulnerability, having established a close working relationship with central government and the national Youth Endowment Fund. As part of the VRU learning network, the VVU is offered the opportunity to present on work from Essex and share lessons learned with other VRUs as well as learning from their experience and transferring knowledge into the local VVU approach.
- Essex violence and vulnerability conference Perspective on Violence was held in March 2020, with more than 300 professionals from across the county learning from existing areas of work and sharing the developing evidence base.

## 05 | Tackle Gangs and Organised Crime

2016/17 – 2019/20 Priorities



### Develop and deliver on a Gangs Strategy as part of the wider Violence Prevention Strategy.

- The Violence and Vulnerability Framework for Essex was authored by the Commissioner office and adopted by Safer Essex in 2018.
- The Violence and Vulnerability Framework provided a strong basis for the Business Case to form the Violence and Vulnerability Partnership, which was established in April 2014, using Early Intervention Youth Funds (of £350,000) from the Home Office. As detailed in the Serious Violence chapter, this was the precursor to the establishment of the Essex Violence & Vulnerability Unit and investment of additional Home Office, local partner, and Commissioner funding.
- The Commissioner appointed a Violence and Vulnerability Programme manager in 2019 to oversee the work of the emerging V&V Partnership

### Prevent the exploitation of children and vulnerable people by gangs through early intervention initiatives and jointly commissioning diversionary activities

- Since 2016, the Commissioner has supported the Children At Risk of Exploitation (CARE) project, delivered by the Children's Society. The Commissioner has made an annual investment in this project, which aims to enhance protective factors, improve wellbeing and resilience, as well as reduce the risk of physical, emotional, and sexual harm for young people that may be exposed to criminality. Between 2016 and 2019, the project supported 300 individuals at risk of child sexual exploitation.
- As referenced elsewhere in this report, Commissioner facilitated the creation of joint education teams in 2016/17 delivered by Essex County Fire and Rescue Service, providing messages about fire safety, and broader community safety issues including an element focused on knife crime prevention and gang awareness for those in Key Stages 3 to 5.
- As detailed in the Serious Violence chapter, the Commissioner also invested in the A&E navigator programme in Basildon which reached 125 young people by the end of 2019/20

### Support victims of human trafficking and modern slavery, including sexual exploitation, working closely with UK Border Agency (UKBA), National Crime Agency (NCA) and national and regional partners to bring perpetrators to justice

- Through the Eastern Region Special Operations Unit (ERSOU) Operation Venetic, an international operation was undertaken which resulted in the identification and disruption of several organised crime groups in the UK and in Essex. The dedicated specialist resources that have been invested in Essex gave the force the capacity to respond proactively to the national intelligence secured under Operation Venetic and resulted in a significant number of arrests and seizure

### Support rural communities and businesses to counter organised crime through improved communication and information sharing

- In 2017, a new Rural Crime Strategy for Essex was launched. This was the first time the strategy was developed in partnership and was launched as a joint strategy between Essex Police, the Commissioner for Essex, and Essex Rural Partnership, itself representing more than 40 individual organisations.
- The formation of the Rural Engagement Team (originally the Gypsy Traveller and Rural Engagement Team) was established in 2017/8 to focus specifically on issues impacting on Essex's rural communities

### Channel funds seized from criminal groups back into policing priorities for local communities

- The Essex Police policy for Proceeds of Crime was reviewed in 2019. This policy ensures that Essex Police will financially investigate all persons charged with a drug trafficking offence or an acquisitive crime with a view to making an application to a court for a confiscation order to be made to the value of the benefits derived from the crimes. Essex Police will seek to use the provisions of the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 and seize cash to the value of £1,000 and above if it is found while lawfully on premises, or while searching any person or vehicle. Police financial investigators will investigate the origins of any cash, so seized with a view to requesting its forfeiture at the magistrates' court.
- Between 2016/17 and 2020/21, Essex Police received £3.24m from the POCA Asset Recovery Incentivisation Scheme. Over this period, £1.60m was allocated from the POCA reserve. The force contributed £0.23m to the Essex Community Foundation which provides vital funding to local community groups, £0.40m towards the funding of Financial Investigator staff within the Serious Crime Directorate (SCD), and £1.05m allocated via the Essex POCA Board.

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- The Essex POCA board allocations contributed towards specialist equipment, proactive operations, Essex Search & Rescue, Body Worn Video, drones, 'Method of Entry' training, digital forensics, knife arches covert equipment, digital forensics training, and fraud prevention campaigns.

**Disrupt and prevent organised drug distribution through improved intelligence shared between the police, partners, and local communities to limit the harm drugs cause**

- Between 2016 and 2020 the Serious Violence Unit was implemented within Essex Police. The Unit is made up of Five Op Raptor teams that are dedicated to the investigation and disruption of gangs and county lines. They are supported by the SVU intelligence team and the Op Orochi team whose function are to develop intelligence and identify those that are involved in the supply of controlled drugs across Essex.

**Encourage local authorities and employers to work with landlords and private sector partners, ensuring immigrant identification checks and controls by landlords are implemented in the right way, in order to limit the ability of illegal gangs to operate**

- Engaged with local housing leads, including Registered Social Landlords, through the Reducing Reoffending Board, where partners receive a regular update on housing issues.
- We also include a member of the Essex Housing Officers Group on the SETDA Board

**Use roads policing to target people and vehicles who cause harm to our communities, especially those who are involved in serious and organised crime, through automatic number plate recognition (ANPR), other intelligence gathering and disruption activities**

- The Essex Police ANPR estate was significantly expanded over the period between 2016 to 2021 in order to better protect the policing area. During that time ANPR has played a pivotal role in such important investigations as murders, human trafficking, and illegal immigration (Op Melrose – the murder investigation into the deaths of Vietnamese people being smuggled into the UK), and drug trafficking as well as crimes such as domestic violence and stalking, vehicle theft and burglary to name but a few. ANPR has supported many types of investigations from the point of the initial offence right through to providing evidence at trial.

