

## Performance and Resources Scrutiny Programme 2023

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

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### 1.0 Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to provide the Chief Officer Group and PFCC Performance and Scrutiny meeting with an update on Homicide Prevention activity since the last report to the May 2023 meeting.

### 2.0 Recommendations

The Board to note the report and progress updates.

### 3.0 Executive Summary

This report provides an update on Homicides in Essex and includes analysis of Homicide trends as well of an assessment of Homicide prevention activity and investigation performance.

An update since the last quarter is provided on the four key areas of Domestic Abuse, Mental Health, Gangs and drugs lines and Serious Violence.

An update on the latest Homicide Prevention work across Essex is provided, as well as references to the national Homicide Prevention Framework and the links to Essex through the highlighting of the Essex Rapid Debrief Process as best practice.

This work is completed in conjunction with the Essex Homicide Prevention Strategy

## **4.0 Introduction**

Homicide Prevention continues to be a clear priority for Essex Police, with the force leading the way nationally in terms of its analysis and rapid debrief initiatives.

Our approach is now incorporated into the Homicide Prevention Strategy 2022-26. The overarching aim of the strategy is *“To reduce homicide in Essex by tackling serious violence and the contributing factors that lead to homicide”* and is underpinned by four main themes in line with the National NPCC approach:

1. Domestic Abuse
2. Mental Health
3. Drugs – including County Lines and drug enabled violence
4. Serious Violence: including Knife Crime, Serious Youth Violence, alcohol related violence and the Night Time Economy

The strategy articulates the strong Governance arrangements that support our focus on Homicide Prevention and signpost the other significant areas of scrutiny and oversight that are linked to the four main themes.

Essex Police have continued to engage with the NPCC and College of Policing around the development of their ‘What Works Toolkit’ which launched in October 2022.

## **5.0 Current Work and Performance**

### **5.1 Overview of Performance Analysis**

**Previous whole year overview** - There were 15 homicides recorded from April 2022 to March 2023. This is a reduction in homicide from 2021/22 where there were 23 recorded (and a reduction from 2020/21 where 17 homicides were recorded). Two of the offences recorded within this timeframe occurred in previous years, bringing the total amount of homicides committed in 2022/23 to 13 (although Home Office figures will show the official figure of 15).

**Reporting Quarter Overview (Q2)**- In the reporting quarter (April 2023 to June 2023), there were 2 recorded homicides. In both cases, suspects have been identified and charged. The matters are progressing towards trial.

**Calendar Year to Date (Q4, Q1)** – There have been 5 homicides recorded from Jan 2023 - June 2023. The homicide solved rate for 2023 to date is 100% (5 from 5).

Investigation of homicide remains strong and thorough, leading to successful convictions at court. Court results from Q1 (April-June 2023):

**Op Fiscal** – In Oct 2021. Curtis Butler stabbed Jordan King outside a public house in Westcliff. Jordan survived the attack. In April 2023 Butler was found guilty of attempted murder and sentenced to 26 years in prison.

**Op Mango** – In April 2022, in Lakeside Shopping centre Muhammad Khan, 23, and Brandon Lutchmusing, 20 were involved in a short altercation with Michael Ugwa. This

resulted in Khan stabbing Michael once which led to his death. In May 2023, they were both found guilty of murder and are due to be sentenced. The Ugwa family told family liaison officers *'that it really hit us just how much work had gone into this Murder Investigation and you [the Police] had not left a stone unturned from what we can see'*.

**Op Gallop** – Sept 2022. Bako Sheika was stabbed and killed by Rakar Rahimi (an acquaintance) on Distillery Lane, Colchester on 12th September 2022 after a dispute. In June 2023, Rahimi was found guilty of murder and sentenced to 25 years.

