

Performance and Resources Scrutiny Programme 2024

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

Title of Report:	Crime Prevention Strategy Report Q1 & Q2
Classification of Paper:	Official
Agenda Number:	8.0
Chief Officer:	ACC Mariner
Date Paper was Written:	6th November 2023
Version Number:	2
Report from:	Essex Police
Date of Meeting:	4th January 2024
Author on behalf of Chief Officer:	Insp 1162 Nikki Metson
Date of Approval by Chief Officer:	November 2023 - ACC Mariner
COG meeting date / date of approval (Please indicate whether paper presented to COG or not)	COG – 29th November 2023

1.0 **Purpose of Report**

This report provides an update for Q1 and Q2 (April 2023 – September 2023) in relation to the progress of the Essex Crime Prevention Strategy 2021-25 (herein ‘the Strategy’) which was launched on 29th November 2021.

2.0 **Recommendations**

No recommendations

3.0 **Executive Summary**

The Strategy prioritises crime prevention activity in 14 key areas. Each of these areas has a thematic force lead, responsible for appropriate oversight, review, and focus to ensure appropriate action takes place within each thematic area, working to improve our response and ultimately prevent crime.

Covid-19 has undoubtedly led to significant challenges within many areas of policing. These challenges and our responses to those challenges have continued year on year, with Covid-19 impacting and accelerating the changes we were seeing to certain crime types. Within this report pre-covid data continues to be included for comparison, along with comparison to the previous twelve months.

With the introduction of the new strategy, and in line with the partnership approach to crime prevention we, along with partners, will also be reporting to Safer Essex who have overall governance of the new strategy approach.

4.0 **Introduction/Background**

This report provides a structured update in relation to each of the 14 strands of the Crime Prevention Strategy 2021-25:

- **Insights** to show/illustrate data insights for rolling 12 months.
- **Delivery achieved April – September 2023:** to show/illustrate work completed towards the thematic area within the time period.
- **Delivery scheduled October 2023 – March 2024:** to show/illustrate planned work towards the thematic area within the time period.

The report also includes updates in relation to any significant issues/challenges faced which do not sit within the 14 strands of the strategy but are of relevance and therefore worthy of note.

5.0 **Current Work and Performance**

Broken down into Thematic strand updates below:

5.1 Serious Violence

5.1.1 Knife Crime

Thematic lead: Detective Superintendent Gary Biddle
Insights:

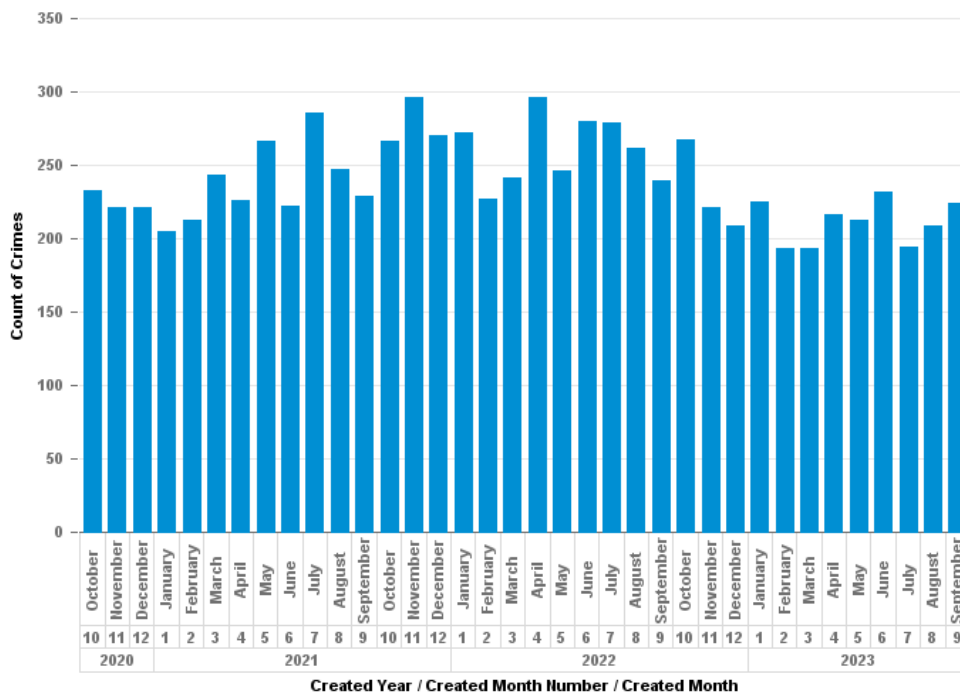
Data for 12 months to end of September 2023, in comparison to the previous 12 months:

12 Month ending September 22	12 Month ending September 23	Diff.	% Diff.
3174	2596	-578	-18.2%

Table comparing data to previous 'pre-Covid' year vs 12 months to end of September 2023:

12 month ending December 19	12 Month ending September 23	Diff.	% Diff.
1989	2596	607	+30.5%

Bar chart showing crimes recorded each month:



Knife Crime continues to be a focus of Essex Police and is central to the Force Plan and the PFCC's Policing plan. There is no dedicated team that investigates knife crime, but the force lead sits within the Serious Violence Unit who provides strategic direction for the force in investigating and preventing knife crime. To assist with this process, the force lead holds a bi-monthly Knife Crime Reduction Board that brings together key representatives from across the force aimed at preventing knife crime in

Essex. This is overseen by the Knife Crime Oversight Board chaired by ACC Rachel Nolan.