- Also, during this period, Essex Police became a user of the National ANPR Service which allowed the team to develop tactics to identify vehicles from mobile phone data, meaning Essex Police is no longer dependent on having a vehicle's details to determine its journey. This, especially, has been a game/changer for policing and its use of ANPR

**2019/20 – 2020/21 Priorities**



In the 2020-21 Police and Crime Plan Extension, the "Tackling gangs and organised crime" priority evolved to "Disrupt and prevent organised crime". The gangs element was picked up in an evolved priority to "tackle gangs and serious violence".

**Support victims of human trafficking and modern slavery, including sexual exploitation, working closely with UK Border Agency (UKBA), National Crime Agency (NCA) and national and regional partners to bring perpetrators to justice**

- Essex Police retained focus on identifying possible victims of modern slavery in 2020/21. Despite some forces seeing a decrease in modern slavery and human trafficking (MSHT) referrals during the pandemic, Essex data continued with an increasing overall trend. Officers are now more knowledgeable of the MSHT signs, and this has contributed to increased referrals. Each Local Policing Area has a designated MSHT point of contact to drive the information and sharing of learning out to the staff from the centralised Serious Crime Directorate dedicated team.
- Essex Police have excellent working relationships with Justice and Care. This partnership has seen three victim navigators provided by the charity to work within the force (one within MSHT, one within Organised Immigration Crime and one within the force's Violence and Vulnerability Unit). This has greatly enhanced the victim experience within the county, with 42 adult victims and 28 child victims currently being supported. The force also maintains a local safe facility through partnership with Communities and Asylum Seekers Together (CAST) and Justice and Care. The details of how to access this facility have been passed to all supervising officers and within the Force Control Room (FCR). These details are also available within the MSHT advice pages on the force intranet.
- The force has created a learning environment and, with strategic partners, has developed a system that captures learning from police activity to enhance future victim service. Working with Stop the Traffik, a victim of sexual exploitation was able to share experiences of how earlier intervention could have been achieved by police had certain behaviours not existed. This information was shared with LPA colleagues via the MSHT SPOCs.



### Channel funds seized from criminal groups back into policing priorities for local communities

- The receipt and allocation of POCA funds

### Disrupt and prevent organised drug distribution through improved intelligence shared between police partners and local communities to limit the harm drugs cause

- This is managed through Essex Police's Serious Crime Directorate (SCD) which uses its Strategic Serious Organised Crime (SOC) Board with senior representation from Trading Standards, HMIC, Environment Agency, Border Force and Crimestoppers.
- Examples of some of the local operations that are in place which aim to disrupt and prevent organised drug distribution include:
  - Operation BURNS which targets drug supply in the Barnhall area of Colchester.
  - Operation LANDSEAR, which proactively targets taxi drivers to reduce the use of drug suppliers using them to transport drugs.
  - Operation MONACO, which involved a strike on an Organised Crime Group operating in Colchester. This resulted in class A drugs and cash being seized, and a number being remanded and several remaining on court bail.
  - In March, the South Disruptor Team carried out a strike day for Operation SWEEP, which was a drugs investigation for cocaine supply whereby the main offenders were using females to run the drugs line; violence was threatened if these females spoke about their actions in the Organised Crime Group. Twelve warrants were executed across Southend and Benfleet by 45 officers; eight suspects were arrested and charged, and £25,733 in cash and a significant amount of drugs were seized. The results of this were circulated on social media which garnered a positive response from the communities affected.
  - The Disruptor Team, in conjunction with other partner agencies, have conducted a number of successful warrants resulting in significant custodial sentences for those arrested. They have successfully dismantled a number of drug lines within the Harlow district, preventing the influx of large quantities of drugs into the local communities

### Limit the ability of illegal gangs to operate by encouraging local authorities and employers to work with landlords and private sector partners to ensure immigrant identification checks and controls by landlords are implemented in the right way

- The Commissioner continued to engage with local housing leads, including Registered Social Landlords, through the Reducing Reoffending Board, where partners receive a regular update on housing issues.
- A member of the Essex Housing Officers Group continues to represent and share information through the SETDA Board

### Use roads policing to target people and vehicles who cause harm to our communities, especially those who are involved in serious and organised crime, through automatic number plate recognition (ANPR), other intelligence gathering and disruption activities

- Operation SPITFIRE was an ANPR operation in Harlow that targeted vehicles with gang markers around the border with the Metropolitan Police Service. This operation was aimed at targeting Organised Crime Groups that use road networks to facilitate their criminality and resulted in the arrest of eight suspects, including five who were involved in a knifepoint robbery

### Work with the Environment Agency and rural communities to tackle largescale industrial fly tipping committed by Organised Crime Groups

- Essex Police and the office of the Commissioner attended the Essex Fly Tipping Task and Finish Group (founded by Essex Rural Partnership), later known as the Essex Fly Tipping Group, from its establishment in 2016. This group brought together statutory agencies with differing and complementary powers, to collate data collected which was stored independently to provide a holistic picture and to ensure maximum effect in addressing this issue.
- The Fly Tipping Group researched and adopted good practice from neighbouring counties.
- The ERP Task and Finish Group supported a number of joint operations (led by Essex Police, the Environment Agency, and a variety of Essex Local Authorities) to gather intelligence and deter large scale fly-tipping

**Work with businesses and individuals to help them to protect themselves from cyber enabled crime, such as online fraud**

- Cyber enabled crime has grown exponentially over the last ten years as criminals have used new technology to commit crime. Through the precept funded growth in 2016/17 the Chief Constable recruited a specialist cyber protect officer to coordinate Essex Police’s work with individuals and businesses to help build resilience against these forms of crime.
- Further specialist investment was made in 2020/21 with a further position created. Between these new specialist officers were funded the creation of a business engagement team. This team was supported by and worked closely with a newly created Business Crime Strategic Board, a business led board that connected the team with businesses, provided business views and share prevention activity.
- Through this partnership a variety of focused activities have taken place including three large cyber security conferences, over 70 individual engagements at business networking events and hundreds of pieces of prevention advice.
- In 2020/21 the Strategic Business Board agreed to establish a Cyber Security Subgroup with representatives from a variety of cybersecurity focused businesses, the Eastern Regional Cyber Security Centre and representatives from the Essex Chamber of Commerce, Federation of Small Businesses, and academic institutions. This board has started to grow the activity across Essex and coordinate the partnership approach to reaching, engaging, and protecting businesses and individuals.