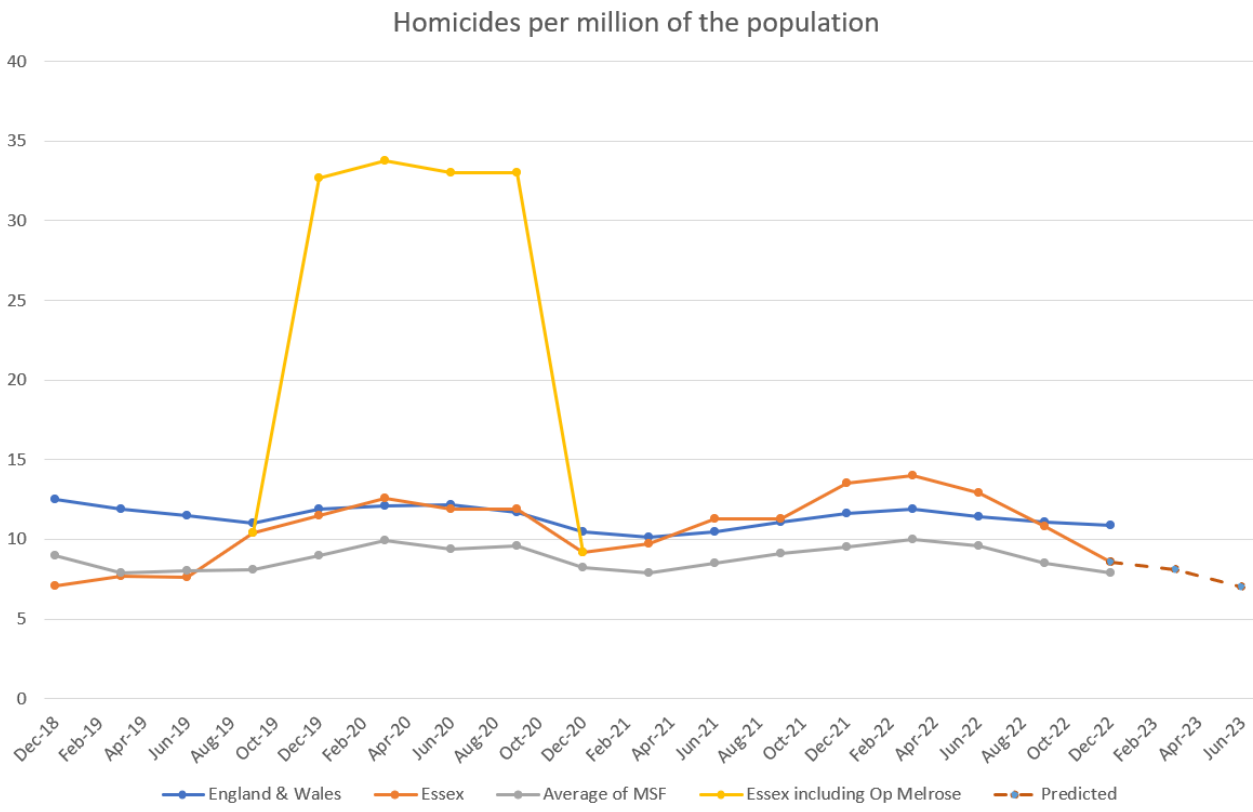
**Long-Term Homicide Trends:**

The long term homicide trend is decreasing with generally being less than two homicides per month. There have been no peak months that have exceeded that position since the last report, with in fact there being no homicides in January, March and June 2023.



The overall rolling 12 month rate of homicides (orange line) shows a steady decrease in the second half of 2022 and a gradual decline of that line to reflect the lower number of recorded homicides in 2022 and into 2023.

When comparing the 12 month rolling homicide rate with most similar forces and the national average, since Aug 2019, Essex follows the trend of the most similar force group (not including Op Melrose), but consistency sits above it. However, when compared to the national average, since Oct 2019, Essex has more closely following this national rate and in the most recent data, has dipped below. Predictions (using local rather than HO data) indicates the homicide rate within Essex will continue to fall far below the national average.



Office National Statics published figures (most recent release Dec 2022)

Using local data, it shows the number of homicides in the previous 12 mths to April 23 is 15. The number of homicides in the previous 12 mths to Jun 23 is 13. This equates to a drop in the homicide rate to 8.1 per million in April and down to 7.0 per million in June. This rate would be below both the current national rate (10.9) and MSF average (7.9). This is reflected above in the dotted 'predicted' line.