Delivery achieved April – September 2023

- The PPP team have worked with the Violence and Vulnerability Unit (VVU) and the PFCC's office to deliver an anti-knife crime campaign with Colchester United Football Club. The joint work was aimed at raising awareness of knife crime and to provide important information regarding support available. The day saw interaction with young people through activity events, footballs with anti-knife crime slogans, and the first team football players wearing anti-knife crime t-shirts. The day was supported by a media strategy to again maximise exposure designed to prevent crime.
- Op Grip continues to be Essex Police's most significant response to reducing/preventing knife crime and serious violence in Essex. The hotspot policing approach has identified 15 zones across Essex that require proactive high visibility policing to prevent crime being committed. This is a three-year strategy that is funded by the Home Office.

The new element to the Op Grip strategy this year has seen the development and delivery of the Safe Space work. This is to support the forces requirement to deliver a Problem Orientated Policing approach to reducing serious violence, including knife crime, as part of the strategy. This work identifies areas within the zones where the greatest harm is caused and provides a proactive partnership response to prevent crime. The response sees Essex Police along with partners engaged with the public in the relevant areas designed to not only provide a high visibility deterrent, but also to provide support and safeguarding advice to the public. The delivery of the initial Safe Space work in Southend was met with significant positive public interest.

- The Prevent, Protect and Prepare Team (PPP Team) within the Serious Violence Unit (SVU), has responsibility for taking the lead in delivering work designed to prevent knife crime. The PPP team continue to work with partner agencies, the PFCC's office and the VVU to deliver educational inputs across the county, aimed towards businesses and schools. The PPP Team have worked closely with the PFCC's Joint Education Team to ensure that relevant educational inputs are provided in the areas where serious violence and knife crime occurs.

Delivery scheduled October 2023 – March 2024

- Continued development and delivery of the Knife Crime Violence Model (KCVM) an algorithm that identifies those offenders that pose the greatest risk of knife crime in Essex. The KCVM will identify a cohort of people that are at risk of being involved in knife crime, this will allow intervention by the PPP team to provide prevention and diversion opportunities. This was previously piloted in Essex in 2022 and reduced offending with individuals that engaged with the team.

- Delivery of the Knife Crime Dashboard, which will provide live time data on knife crime offences across Essex. As well as providing performance data, it will identify hotspots, repeat suspects and victims, and will enable officers and staff to use the information to assist in prevention work.
- Retailer engagement strategy. Developing on the national strategy developed by the College of Policing, Essex will introduce its own retailer engagement strategy designed to provide education to retailers and a commitment not to sell knives to persons under 25.

5.1.2 Rape

Thematic Lead: Detective Superintendent Neil Pudney

Insights:

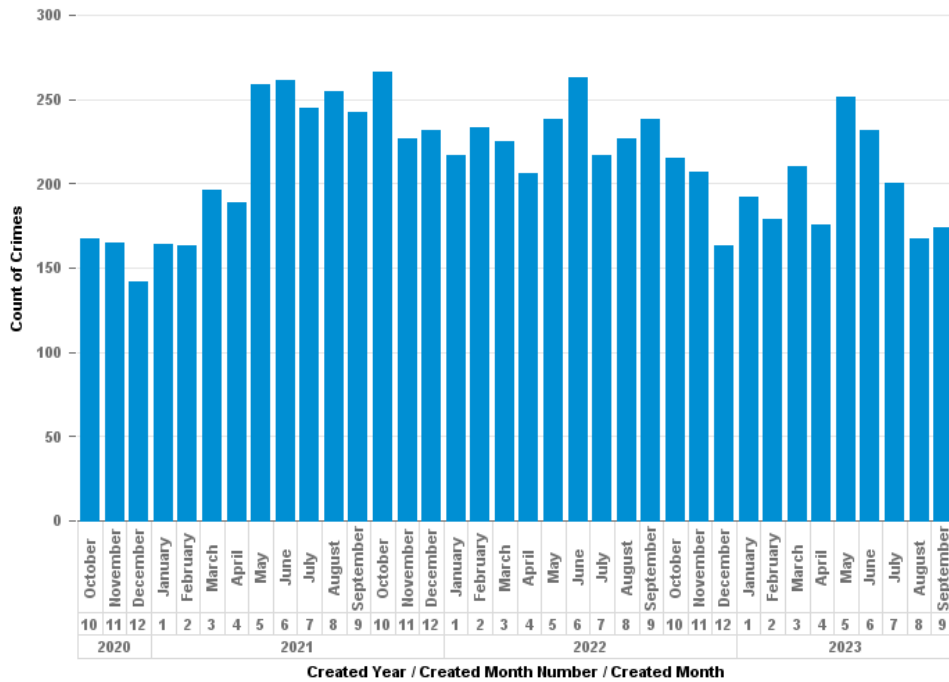
Data for 12 months to end of September 2023, in comparison to the previous 12 months:

12 Month ending September 22	12 Month ending September 23	Diff.	% Diff.
2789	2366	-423	-15.2%

Table comparing data to previous ‘pre-Covid’ year vs 12 months to end of September 2023:

12 month ending December 19	12 Month ending September 23	Diff.	% Diff.
2045	2366	321	+15.7%

Bar chart showing crimes recorded each month:



Rape performance continues to improve over the rolling 12 months to September with 12% increase in solved outcomes and a 15% reduction in reported offences – which equates to 411 less offences. Focus continues on offender management with a new Offender Management Board created which will incorporate Op Ratify and Op Yalta for repeat offender and repeat victims. The delivery of the Op Soteria National Operating Model is underway to embed an offender centric, victim focused and context led approach to rape and serious sexual offences. Earlier this year, Essex Police was held as the best performing force in the country for sexual offence conviction rates. There is a performance framework embedded within Crime and Public Protection which ensures consistency in investigative quality and the partner relationships built with the CPS and Synergy Essex.

An Early Advice Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) has been agreed with CPS and a draft Essex Police and ISVA MOU is being drafted.