**06 | Protecting children and vulnerable people from harm**

**2016/17 – 2019/20 Priorities**



**Promote prevention and early intervention to keep children safe from all forms of abuse, including child sexual abuse, emotional abuse, physical abuse and neglect and Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)**

- In 2016, the Commissioner invested in the Risk Avert model which is an emotional health and wellbeing programme for young people, delivered through schools. During the 2018/19 academic year, 211 young people participated in an independent evaluation of the award winning programme. The findings showed that 72 per cent of young people achieved positive outcomes relating to their mental wellbeing and 74 per cent of young people achieved positive outcomes relating to both their self-efficacy and their resilience.
- Since 2016, the Commissioner has also worked with local authorities and the National Lottery to support the Children At Risk of Exploitation (CARE) project. The Commissioner has made an annual investment in this project, which aims to enhance protective factors, improve wellbeing and resilience as well as reduce the risk of physical, emotional, and sexual harm for young people that may be exposed to criminality. Between 2016 and 2019, the project supported 300 individuals at risk of child sexual exploitation.
- Through the precept investment and the national Police Uplift Programme, the force has received an increase in funding for additional staff and officers, including to undertake child abuse investigations. A dedicated Quest team of officers was formed in February 2019 to investigate cases of non recent child sexual abuse where the victim is now an adult. Following a growth bid, the CSE Investigation Team went live in July 2020, to supplement work already undertaken in Community Policing Teams and to deal with cross-border matters. The team investigates the most serious, complex, and organised child sexual exploitation, proactively targeting suspects who are prolific abusers of children. Dedicated Children and Young People Officers now also work with vulnerable young people through engagement with educational institutions, youth clubs and social care to identify support networks for young people and create referral pathways to divert potential victims of exploitation by building self confidence, respect for self and others and contributing to society

### Promote and encourage partnerships to challenge and support Essex Police to deliver and sustain improvements to outcomes in child protection interventions

- The Commissioner attended and engaged through partnerships including Health and Wellbeing Boards, the Essex Criminal Justice Board, Safeguarding Adults and Children Boards, the Sexual Abuse Strategic Partnership and the Southend, Essex, and Thurrock Domestic Abuse Board (SETDAB).
- With regards to police performance, in the 12 months to February 2020, the force achieved nearly 200 more child abuse outcomes than in the previous 12 months, but also saw an increase in incoming demand, recording a rise of more than 50 per cent in offences during the same period

### Work with front line professionals, including doctors, nurses, teachers, and social workers, to identify signs of abuse and understand how best to refer victims for support

- The Commissioner has supported the SETDAB, which has developed e-learning packages providing basic DA awareness for professionals. The Commissioner also invested in and supported the development and rollout of the community J9 domestic abuse programme which raises awareness of abuse among the public and professionals and upskills individuals in how to signpost people to support. The J9 campaign held five sessions and trained 79 professionals, including Job Centre staff, churches, doctors and hospitals between October 2018 and March 2019. From May 2019 through to Spring 2020, 66 sessions were delivered at venues including Basildon, Harlow, Southend and Colchester Hospitals, St Clare and St Helena Hospices, Harlow College, and a number of local authorities. More than 550 people attended J9 training sessions in 2019/20

### Bring more perpetrators of rape and sexual abuse to justice

- Recorded rape offences have gradually increased over the Plan period, with projections anticipating this trend continuing. As noted in the chapter on serious violence, although rape convictions as a percentage of the total caseload increased between 2016/17 and 2020/21 (from 60 per cent to 69 per cent), the total number of rape convictions in Essex reduced from 67 in 2016/17 to just 20 in 2020/21. For the 12 months to the end of March 2021, Essex had the eighth highest rate per 1,000 population of recorded rape offences nationally, and the joint highest within its Most Similar Group of forces. Only 4 per cent were solved during this period, giving Essex the sixth lowest solved rate across England and Wales.

- To address this, Essex Police has consulted with other forces to identify and implement areas of good practice and a Rape Improvement Plan has been developed, informed by a review undertaken in 2016/17 of 60 rape cases.
- To bring additional focus to work with the Crown Prosecution Service to progress prosecutions, an independent, multi-agency Rape Scrutiny Panel was established in 2017/18 which meets quarterly and is chaired by an Assistant Chief Constable. Partner agencies are invited to identify cases for scrutiny, so that learning and improvement can be shared.
- In early 2020, the Crime and Public Protection Command built on this by formalising a Rape Prevention Strategy 2020 to 2025 which sets out activity within the force to prevent rape and serious sexual offences and to tackle repeat victimisation and offending. As part of this, in June 2020, the combined Op Ratify (which identifies and tackles repeat offenders) and Op Yalta (which identifies and reduces repeat victimisation) was established, focusing on preventative activity. The board identifies new subjects based on intelligence, professional judgement and data analysis and oversees a structured, coordinated, multi-agency approach where appropriate.
- Through the Force Growth Programme, significant resource has been invested in specialist sexual offence roles, including 18 Adult Sexual Abuse Investigation Team (ASAIT) officers (representing a 40 per cent uplift) and 19 detective constables on the Detective Fast Track joining the teams.