So far in the reporting financial year, there have been 5 homicides (3 in Q1 and 2 in Q2) This would amount to a predicted total of 10 per year, which would equate to a rate of 5.4 per million of the population, although it is accepted this is a short data set.

**Disparity Data**

The victim gender picture is changing, The portion of male victims in 2021/22 was 75%. This has reduced to 56% in the 12 months from April 2022 to March 2023. This reflects the reduced homicides in general, but with a more consistent level of domestic homicides where a female is traditionally the victim.

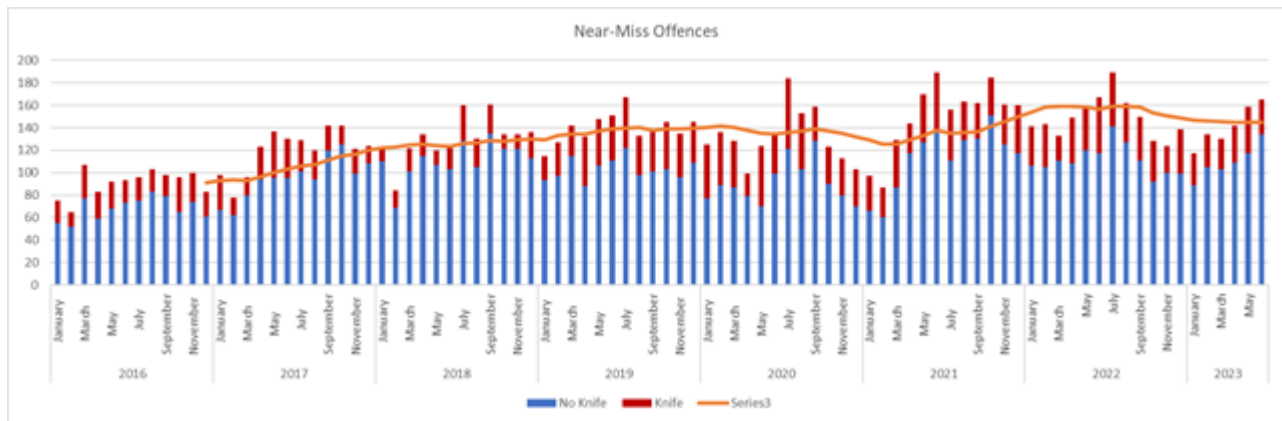
As reported previously, some initial work has been completed to compare victim ethnicity. The initial data identifies a disparity amongst black victims, showing they are more than twice as likely to be victims of homicide than white victims – when compared against census data of Essex residents. Work continues to better understand this disparity, including whether victims (and suspects) were Essex residents or travelling into the county at the time of the homicide.

## **Primary Influencing Factors**

The primary influencing factors remain unchanged with the largest influencing factor being Domestic Abuse, followed by Spontaneous Altercation, with Mental Health Gang and County Lines third. The three largest influencing factors have not changed since the last report.

When considering ‘near miss’ offences (consisting of GBH with intent, GBH, and attempted GBH, the below graph highlights these offences since 2016. The rolling 12-month trend increased consistently during 2021 but stabilised and has decreased towards the end of 2022 and into 2023.

There is no notable change in the proportion of knife related near miss offences. This is a significant proportion of 24-25% of offences but does remain consistent.



## **5.2 Home Office Homicide Data**

As part of the Beating Crime Plan measures, Essex is closely reviewing our position against the Home Office outlier criteria.

The latest data shows Essex continues to not meet any of those criteria (which is the continued position since the last report) and are therefore not considered an outlier as they have been in previous periods due to the lower homicide rate in 2022, which has continued into 2023.

## **5.3 Essex Police Homicide Prevention Approach**

### **5.3.1 Homicide Prevention Strategy**

The Essex Police Homicide Prevention Strategy 2022-26 remains in place and is used to underpin our homicide prevention approach.

The overarching aim of the strategy is to “*To reduce homicide in Essex by tackling serious violence and the contributing factors that lead to homicide*”. Key prevention activity is completed in conjunction with the strategy.

### **5.3.2 Homicide Prevention Rapid Debrief Process**

The Homicide Prevention Rapid Debrief process is now well established.