Delivery achieved April - September 2023

- **Sexual Offence conviction rates** best in the country with significant custodial sentences being imposed over the past quarter.
- **Maintaining investigative focus on Other Sexual Offences** with early intervention through the C&PP tasking process identifying patterns to prevent escalation to rape and penetrative offences. 17% increase in solved outcomes over rolling 12 months for other sexual offences with early intervention and offender centric approach.
- **Targeted Joint Prevention Activity** – evidence based policing approach from success of Op Jaguar last year which resulted in a 66% reduction in rape offences. Op Jaguar delivered again in September with engagement events in Colleges and Universities focusing on consent and raising awareness of dangers of alcohol, drink spiking and the support services available.

Delivery scheduled October 2023 – March 2024

- **Offender Management Board** created to streamline approach to outstanding suspects and improve timeliness of progressing investigations to arrest ready status.
- **Victim Closure Discussion (VCD)** concept trialled in C&PP and now force-wide for high harm offences. Professionalises the closure of investigations, ensuring VCOP compliance, evidence led prosecution considered, safeguarding orders considered, voice of the child captured, and AWARE principles recorded for holistic assessment of risk. All will contribute to prevention of crime activity.
- **National Operating Model** to be embedded force-wide by June 2024. This involves systems and cultural change to embed an offender centric, victim focused and context led approach to rape to improve investigative quality, victim engagement, suspect management and workforce welfare and skills. Based on six key pillars including data quality and digital material. Governance framework in place to manage this with self assessments being conducted across each pillar to understand what the Force is doing well and where organisational gaps are.

5.1.3 Night-Time Economy (NTE)

Thematic Lead: Chief Inspector Paul Hogben

Insights:

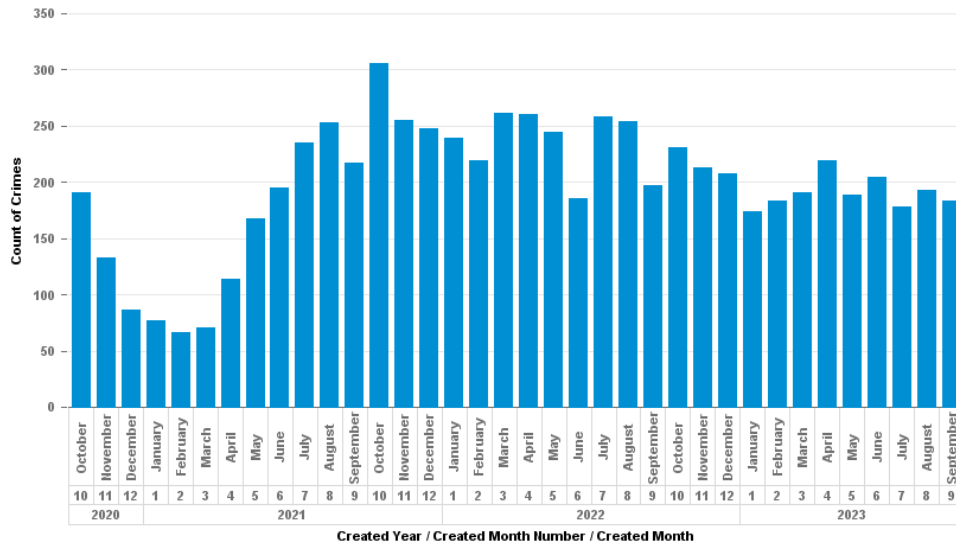
Data for 12 months to end of September 2023, in comparison to the previous 12 months:

12 Month ending September 22	12 Month ending September 23	Diff.	% Diff.
2928	2368	-560	-19.1%

Table comparing data to previous 'pre-Covid' vs 12 months to end of September 2023:

12 month ending December 19	12 Month ending September 23	Diff.	% Diff.
3367	2368	-999	-29.7%

Bar chart showing crimes recorded each month:



NTE has recently had a change of force lead following a long period of reduced capacity by the previous lead. The force wide NTE Harm Reduction Group has just been relaunched, with attendance from all districts, Intelligence, Serious Violence Unit, Licensing and Media. Future meetings will have the CSP NTE lead for Essex in attendance. NTE policing seems to be in a good place, with significant reduction in offences and harm compared to last year and pre-covid.

Delivery achieved April – September 2023

In the last period the Serious Violence Unit have contributed to visibility and crime reduction within the NTE areas that overlap with Op Grip zones. They have deployed the Open Gate Weapons Detection System in different areas, supported by behavioural detection officers, to increase visibility and disrupt criminality. They have also set up the safe space in Southend, deploying the mobile police station on Friday and Saturday nights, staffed by police and other partners, to ensure a safe space and welfare provision for people using the NTE. This has been very well received. The CPTs in the four Primary NTE areas have robust plans to ensure visibility within the NTE at key times, reacting to and developing intelligence which may suggest an increase in footfall. This has contributed to the reduction in crime and harm.

Delivery scheduled October 2023 – March 2024

The four primary NTE locations have already submitted robust plans to police key dates such as Builders day, Christmas Eve and New Years Eve. They have refreshed their 4P plans to include the Op Lester national drink spiking response plan.

All NTE areas have been asked to have a renewed push on “Ask Angela” while completing their licensing checks each month, as well as pushing white ribbon accreditation. SVU will be introducing Safe Spaces in Colchester and Basildon, as well as continuing to support the Southend one. Southend are also in the final stages of acquiring drink spiking wrist bands. These will be given out and contain testing patches to test drinks for the four most commonly used spiking drugs. The possibility

of expanding Op Gerbera is also being explored - an operation deploying plain clothed behavioural Detection Officers into NTE venues, to identify signs of anxiousness or agitation, which may indicate criminal intent.