### Improve reporting rates of sexual abuse and ensure victims have access to appropriate support

- As documented in the chapters on domestic abuse and serious violence, the Commissioner commissions the Synergy Essex Rape Crisis partnership to deliver specialist support for victims of sexual abuse. This is a consortium of three Rape Crisis Centres: The South Essex Rape and Incest Crisis Centre (SERICC), the Centre for Action on Rape and Abuse (CARA) and Southend-on-Sea Rape Crisis (SoSRC). The service includes provision of Independent Sexual Violence Advisors (ISVAs) as well as counselling, therapy, and advocacy for all victims, regardless of their age, gender, or when the abuse happened. Synergy offers a single point of access via telephone and its website. The Synergy partnership has seen significant increases in demand over recent years. Services delivered have increased from 9,722 in 2016/17, 12,524 in 2017/18, 13,713 in 2018/19 to 15,747 in 2019/20.

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- Since taking office, the Commissioner has sought to increase reporting of sexual abuse, recognising data from the Crime Survey of England and Wales that around eight in ten incidents of sexual abuse are not reported. We have seen an increase in the number of people coming forward for help since the Commissioner inherited responsibility for the commissioning of local support services in 2014. For instance, service users entering support increased from 4,690 in 2016/17 to 7,117 in 2018/19.
- The Commissioner has commissioned local rape crisis centres to provide specialist support for victims and survivors of sexual abuse since 2016, increasing investment in services as demand has increased. In 2016/17, the Commissioner invested about £840k in sexual abuse support. By 2020/21, this figure had increased to £1.1m. In April 2020, the Synergy Rape Crisis Partnership was commissioned to deliver specialist support across the county, including therapeutic support, advocacy, counselling and ISVAs. Synergy also offers a single point of contact for victims of abuse to engage through, ensuring help and advice can be found in a consistent and accessible way. The contract value is about £1m per annum

#### **Support those with mental health, alcohol, and drug misuse issues, intervening early to prevent harm and divert away from the Criminal Justice System wherever appropriate, through initiatives such as street triage**

- During 2016/17, the Commissioner, in collaboration with local authorities, health partners and Essex Police, facilitated the introduction of new legislation – section 136 of the Mental Health Act – which ensures that individuals in mental health crisis are no longer arrested, but instead receive appropriate assessment and intervention within a health based place of safety. Only where any threat cannot be managed within a hospital can a detainee under section 136 now be taken to a police station which, in effect, means that only individuals displaying extreme violence will be detained in custody. During 2016/17, the Commissioner and Essex Police also signed the Crisis Care Concordat, which was then a new arrangement setting out how relevant organisations will work together effectively to help people in mental health crisis.
- Since 2018, the Commissioner has co-commissioned an integrated health and justice service with local authority and health partners. The service combines street triage, liaison and diversion, and custody healthcare services. In 2019/20, 38.2 per cent of substance misuse referrals from the integrated health and justice service resulted in successful entry into a service, with a total of 480 people supported.
- In 2019/20, the street Triage service operated at about a 70 per cent avoidance rate for A&E and a higher rate of about 77 per cent for S136 avoidance. These figures represented improvements from about 50 per cent in 2018/19. In 2019/20, it was also noted that the street triage service was increasingly seeing people who were new to the service (rather than repeat attendees), which possibly demonstrates the sustainability of mental health interventions and an improvement in the wider mental health system

#### **Deliver awareness campaigns for children and young people to improve understanding of healthy relationships through schools and public health information**

- As set out above, in 2016, the Commissioner invested in the Risk Avert model which is an emotional health and wellbeing programme for young people delivered through schools. During the 2018/19 academic year, 211 young people participated in an independent evaluation of the award winning Risk Avert programme. The findings showed that 72 per cent of young people achieved positive outcomes relating to their mental wellbeing, and 74 per cent of young people achieved positive outcomes relating to both their self-efficacy and their resilience

#### **Tackle perpetrators who groom individuals or groups, with a particular focus on victims who are targeted online**

- In response to an increase in cases of indecent images of children being created and / or shared online, additional posts have been created to form a Proactive Team in the Police online Investigation Team (POLIT).
- In 2018/19, Essex Police collaborated with the Leicestershire, Northamptonshire, and Surrey Constabularies to launch a significant public awareness campaign and educational tool to highlight the dangers of online grooming and child sexual exploitation. Breck's Last Game tells the story of Surrey teenager Breck Bednar, who was killed by Essex computer engineer Lewis Daynes in 2014, following months of online grooming.
- Continuing to lead the way in utilising innovative methods to support and protect young people, the Dot Com project was launched in Essex in June 2019 and nationally in January 2020. Essex Police worked with teachers and pupils at a school in South Ockendon to identify the greatest risks facing young people and to develop an online programme to help them to identify dangerous situations, tell their teacher if something is worrying them, and feel confident about exploring the internet, in safety. This resulted in the creation of Dot Com, a digital resource that is now available to all schools across Essex.

### Respond to the needs of individuals and local communities who are vulnerable to specific crime types, such as hate crime, elder abuse, harassment, human trafficking, female genital mutilation (FGM), forced marriage and honour based abuse (HBA)

- As referenced in the chapter on serious violence, in 2018/19, the Commissioner led the development and publication of Essex's first partnership Sexual Violence and Abuse Strategy. The strategy was developed through the Essex Sexual Abuse Strategic Partnership which includes representatives from Essex Police, local rape crisis centres, health, and local authorities. The partnership reviews progress against the strategy at each of its quarterly meetings. The strategy outlines the holistic approach the partnership is taking to tackle abuse, and focuses on the following partnership priorities:
  - Prevent abuse from happening.
  - Support for victims and survivors.
  - Develop consistent, impactful communication and campaigns.
  - Challenge perpetrators to break the cycle of abuse.
  - Deliver an effective criminal justice response which bring victims justice and holds perpetrators to account.
- Through the SETDAB, more than 800 professionals attended seminars and workshops in 2019/20, which included stalking seminars, Complex Needs training, Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) and domestic abuse training, stalking and honour based abuse (DASH) risk assessment, Domestic Homicide Review (DHR) seminars and Learning from Reviews. Event feedback showed that professionals' confidence in these areas increased, e.g., 93 per cent of those who completed evaluations for the stalking seminars confirmed it would influence their practice and that their confidence increased across all the learning outcomes.