There has been a total of 16 debriefs with a further three being scoped. The Rapid Debrief process was reinvigorated at the Chief Constable's SLT event in February 2023.

In total 118 actions have been raised as part of the debrief process to date, of which 99 have been completed. Of the 19 outstanding, 13 are from three recent de-briefs, leaving only 6 open from the other 13 debriefs. The working group ensures traction and completion of these actions and meets 6-weekly.

### **5.3.3 Homicide Prevention Activity**

#### **Domestic Abuse**

Reports of Domestic Abuse have reduced 10.1% (rolling 12 months end March 2023). This coincides with an overall modest increase in the amount of Domestic Abuse cases solved from 10.5% to 11.4%.

**DARA Model** -The move from DASH to DARA risk assessment is still set to going live on 1st August 2023.

**DA Matters training** - Home Office funding has been received (£149k). This training, aimed at improving our response to DA will be delivered to 1500 staff prior to the end of the financial year.

**DAPST training** – This is a bespoke 3 day training course designed to provide an insight to perpetrator management, offender manager processes and other key areas of the role. Two training events have already taken place in June. This course is now on the 'perfect profile' for DAPST and further courses being planned for all new starters.

**DART course** – This is a bespoke 3 day training course designed to raise awareness of the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (DVDS) and risk assessments being delivered to new 'DART' officers. This training is scheduled for July.

**Flex training** is a program used force wide which ensures officers receive up to date training about a variety of subjects. One package is being designed for delivery around Preventative Orders between August-October 23.

**Perpetrator Programs.** Funding has been obtained from the Home Office (approx. £400k) for additional perpetrator programs in Essex. This is being worked through with SETDAB with a commissioning panel being established in June to select services. The purpose will be to commission a 'Stalking prevention program' and a provide a 'CARA' type model providing a diversionary route (through the use of cautions) for some standard risk DA perpetrators.

**Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme pilot.** Following a review into DVDS, where concerns were raised about the current processes in Essex, a pilot was commenced in North LPA utilising DAPST officers and IDVA. This has proven to be highly successful with

increases in both amount of DVDS delivered, and an increase in the amount of information being provided in the disclosure. Following a formal review of the pilot to gather the learning, the aim will be to roll this out force wide from August.

**Kulpa App.** This is a commercial app, offering opportunities around gathering and collection of evidence, in a secure 'cloud'. This means the evidence is stored away from the victim's phone (safety) and police can gain immediate access to the evidence and associated meta data, when granted permission by the victim. This means that in many cases police will not need to seize and examine victim mobile phones. Essex was involved in the national proof of concept, highlighting use of this app which made High risk victims feel 'empowered' and 'safer', and provided significant efficiency savings for police. The Home Office considered this proof of concept so successful that they are moving to make Kulpa commercially available now, without the need for wider pilots. The 7 Force procurement team are engaging with Kulpa around the commercial aspects, and if agreement can be reached, we will be looking to identify funding streams to purchase this.

**TesSafe App** - This is an app provided to victims of DA, that enables them to be GPS tracked and police to be called to their location when in need of immediate support app safeguards victims of DA and is used nationally by the majority of police forces. Essex were one of 2 forces not using it, however, have now purchased 150 licences. Implementation will take place, once staff are trained – which is underway.

**VKPP** - Following the publication of the VKPP annual report and 19 recommendations, Essex are working through the recommendations in order to complete a gap analysis. We are in a relatively strong position with the majority, but there are felt to be gaps around 'unexplained deaths / DA Suicide' which will need closing. Activity is being tracked through a VKPP Gold Group (ACC Mariner) and DA Oversight Board.

**Preventative Orders.** The decreasing numbers of DVPO being issued continues to be monitored. A recent review commissioned by the DA Governance Board highlighted areas where investigation needed improving and inconsistencies following reports of breaches of Non-Molestation Orders. CI Paul Ballard is leading a working group into these areas and several workstreams are likely to come from this. Flex training (mentioned above) will be dedicated to this area of work with a view to improving the current situation.

### **Serious Violence**

A recent extensive PFCC update has recently been completed by D/Supt Biddle in a yearly deep dive entitled "Reducing Drug Driven Violence".