5.2 Organised Crime

5.2.1 County Lines/Exploitation

Thematic Lead: Detective Superintendent Gary Biddle

Insights:

Trafficking of drugs offences

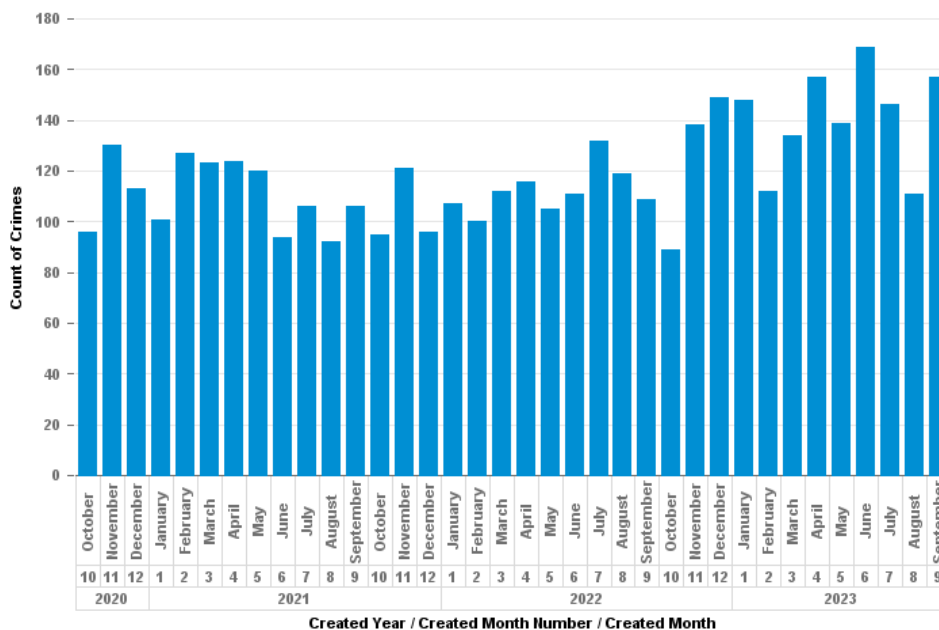
Data for 12 months to end of September 2023, in comparison to the previous 12 months:

12 Month ending September 22	12 Month ending September 23	Diff.	% Diff.
1323	1649	326	+24.6%

Table comparing data to previous 'pre-Covid' vs 12 months to end of September 2023:

12 month ending December 19	12 Month ending September 23	Diff.	% Diff.
926	1649	723	+78.1%

Bar chart showing trafficking of drug offences recorded each month:



Essex Police continues to tackle the threat posed by County Lines and associated exploitation through the work delivered by the Serious Violence Unit. The Serious Violence Unit is made up of two elements that focus on County Lines and associated exploitation. The Op Raptor and Op Orochi teams investigate, pursue, disrupt, and dismantle County Lines that operate in Essex. The Prevent, Protect and Prepare Team (PPP Team) conducts work to safeguard, prevent and provide diversion opportunities for those involved in County Lines and associated exploitation. The team also delivers several measures designed to prevent crime and those that are vulnerable to exploitation.

Delivery achieved April – September 2023

- Op Pester is a national tactic designed to prevent the activity of County Lines. Historically this tactic was used to deter suspects from supplying controlled substances. The tactic would see a text message being sent to the phone number responsible for supplying controlled substances to prevent further offending. This tactic was largely unsuccessful and meant that those supply controlled substances would simply change numbers and continue offending. This approach did not prevent crime and did not provide support to vulnerable people at risk of exploitation.

Essex Police has further developed this tactic to send messages to those that are buying controlled substances from County Lines, after police have enforced against suspects. The text message sent contains details of support agencies and treatment services, and links to their websites designed to prevent further offences being committed. Due to its development, Essex Police is leading the country in its use of this tactic.

- The PPP team has developed a dedicated safeguarding form and process for those that are exploited by County Lines. The new process ensures that partner agencies are engaged with in a 'whole system' approach to ensuring people are safeguarded and diverted away from criminality. Engagement with partners allows for diversion plans to prevent further offending.
- The SVU has developed a new pilot with Open Road and Phoenix Futures that is designed to provide a partnership response during police enforcement activity targeting County Lines. This pilot ensures that there is immediate access to treatment services for those that are vulnerable or being exploited by County Lines. This immediate support is designed to prevent further crimes being committed, and to ensure that those that are vulnerable have an opportunity to be diverted away from criminality.

Delivery scheduled October 2023 – March 2024

- County Lines intensification week in October. A dedicated week of enforcement activity and prevention work designed to prevent crime. This saw a mix of enforcement activity targeting high risk County Lines. It also saw the delivery of Op Bumble proactive exploitation prevention advice to companies across parts of Essex that may be susceptible to criminals using their services for exploitation, such as transport hubs, taxi companies and locations such as shopping centres.

Op Bumble aims to provide awareness in spotting the signs of exploitation so that crime can be prevented.

- Delivery of training to all front-line officers and staff regarding the investigation of Modern Slavery and exploitation offences. This will include raising awareness to the signs of exploitation and support from partner agencies available.
- Roll out of the dedicated safeguarding form for those that are being exploited. Initially used and trialled within SVU, this is now being rolled out across the force to ensure that the same level of safeguarding, support and diversion is used with all people that are subject of exploitation.

5.2.2 Serious Organised Crime

Thematic Lead: Detective Chief Inspector Justin Beacher

Insights:

Essex Police Serious Organised Crime Unit activity across Q2 linked to the disruption of Organised Crime groups; the total results are as follows:

- 125 arrests
- 77 warrants executed
- 112 charges
- 19 Kg of class A drugs seized
- 327 Kg of class B drugs seized
- £467,000 cash seized
- 7 Firearms recovered
- 43 people safeguarded

Delivery achieved April – September 2023

- Support to the wider force in tackling OCGs has been delivered through Local SOC boards and tasking process by adopting the highest scoring OCGs causing the most harm.
- Training has been delivered to all LROs across the force with regards to tactical options to tackle OCGs in their policing areas and the support available to them from the wider force.
- Investigations have seen impressive sentences for OCG members which is due to quality investigations and a focus on the harm the OCGs pose to Essex.