### Improve reporting of hate incidents through improved community engagement and greater use of Hate Crime Reporting Centres

- In 2016, the Commissioner invested in the recruitment of a Hate Crime Prevention Coordinator who reported into the Partnership Strategic Hate Crime Prevention Partnership (SHCPP). The coordinator developed the first partnership strategy on preventing hate crime, which was published in 2018 and included the following key themes:
  - Understanding hate crime.
  - Preventing hate crime.
  - Increasing the reporting of hate crime.
  - Increasing access to support for victims.
  - Improving the operational response to hate crimes.

- Since 2017, the Commissioner has commissioned Stop Hate UK to provide a dedicated, specialist helpline for victims of hate crime to report incidents and seek information, advice, and support. The helpline also provides information and advice to professionals. The service is available 24/7 as part of a direct response to Recommendation 16 of the MacPherson Inquiry.
  - 'All possible steps should be taken by Police Services at local level in consultation with local Government and other agencies and local communities to encourage the reporting of racist incidents and crimes. This should include: the ability to report at locations other than police stations; and the ability to report 24 hours a day.'
- Between 2017 and 2020, Stop Hate UK received 141 contacts to its dedicated phone line. The Commissioner supported multiple campaigns throughout the period to promote the availability of the service.

### 2019/20 – 2020/21 Priorities



### Promote prevention and early intervention to keep children safe from all forms of abuse, including child sexual abuse, emotional abuse, physical abuse and neglect and Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

- The Commissioner continued to support and promote the Risk Avert programme which delivered the following achievements in 2020/21:
  - 45 schools participated in the programme with 82 school staff being trained to deliver the Risk Avert and the new RSE and HE Curriculum.
  - 3,776 Year 8 surveys were completed for Risk Avert. 1,478 Year 6 surveys were completed for Risk Avert: Primary.
  - New videos were made available on the Risk Avert portal to assist primary and secondary schools to teach RSHE.
  - As noted in the serious violence chapter, through the Emergency Service Collaboration programme, in 2016/17 the Commissioner facilitated the creation of joint emergency services education teams delivered by Essex County Fire and Rescue Service. The teams provide messages to young people in Key Stages 1 to 4 about fire safety and broader community safety issues, such as healthy relationships, gang awareness and cyber safety. Between November 2020 and November 2021, the Joint Education Team gave safety information to 93,837 young people across Essex. 100 per cent of schools in Essex are engaged in this process annually.
  - In the 12 months to February 2021, there was a 5.1 per cent reduction in the number of recorded child abuse offences in the county (a reduction of 284 compared with the previous 12 months). While positive, there remains more that can and will be done to protect those affected by these crimes

### Promote and encourage partnerships to challenge and support Essex Police to deliver and sustain improvements to outcomes in child protection interventions.

- The Commissioner continued to attend and engage through partnerships including Health and Wellbeing Boards, the Essex Criminal Justice Board, Safeguarding Adults and Children Boards, the Sexual Abuse Strategic Partnership and Domestic Abuse Board

### Work with front-line professionals, including doctors, nurses, teachers, and social workers, to identify signs of abuse and understand how best to refer victims for support

- In 2020/21, the SETDAB launched new e-learning courses focused on working with LGBTQ+ victims, MARAC basic awareness, and DA and older people. 682 individuals subscribe to the SETDAB newsletter, and in 2020/21 the partnership received 18,566 visits to its website. In response to the challenges presented by the COVID pandemic, the SETDAB adapted its training and communication activities for online platforms. All partners continued to promote positive messages about service availability throughout 2021/22.
- As referenced in the chapter on domestic abuse, the Commissioner attracted an additional £1m investment in victim services in 2020 which supported local organisations to adapt their offer to continue to provide much needed support during COVID different ways. The funding was allocated to 12 different services, including one dedicated to supporting the Gypsy and Traveller community.

### Improve reporting rates of sexual abuse and ensure victims have access to appropriate support

- 2020/21 saw an increase in services requested from the specialist support service for victims of sexual abuse to 15,824, continuing the trend of annual increase since the original support contract launched in 2016

### Use initiatives such as street triage to intervene early to help people with mental health, alcohol, and drug misuse issues, to stay safe and stay out of the Criminal Justice System where appropriate

- The integrated health and justice contract continued to provide street triage, liaison and diversion, and custody healthcare services in 2020/21. During the year, 42.2 per cent of substance misuse referrals from the service resulted in successful entry into a service, with a total of 528 people supported (an increase from 480 in the previous year).
- In 2020/21, the street triage service operated at about a 70 per cent avoidance rate for A&E and a higher rate of about 81 per cent for S136 avoidance. These figures represented improvements from about 70 and 77 per cent in 2019/20

### Deliver awareness campaigns for children and young people to improve understanding of healthy relationships through schools and public health information

- Since 2020, the Commissioner has funded the Goodman and Sisters in Strength mentoring programmes delivered by the Essex Youth Service. The programmes are aimed at individuals at risk of entering an abusive relationship, or currently experiencing such abuse. The sessions can be delivered in group work or 1:1. The projects educate young people about the value of respect and the characteristics of healthy relationships. The intervention equips young people with the necessary skills to recognise, develop and maintain healthy relationships

### Respond to the needs of individuals and local communities who are vulnerable to specific crime types, such as hate crime, elder abuse, harassment, human trafficking, female genital mutilation (FGM), forced marriage and honour based abuse (HBA)

- The SETDAB supported the launch of the Stay Safe campaign in April 2020 which focused on five key risk areas to keep people safe during the first national lockdown. The domestic abuse content attracted the most views and interactions with 35,998 video views and 104,688 people viewing the post on Facebook. The partnership also:
- Delivered five webinars in place of the SETDAB annual conference.
- Launched two new e-learning packages, focused on Domestic Abuse Basic Awareness and Drug and Alcohol Basic Awareness.
- Moved the SETDAB Newsletter from monthly to bi-weekly to ensure that up to date service information could be cascaded to partners.
- Moved J9 and Alpha Vesta training to online platforms.
- The Commissioner funded Alpha Vesta project trained more than 2,500 employees in 394 businesses and organisations across the country, including 189 SET based businesses.