The most recent Serious Violence Unit performance figures for April-June 2023 are below on Page 8). A reduction in performance is accounted for as SVU prioritises and dedicates more of it's time to disrupting the highest level of criminality from those in Organised Crime Groups (OCG's). This is coupled with a vacancy rate and service to other critical areas of force business, such as contact management.

SVU Performance (Apr-Jun 2023)		Average quarterly performance 2022
84	Searches completed	100
111	Arrests	148
77	RIC's – (69%)	62%
19	Weapons seized	31
£64.5K	Cash seized	£191k
144	Vulnerable people safeguarded	24

### **Alcohol and Night Time Economy**

There continues to be a programme of work specified within the Night Time Economy (NTE) hotspots throughout the county of Essex. The Summer plans for NTE have been refreshed and plans are also being prepared for Freshers week in Sept and October.

Partnership support is still strong (through the use of street pasters and the SOS bus). This also includes the use of neighbourhood protection officers in and around Southend and Colchester based near to the nightclubs.

The expansion of **drug testing upon arrest** may present future opportunity to understand a detained person's journey prior to arrest – which may in turn identify opportunities for enforcement at licenced premises in respect of drug use particularly around cocaine use.

Finally, the NTE lead for Essex Police to replace Supt Stuart Weaver will be C/Insp Paul Hogben.

### **Vulnerability - Mental Health**

The **C&PP Mental Health team** has now been embedded. This was introduced as a result of Op Beaumont (the death of a 12-year-old boy in Debden in 2019). The team consists of one Inspector, one Sgt and two PC.

The role of the team is to provide the holistic overview of MH in Essex around the three areas of Response, Investigation and Prevention.

**Response** – Responsibilities in this area include S136 compliance and the escalation process. Ensuring partners are fulfilling their responsibilities ensures officers are able to respond to other incidents.

**Investigation** – focuses on the Criminal justice process, including the suspect experience and tackling violence within MH settings including hate crime. The work also includes partnership approach to identify those who are being released into the community to enable to police to appropriately brief local teams.

**Prevention** – works on the cohorts for the Mental Health Risk Management Board (MHRMB). This work manages and works to mitigate risks for those who are making threats - particularly in relation to threats of violence. The MHRMB is a strategic oversight board



with partners which monitors a risk register across multiple agencies. Underneath this, aligned to the three health areas are operational boards which discuss individuals and activity can be recorded on accessible systems.

The referral mechanism into the MHRMB is via the MHT1 form. This, along with other key learning messages around dealing with those who may present a risk of harm to themselves or others, is encapsulated within a 17 min training video piece on Op Beaumont. This training package is now mandatory for all operational staff and officers.

Finally, progress is being made to digitalise the S136 form which will assist with data collection and identification of patterns and trends.

#### **5.4 NPCC Homicide Prevention Framework**

The NPCC prevention framework continues to be developed, and now has seven areas of best practice.

The Homicide Prevention board now includes a standing agenda item where nationally highlighted best practice can be reviewed by the key strategic leads to understand if this can be adopted into Essex.

#### **6.0 Implications (Issues)**

There are no implications or issues identified in this reporting period.

#### **6.1 Scrutiny and Governance**

The strong Governance processes remain in place through the Homicide Prevention board and quarterly reporting and have been bolstered with the Rapid Debrief working group. This is underpinned by the Homicide Prevention Strategy.

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

In line with the new strategy and national best practice, we will continue to develop our preventative approach to the four key areas (Domestic Abuse, Mental Health, drug driven violence and serious violence).

#### **8.0 Risks/Mitigation**

There are no new risks identified.

The need to ensure sufficient resources to manage the rapid debrief process has previously been highlighted. The funding (at zero cost) has been identified for this post which is being advertised.

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

There are no specific identified impacts on equality, diversity or human rights, however Homicide analysis continues to monitor ethnicity and gender to ascertain any levels of disproportionality on homicide victims. The homicide prevention strategy works in

conjunction with the Diversity, Equality and Inclusion strategy and will do so and be refreshed in line with the new Census data.

**10.0 Health and Safety Implications**

None.