Delivery scheduled October 2023 – March 2024

- SCD are taking the lead in the delivery of CLEAR, HOLD, BUILD model in disrupting Organised crime within the community. Training will be given to LROs, and locations identified for a trial purpose with local authorities and partner agencies participation.

- A review of SCD serious Organised Crime tasking process has taken place and a more efficient system adopted. This will streamline the most harmful OCGs to be tackled by SCD and assistance given to Local Policing. This is following the National Intelligence Model and will ensure all identified OCGs are given the correct resources across the force.

5.2.3 Cybercrime and Fraud

Thematic Lead: Detective Chief Inspector Ashley Howard

Cyber/Online Offences

Insights:

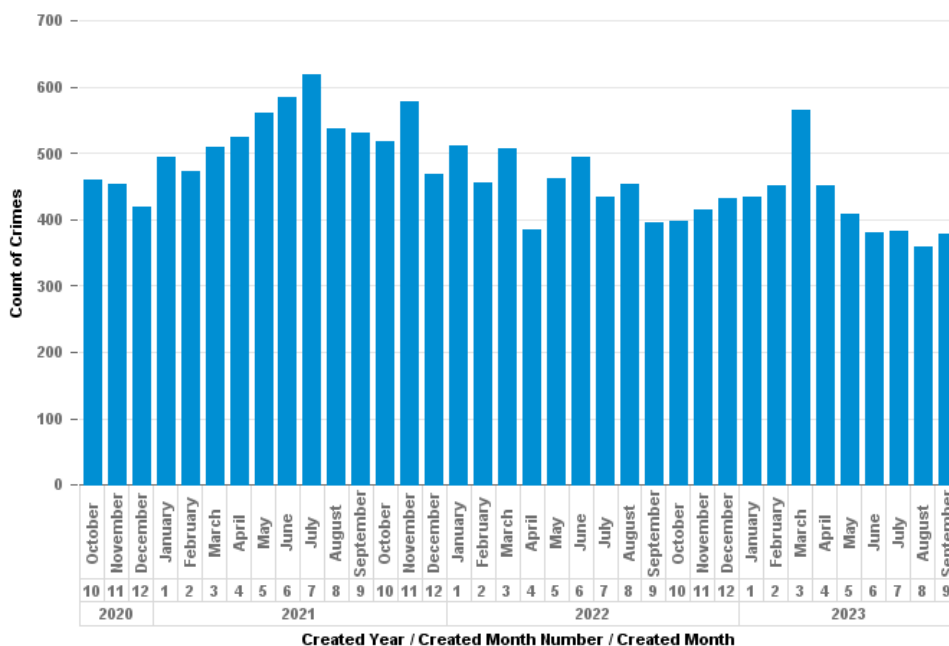
Data for 12 months to end of September 2023, in comparison to the previous 12 months:

12 Month ending September 22	12 Month ending September 23	Diff.	% Diff.
5660	5056	-604	-10.7%

Table comparing data to previous 'pre-Covid vs 12 months to end of September 2023:

12 Month ending December 19	12 Month ending September 23	Diff.	% Diff.
4331	5056	725	+16.7%

Bar chart showing crimes recorded each month:



The above data relates to all online crime and therefore is higher than if just showing cybercrime. Cybercrime offences continue to be under-reported nationally, especially from businesses, due to the reputational risk and requirement to engage with the Information Commissioner’s Office for any data breaches. The cyber-enabled offences included in the data above across a wide range of crime types.

The top three cybercrime offence types remain:

- 1) Hacking of Social Media Accounts
- 2) Hacking Personal accounts
- 3) Hacking Extortion

NFIB Cyber Dependent Disseminations

FY 2021-22	FY 2022-23	Diff	% Diff
807	669	-138	-17.1%

In Q2 of 2023-24, there have been 224 reports of cyber dependent crime, with losses reported at £2.2k. In terms of reporter, this was 94% from individuals, 6% from businesses.

This is an increase in reports from Q1 of 2023-24, which saw 207 reports, with losses reported at £133.8k. This was 98% from individuals and 2% from businesses. This reporting demographic is represented nationally.

Delivery achieved April-September 2023

- The Prevent & Protect Team have been working with Essex-based cyber insurance and security firms in order to establish the blockers for businesses in reporting fraud and cybercrime to law enforcement. These insurance and security firms are assisting in developing a planned and staged approach to build up trust within the business community that reporting of these incidents will not adversely damage their reputation.
- Essex Cyber Protect Officers have worked with the PFCC’s Youth Assembly to train Cyber Ambassadors who can offer advice to their peers.
- The Prevent & Protect Team works closely with small and medium sized businesses within Essex. The P&P Team have developed great working relationships with the Essex Federation of Small Businesses and local Business Networking organisations, which gives the team access and networking opportunities with Essex businesses. Through this networking, they can deliver the required messaging re identifying fraud and cyber risks within their organisations and the priority to implement basic security and training for their staff.