### Improve reporting of hate incidents through improved community engagement, improved reporting through Victim Support and greater use of Hate Crime Reporting Centres

- A review of the partnership strategy in early 2021 reported that the following achievements had been delivered:
- Essex Police received more than 3,600 reports of hate crime from January to December 2020 (a 14.4 per cent increase from the previous 12 months).
- Victim Support received nearly 1,000 referrals for victims affected by hate crime in Essex during the COVID pandemic, including 90 children and young people.
- Hate crime education has been delivered to more than 18,000 students since 2018.
- Essex Police trained more than 800 Hate Crime Ambassadors and 50 more Hate Incident Reporting Centres were established across Essex.
- Essex Police and Victim Support revamped the Stop the Hate leaflet, printing 15,000 copies and translating it into five languages.
- A Crimestoppers online hate crime campaign made 1.2 million impressions.
- An increased rate of hate crime contacts was received via the dedicated Stop Hate UK helpline, with 168 contacts in 2020/21 compared to 141 contacts in 2017 to 2020. 61 per cent of contacts were received outside office hours (9am to 5pm Monday to Friday).
- Essex Police continues to support the training of Hate Crime Ambassadors and the availability of hate incident / crime reporting centres. By the end of the Plan period, more than 800 Hate Crime Ambassadors had been trained by Essex Police to take reports of hate crime and to provide advice and support to those affected, and there were more than 50 Hate Incident Reporting Centres across Essex.

## 07 | Improving safety on our roads

2016/17 – 2019/20 Priorities



### Reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured on our roads through the work of the multi-agency Safer Essex Roads Partnership on enforcement, engagement, and education

- Through a combination of enforcement, engagement and education, the total number of people killed or seriously injured on Essex roads fell from 850 in 2015/16 to 641 in 2020/21 (a 24 per cent reduction). This was the result of significant work across the Safer Essex Roads Partnership, launched in 2015. However, as the country emerged from most stringent COVID lockdowns, the numbers of people killed and seriously injured on Essex roads returned to pre pandemic levels.
- At the start of each financial year, a programme of road safety activity is agreed by the Safer Essex Roads Partnership Board with the project team responsible for its delivery. The plan will include operational activity focused on a prioritisation of funding provided to those at most risk when using the roads, with road traffic collision analytical data directing that prioritisation. Activity (A) covers direct policing involvement and supports police officers working overtime on dedicated policing operations focusing on road safety and those who use the road network to commit crime or look to bring harm to communities. Such operations are intelligence led using historic and recent collision trends, which inform priority patrol areas and routes. For example, Operation CALYPSO provides intelligence directed patrols on key routes and at key locations that have been identified as hotspots for people being killed and seriously injured. Activity (B) focuses on broader education and engagement activity undertaken by the Safer Essex Roads Partnership, with progress monitored throughout the year by a dedicated Activity (B) delivery team.

*Continued on next page*

- Excess speed is consistently an area of public concern. As a way of addressing this, in December 2017, Essex Police launched the TruCAM project with Maldon District Council. TruCAM is a hand held speed detection device that calculates speed. One of the distinguishing features of this device is that it has specific targeting, which enables officers to distinguish the speed and direction of a single vehicle in multi-lane traffic effectively. TruCAM not only calculates speed, but it also produces video and still images of the offence. The trial scheme gave Maldon District Council Community Protection Officers the powers and equipment to enforce speed limits within their district. This was the first scheme of its kind to operate across the country and attracted national interest. This project has been a great success with 171 deployments and 1,024 prosecutions in its first nine months of operation. 54 enforcement sites across the Maldon district have been selected based upon road traffic collision casualty data or in response to local community consultation. While the direct results have been very positive, the opportunity to engage local communities in the selection of the sites has also created a stronger sense of ownership within the local community, helping to improve public confidence.
- In July 2019, following a successful pilot, the Harwich Community Speed Watch group also went live with TruCAM speed enforcement activity, allowing the group to enforce speed limits across the Tendring District. Later in 2019/20, Brentwood Borough Council's Community Safety Team adopted the use of TruCAM too, operating at approved sites across the borough to enforce speed limits. TruCAM deployments by Community Policing Teams, local authority representatives and authorised community groups increases visibility across the county and provides reassurance to law abiding citizens who report concerns in their local area. The rollout of TruCAM to non roads policing officers, partner agencies and volunteers has also increased the number of prosecutions for speeding.
- In September 2018, the Safe Pass scheme was launched by the Safer Essex Roads Partnership to reduce the risk to vulnerable road users, including cyclists and horse riders. This scheme promotes a safe passing distance of 1.5 meters and has been promoted in Essex through multi-agency partnership days.
- In addition to theoretical and practical training, powered two wheeler riders (including riders of e-scooters) have been targeted through Safer Riding media campaigns, while other campaigns have sought to increase driver awareness of the vulnerability of riders on two wheels.
- More detailed information on this work is available via the Safer Essex Roads Partnership and more detailed information on the Police element of this work is available through the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner's Annual Reports.

### **Improve take-up of safe driving programmes, working with drivers to prevent harm and help change behaviours, so they understand their responsibilities for safe driving, with a particular focus on use of mobile phones, speeding and drug and drink driving**

- Since 1989, Essex Police has, in partnership with the local highway authorities, enforced offences of excess speed and red traffic light offences through the use of mobile and static safety cameras. Alongside the use of TruCAM and other conventional roadside speed detection devices, a total of 10,500 offences are detected and processed each month by the Road Policing Process Team.
- The key safer driving programme across the country is the National Driver Offending Retraining Scheme (NDORS). This scheme has been used significantly in Essex with 61,865 drivers being referred by Essex Police in 2017 and similar numbers being referred in 2018 and 2019. However, the number of referrals reduced significantly in 2020 (to 39,653) due to COVID and in 2021 (to 36,167) due to the introduction of a national online programme which made it possible for people offending in Essex to take courses nationally. This reduced the ability to track drivers caught in Essex completing the course. Significant capacity issues have also caused issues leading to a reduction in referrals. New technology was introduced in 2021 to overcome this, however, there is no evidence that this has had a positive impact yet.
- Operation CALLA focuses on mitigating the risks posed by unauthorised car meets while Operation WAGTAIL, delivered in partnership with Essex County Fire and Rescue Service and wider SERP, focuses on car cruise events and young drivers. Greater Essex remains a hotspot for such activity in both urban and rural locations. Street racing is common practice alongside other anti-social road use, causing nuisance to residents and a high risk of harm to those who take part or remain as a spectator.
- Essex Police's Rural Engagement Team (RET) provides and promotes a high level of speed enforcement activity in rural locations, mainly across the North Local Policing Area (LPA).
- Essex Police also supports road safety operations and campaigns endorsed by the National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC) focused on enforcing and educating road users around topics including mobile phone use, seatbelts, motorcycle safety and excess speed.

### Encourage people to report poor driving and engage with the police and partners to reduce driver/related crime on the roads

- Significant media campaigns have been run since 2016 with targeted campaigns focused on the most vulnerable groups and separate campaigns for those most likely to offend. This activity is run in partnership and is supported by all SERP partners.
- Essex Police received national recognition at the National Transport Awards, winning the Road Safety Traffic Management and Enforcement Category for its Extra Eyes project. This initiative allows road users to forward footage to the police which they believe highlights dangerous or poor behaviour on the roads, with Essex Police being one of the first forces in the country to utilise the growth in dashcam devices to gather evidence against poor drivers. Within the first few months of the scheme being launched in December 2017, 79 reports had been received by the force, with 39 identifying enough evidence to support a prosecution. Following the initial success of the programme, Essex Police took over the administration of the scheme in 2018 and has improved and developed it. During the 2018 calendar year, 2,718 reports were received containing hundreds of pieces of valuable evidence which have in turn led to hundreds of intelligence reports and convictions. During 2019, positive action was taken in relation to more than 500 incidents, including more than 100 cases of using a mobile phone while driving and 120 cases of passing too close to a cyclist. In 2020, the number of submissions through the site grew to 1,896. This increased to 2,460 in 2021 and again to 2,831 in 2022.

### Maximise the use of police technology such as drug wipes, speed detection devices and automatic number plate recognition (ANPR) to prevent harm, identify and change the behaviours of those who break the law, while also using Dashcam footage from the public in an effective and proportionate way

- There has been a steady increase in the number of drivers arrested for the offence of drug driving since December 2018, such that there are now more monthly arrests for drug driving than drink driving. This steady increase in arrests for drug driving is reflected in data from across the country.
- With the increase in drug driving, Essex Police has continued to train specific front line officers in the use of roadside drug wipes, including all road policing officers and Special Constables, plus Local Policing Area response teams, Community Policing Teams and proactive teams focused on disrupting drug gangs. Essex Police has been recognised by the Department for Transport for this approach.
- Funding has been provided for the provision of vehicle mounted ANPR in Roads Policing vehicles.
- Operation ANIMAL has returned positive results through dedicated operations to respond to ANPR hits on the M11, A13 and A127.

### Work with partners to ensure appropriate road traffic regulations are in place, such as speed limits, cameras, and safe road design

- The highways authorities in Essex are key members of the Safer Essex Roads Partnership and are directly in control of speed limits, cameras, and safe road design. Through SERP, all highways' agencies are promoting the Safe System approach to reducing road deaths, which includes lowering speed limits, the effective use of cameras and the 'roads and roadsides' pillar of the Safe System. The largest highways authority in the county, Essex County Council, is currently undertaking a road hierarchy review that will underpin a future speed limit review.
- Throughout the Plan period, Essex Police continued to promote, through local planning authorities, consideration of the inclusion of technology to enforce speed limits within new housing developments and infrastructure projects. The force promotes the wider use of average speed systems within the design and build stage, looking for opportunities to build out the risk of collisions and support Vision Zero

### Encourage and develop volunteer action to improve road safety, such as Community Speed Watch

- In Essex, the Roads Policing Team is supported by dedicated Roads Policing Special Constables who provide more than 12,000 operational hours to the team and arrest more than 150 people per year. Each of these Special Constables is fully integrated into the Roads Policing Team and is highly trained, having been provided with additional driving skills including Response, Initial Phase Pursuit and Advanced Driving. Some are also trained to ride police motorcycles.
- By December 2018, the Community Speed Watch scheme had 37 active groups and more than 870 volunteers. By April 2021, this had grown to more than 60 active Community Speed Watch groups. The scheme provides a tough, community based deterrent against poor driving. In 2017, 15,001 warning letters were sent to drivers because of the work of these volunteer groups. In 2018, this number increased to 21,479, then to 24,333 in 2019. Following the outbreak of the COVID pandemic, the numbers fell to 3,550 in 2020, but grew again in 2021 to 13,739 and in the first six months of 2022 had already reached 8,456.



## 2019/20 – 2020/21 Priorities

### Build on the success of reducing those killed or seriously injured on our roads by working with our partners on the Safer Essex Roads Partnership to set an ambitious long-term target for significant further reductions

- The Partnership undertook a significant review of activity in 2019 following the success of its previous strategy. This resulted in the Partnership taking the ambitious step to commit to its Vision Zero Strategy in 2020-21. This builds on the success over the previous few years and aims to achieve zero people killed or seriously injured on Essex roads by 2040. This will require a cultural change by communities, stakeholders, and industry, acknowledging that everyone has a responsibility for safe use of the road network.
- You can find out more on Vision Zero at the [Safer Essex Roads Partnership Website](#).