Delivery scheduled October 2023 – March 2024

- Essex Cyber Prevent have developed a two year plan regarding Cyber Choice referrals aimed at increasing number and quality of referrals.
- Essex P&P Cyber are looking to introduce #patchtuesday, a campaign to remind businesses and the public to carry out regular software updates.
- Essex P&P Cyber will be holding their second of three conferences in partnership with SASIG around building trust and collaboration with business community and the police

Fraud

Insights:

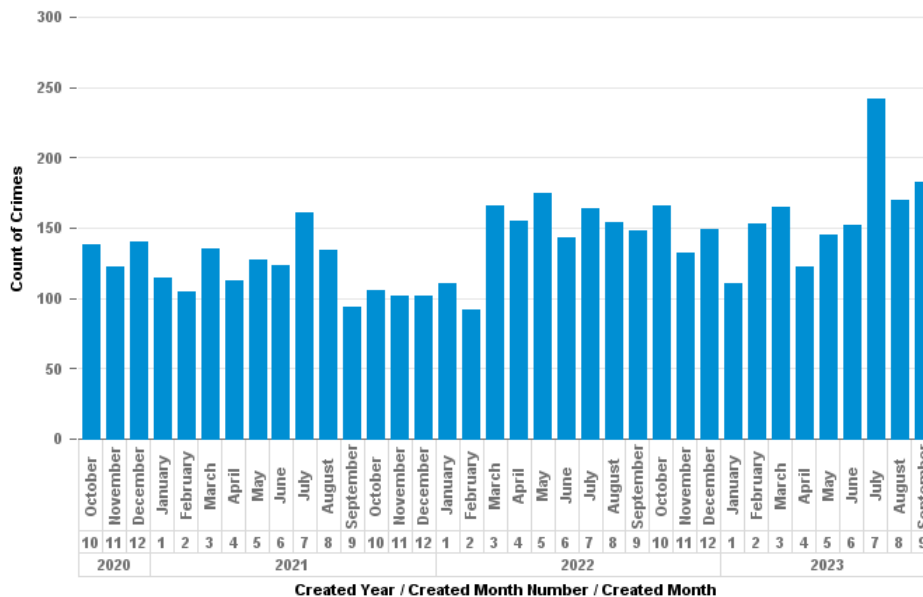
Data for 12 months to end of September 2023, in comparison to the previous 12 months:

12 Month ending September 22	12 Month ending September 23	Diff.	% Diff.
1618	1890	272	+16.8%

Table comparing data to previous ‘pre-Covid vs 12 months to end of September 2023:

12 Month ending December 19	12 Month ending September 23	Diff.	% Diff.
2011	1890	-121	-6.0%

Bar chart showing crimes recorded each month:



The above data reflects only crime recorded on Athena, rather than the true scale of fraud offences in Essex. This is due to Action Fraud recording all offences centrally before disseminating a small proportion to forces to investigate or conduct Prevent interventions.

The actual amount of crime recorded in Essex is as follows:

FY 2021-22	FY 2022-23	Diff	% Diff
9362	7886	-1476	-15.76%

In 2023-24 today, the total reports are 2139, with reported losses of £9.8 million. This is compared with 2596 reports and £11.9 million losses during the same period in 2022-23.

92% of these reports are from individuals, with 8% being from businesses. There have been no changes to the offending trends, with the top three being:

- 1) Consumer fraud
- 2) Advance fee fraud
- 3) Banking fraud

Delivery achieved April-September 2023

- Essex Fraud Protect have developed a Fraud Toolkit for officers to use when dealing with and supporting victims. This Toolkit has been recognised by NPCC as best practice and has been shortlisted for the national TECAs 2023 (Tackling Economic Crime Awards).
- Essex Fraud Protect are leading the way nationally in respect of providing support and information to victims and the public in relation to fraud. The Romance Victim Peer Support Group is unique in the way victims of this devastating crime offer support, survivor accounts and coping mechanisms between themselves, run by and facilitated by Essex Fraud Protect and Victim Support. Essex Fraud Protect are also working with various agencies and voluntary organisations in order to provide a fully joined up approach to supporting victims of fraud. This approach is the first in the country and is being monitored with interest by the Home Office and academia. The Fraud Coordinators continue to provide support to hundreds of the most vulnerable victims to prevent them from becoming repeat victims.
- Contactless cards are now being used by the Essex P&P Team and selected other departments as their business cards and they also signpost Protect messaging.

Delivery scheduled October 2023 – March 2024

- Essex Police is working closely with the local councils, Trading Standards, Essex Community Voluntary Services and other agencies to form a MAAF (Multi-Agency Approach to Fraud).
- Continued development of the Reverse Banking Protocol and move towards implementation. Pilots have been completed in Sussex and Surrey and results are being evaluated.
- Essex P&P is working with a local University to develop a Fraud Victim Recovery Toolkit which will be a self-help guide for victims.

5.3 Complex Needs

5.3.1 Child Abuse/Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

Thematic Lead: Detective Chief Inspector Dan Morrissey

Insights:

CSE Offences

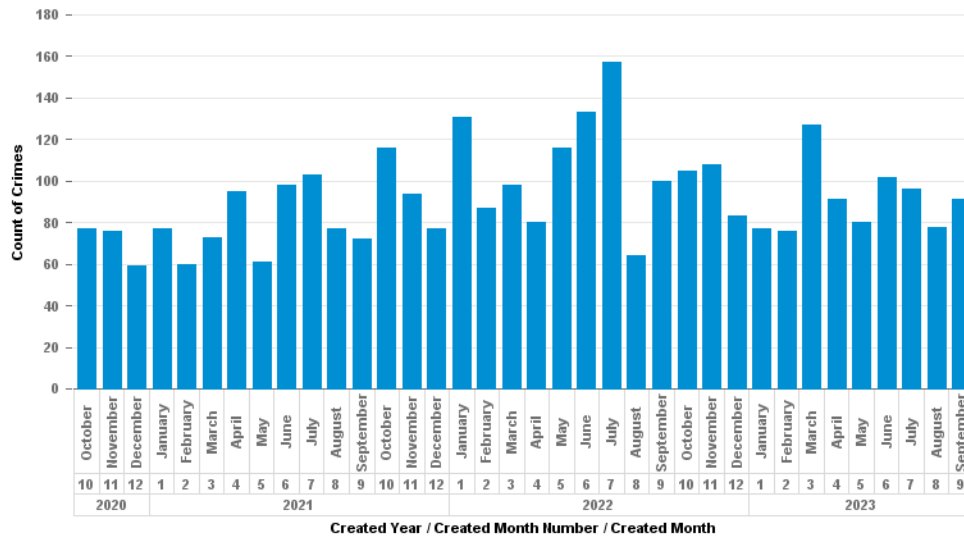
Data for 12 months to end of September 2023, in comparison to the previous 12 months:

12 Month ending September 22	12 Month ending September 23	Diff.	% Diff.
1253	1114	-139	-11.1%

Table comparing data to previous 'pre-Covid' vs 12 months to end of September 2023:

12 Month ending December 19	12 Month ending September 23	Diff.	% Diff.
1091	1114	23	+2.1%

Bar chart showing crimes recorded each month:



Essex Police investigates Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation across a number of departments and commands. Most teams sit within the Crime & Public Protection Command (C&PP), which has dedicated county-wide teams, supporting victims, managing offenders, and working with partners to tackle these crimes.

The two main units are:

1. HQ Investigations including an intelligence led Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) Proactive Team that investigates allegations where victims provide accounts of their abuse. They also proactively pursue and disrupt individuals/groups who seek to sexually exploit children where victim-led investigations cannot be progressed.
2. The Police Online Investigation Team (POLIT) has responsibility for investigations across the county regarding offences involving indecent images of children and paedophilia material held on a computer. POLIT respond to referrals from other agencies (most significantly the National Crime Agency) and provide a proactive capability by utilising systems to detect those people in Essex viewing and distributing indecent images of children (IIOC) via the internet. They also, as of this year, deal with cases referred to police by Online Child Activist Groups (OCAGs).

Most offences investigated by POLIT come from industry referrals that are routed via the National Crime Agency (NCA). Nationally there have been significant year on year increases in the volume of these referrals and Essex has broadly followed this trend. There have been increases over the last six years and are forecast to increase again over the next two years. Proactive investigations are generated via the covert systems that all POLITs have access to i.e., CPSys and ICACCOPS. The volume of these referrals is controlled within the POLIT, and activity has historically been based on the resourcing capacity of the proactive team. There has been an increase in reactive referrals and is mainly due to higher than anticipated volumes of Online child

activist group (OCAG) and Undercover Online (UCOL) referral investigations this year.

The total investigations managed within POLIT in 2022 was 372 (reactive referrals and proactive investigations) which is forecast to increase to 421 in 2023 with further increases over the next three years. Between January and Sept 2023 there were 30 OCAG crimes recorded and 30 UCOL referrals. POLIT currently have an 86% overall solved rate and 100% solved rate for OCAG offences.

Delivery achieved April – September 2023

- CSAE and Child Abuse Dashboard available on A4E
- Prevention Activity - two SET partnership operations conducted twice annually:
 1. Operation Henderson actioned, local outreach workers and community police engaged with passengers, businesses and young people at train and bus stations along identified key routes in Essex, raising awareness about the signs of exploitation and where to report concerns.
 2. Operation Makesafe actioned. This is national initiative is a test purchase operation designed and implemented to help owners and employees within the hotels and hospitality sector identify potential victims of child exploitation and, to understand how to appropriately report concerns to the police to ensure intervention prior to any child or young people coming to harm. The operation is used to establish the basic compliance state amongst hotels and can then be used to develop better awareness around Operation Makesafe and child exploitation.
- Operation Feedback – Proof of concept operation to form the basis of the missing persons team pilot. Five frequent missing children in each LPA were chosen. The aim was for the same officer to conduct three planned visits over the course of six weeks to work with each child, to get to know them and understand their reasons they go missing, identifying the risk and enable safeguarding. The theory proven by this Op is that children visited outside of their time of crisis by someone familiar to them are more likely to make disclosures.

Delivery scheduled October 2023 – March 2024

- A data source has been created for the Force to monitor where the AWARE principles have been adhered to within investigations. These are dip sample checked locally by each Command to ensure compliance and quality of service.
- A review was commissioned with the review team regarding the extent AWARE is used across the force to tailor further communications and training. Their findings will be considered by C&PP Command.
- Op Encompass Referrals - Operation Encompass is an information sharing platform between police and schools. Its purpose is to add an additional level of safeguarding to vulnerable children exposed to domestic violence within the home.

- Project Ask - Project Ask is ensuring all children who are at risk of serious neglect and/or criminality are highlighted to response officers across the force so that when they engage them at incidents, they are aware of the intelligence surrounding the potential risk to that child. This is done through a Storm premises comment and enable dynamic and informed risk assessments. This has enabled better partnership information sharing to ensure better safeguarding of the most vulnerable children across Essex.

5.3.2 **Domestic Abuse**

Thematic Lead: Detective Superintendent Matt Cornish

Deep dive presented in October 2023; therefore further update not provided for this report.

5.3.3 **Drugs and Alcohol**

Thematic Lead: Chief Superintendent Simon Anslow

Insights:

The Essex Police Drugs and Alcohol strategy seeks to reduce crime by working with partners to deliver the Government’s ‘From Harm, to Hope’ ten-year strategy. The action plan has five objectives:

- 1) Target enforcement action against individuals and groups who are willingly concerned in the production and supply of illegal drugs and those in breach of alcohol;
- 2) Identify and protect vulnerable individuals and communities from the exploitation and harm caused by drug supply and use, and misuse of alcohol;
- 3) Work in partnership to further develop and better utilise pathways into treatment for alcohol and drug misuse;
- 4) Inform and influence the education and engagement of young people to divert them away from substance misuse;
- 5) Develop an improved shared understanding of current local drugs markets, and the impact of licenced alcohol sales, to inform and direct partnership interventions.