### Undertake targeted, preventative operations to make it harder for criminals to use our road network to commit crime

- Roads Policing provides a vital role in targeted and preventative activity to target criminals using the road networks. During 2018/19 alone, the team was involved in nearly 80 operations across the county alongside other teams to target locations where intelligence shows criminality is happening and where the road network is being used for criminal activity, such as organised crime, the movement of drugs, vehicle related crime, burglary, and violence. An example of this approach was an operation in November 2018 focused around the A13/A127 area. This two day operation resulted in seven arrests for drug driving, one arrest for drink driving, one arrest of somebody wanted for fraud, one arrest of somebody wanted for threats to kill, three arrests for possession of a class A drug, 16 vehicles seized for no insurance, 116 seatbelt offences and 64 other traffic offences. These types of operations have a significant impact both on the safety of the roads, and also in tackling crime more generally.
- Following the uplift in officer numbers in 2019/20 (17 officers) and 2020/21 (24 officers), the teams have additional capacity to focus proactively on road safety and the disruption of those who use vehicles with criminal intent. Operation GAMBLER targets roads to the west of Essex that link the county to north and east London. This cross border operation with the Metropolitan Police focuses on high harm road traffic offences and cross border criminality, acting upon those who use the road network at the highest level of risk, often through the identification of multiple occasions of drink / drug driving, identifying disqualified drivers and identifying other road crimes. The first operation resulted in 16 arrests over an eight hour period for offences including dwelling burglary, robbery, drug driving and possession with intent to supply class A drugs. The operation has arrested more than 700 people since it started back in 2019.

- A similar proactive approach has been taken with the approach to commercial vehicles. Through Operation TALON, frequent operations have been coordinated with partners from National Highways, the DVSA, the Metropolitan Police Service, local authority licencing teams and the Environment Agency at MOTO services, Boreham Services and at Junction 7 of the M11 focused on mechanical and drivers' hours offences for heavy and light goods vehicles.
- Operation DUNKER, carried out in collaboration with Uttlesford District Council, Transport for London and the DVSA, provides road checks at Stansted Airport linked to human trafficking, modern slavery, and money laundering

### Invest in the rapid expansion of the Extra Eyes programme, so drivers can report poor and dangerous driving

- As set out above, the growth of this programme has continued since it was first established and has accelerated since this further commitment was made by the Commissioner in 2020.
- During Quarter 4 of 2019/20, the Extra Eyes campaign progressed onto a new cloud-based system which provides far greater capacity for processing offences, ensuring a secure and safe platform to store image data that can be used by the courts. This also enables the increased use of digital images to enforce, educate and influence road user behaviour in the future.

### Train more Community Speed Watch Volunteers to use technology, so they can issue enforcement notices for bad driving

- As set out in the commitment above relating to the growth of Community Speed Watch, the number of volunteers has increased over this period. In December 2018, the Community Speed Watch scheme had 37 active groups and more than 870 volunteers, and by April 2021, this had grown to more than 60 active Community Speed Watch groups. COVID presented a significant challenge to the operation of the scheme, but this has now largely been overcome with more groups being trained.
- The scheme provides a tough, community based deterrent against poor driving and in 2017, 15,001 warning letters were sent to drivers because of the work of these volunteer groups. In 2018, this number increased to 21,479, then to 24,333 in 2019. Following the outbreak of the COVID pandemic, the numbers fell to 3,550 in 2020, but grew again in 2021 to 13,739 and in the first six months of 2022 had already reached 8,456.
- While a pilot undertaken to support Community Speed Watch Volunteers to issue enforcement notices themselves rather than warning letters has not been extended, the results feed into a wider revised Speeding Reduction Strategy being developed by the Safer Essex Roads Partnership which is due to be completed in 2023.

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### Increase enforcement activity against drug drivers, provide a focused deterrence for repeat offenders and a clear public messaging campaign to detect and deter people from committing this offence

- Following the growth of drug driving offences as a proportion of the total number of drug and drink driving offences, a coordinated enforcement programme was put in place during 2020. This included a sustained period of enforcement activity and a high profile media campaign.

### Improve take up of safe driving programmes, working with drivers to prevent harm and change behaviours, so they understand their responsibilities for safe driving, with a focus on high risk drivers such as young men between the ages of 18 to 24

- The Street Spirit initiative offers young riders the opportunity to win a new motorcycle and safety equipment when they access a host of resources around safety equipment, clothing, skills, and hazards which are all designed to help riders make safer decisions on the road. The aims of the project are to raise awareness of the risks and consequences of riding a scooter or moped on the road; to highlight the benefits of wearing appropriate protective clothing; to encourage a safer, more responsible approach to riding and personal safety, and to encourage further training for those riders who go on to pass their full motorcycle tests.
- Following the identification of a long term upward trend in the number of collisions involving older drivers, especially those aged over 70, along with a greater propensity for collisions involving this group to be serious or fatal, the Safer Essex Roads Partnership identified a number of at risk groups and individuals and introduced a 90 minute practical course for this high risk group of drivers to help to keep them and other road users safe

### Maximise the use of police technology such as drug wipes, speed detection devices and automatic number plate recognition (ANPR) to prevent harm, identify and change the behaviours of those who break the law

- During 2020/21, Roads Policing continued to respond to and mitigate risks using new speed detection devices, Laser Cam 4, which can be operated during the hours of darkness.

### Work with partners to ensure appropriate road traffic regulations are in place, such as speed limits, cameras, and safe road design

- During 2020/21, the Roads Policing Team actively engaged at the design stage on a number of strategic projects, including the A12 upgrade between Junction 19 and Junction 25, Dunton Village, Maldon District Council's Limebrook Way development, the Lower Thames Crossing, the Boreham Railway development, the Chelmsford A131 and Wethersfield HMP proposals. Working with partners within the SERP, the Commissioner will continue to influence local and county planning authorities, developers, and National Highways in this way.

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