Data for 12 months to end of August 2023, in comparison to the previous 12 months demonstrates a marked increase in activity to tackle trafficking of drugs in Essex:

	12 Month ending August 2022	12 Month ending August 2023	Diff.	% Diff.
Trafficking of Drugs	1246	1582	336	27%
Possession of Drugs	4028	3921	-107	-2.7%

Delivery achieved April 2023 – September 2023

- In the last six months, the force has rolled out Drug Testing on Arrest (DToA), supported by Home Office grants. Under the scheme, in place since 1st April 2023, drug tests are required for any ‘trigger offences’, defined in law as

predominantly acquisitive offences such as theft, burglary and robbery, as well as class A drug-related offences such as possession of a class A drug (Cocaine or Heroin) or possession of a class A drug with intent to supply. The supporting legislation also allows testing for ‘non-trigger offences’ where an Inspector or above has reasonable grounds to suspect that drugs were a factor in the offending. Since the scheme was launched on 1st April 2023, we have seen the following results:

DToA 1st April to 30th September	
Trigger offence tests	2579
Non-trigger offence tests	201
Positive tests	1122 (57%)
Refused tests	42
Prosecutions	254

- The Government’s Drug Strategy set an expectation that localities established new Combatting Drugs Partnerships (CDPs) and that these partnerships drive delivery of the national strategy. Within Essex these CDPs were initially established for each of the three top tier local authority areas, but agreement has since been reached to have one single, Greater Essex board: the Southend, Essex & Thurrock Drugs and Alcohol Partnership (SETDAP). This board is chaired by Lucy Wightman (ECC Director of Public of Health), Police representation is through Ch/Supt Simon Anslow. The board has met twice in the review period and will be the primary strategic partnership forum for pushing forward the national strategy.
- There is growing national concern about an increase in synthetic opioids within Heroin supplies. Within the last few months Essex has seen four confirmed deaths as a result of these drugs. The force has responded robustly to these cases, with our Operation Raptor officers taking the lead in identifying the drugs and supply lines, working back up the chain to enforce against those selling these dangerous drugs, whilst working closely with public health colleagues to make sure appropriate public messaging and communication with drug users is in place. The force has been well linked in with the NCA and our response has been adopted as the template for national policing. The SVU have now formalised a protocol with the LPAs that sets out roles and responsibilities, fast track actions to be undertaken and health and safety advice for dealing with potentially dangerous substances.

Delivery scheduled October 2023 – March 2024

- The implementation of DToA in Essex includes focus on domestic abuse perpetrators, which currently relies upon non-trigger grounds. In the period 1st June to 30th September, the force tested 381 detainees who had been arrested for DA-related matters. This resulted in 222 positive tests (58%), demonstrating the prevalence of class A drug use in domestic abuse offences. Dip sampling of DA-related custody records shows that there are opportunities to use DToA in more cases. This will be an area to develop over the next reporting period.

- Whilst DToA caters well for those brought into custody, a large number of cases are resolved outside of that space, with many finalised by way of Out of Court Disposal (O OCD). Over the next period the force will work with treatment providers to increase referrals by way of O OCD, likely mirroring the process of mandated referral for an assessment that is working effectively for DToA.
- The force brings charges in 89% of recorded class A supply offences, with 62% of those charged by Op Raptor then being remanded in custody. Use of RUI for class A supply has previously been identified as a risk nationally. Whilst the number of suspects who are RUI has dropped 32% since 2020, there are still 316 suspects under investigation. Over the next period, the force will review use of RUI and supporting investigative processes for class A supply offences.

5.3.4 Mental Health

Thematic Lead: Detective Superintendent Natalia Ross

Insights:

Mental Health Investigations – Detention under S136 Mental Health Act 1983

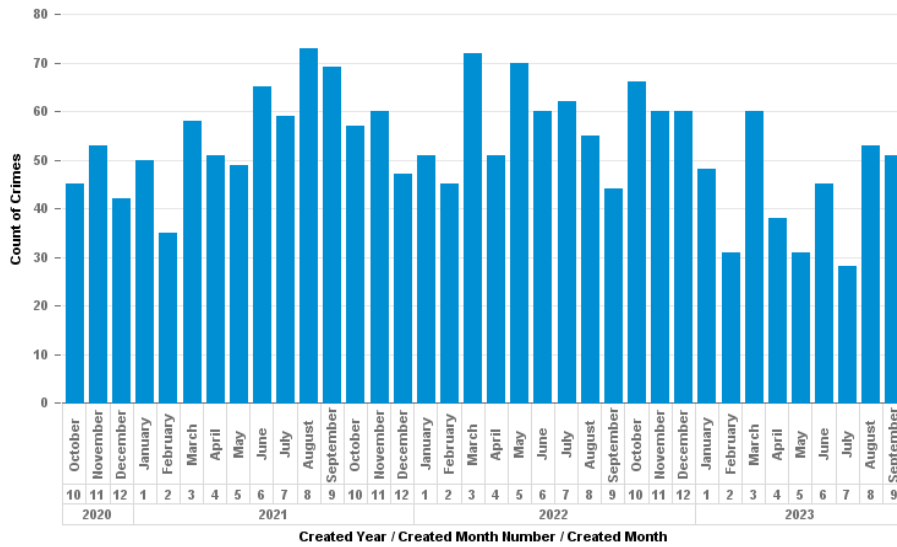
Data for 12 months to end of September 2023, in comparison to the previous 12 months:

12 Month ending September 22	12 Month ending September 23	Diff.	% Diff.
674	571	-103	-15.3%

Table comparing data to previous 'pre-Covid' vs 12 months to end of September 2023:

12 month ending December 19	12 Month ending September 23	Diff.	% Diff.
691	571	-120	-17.4%

Bar chart showing crimes recorded each month:



Mental Health Incidents

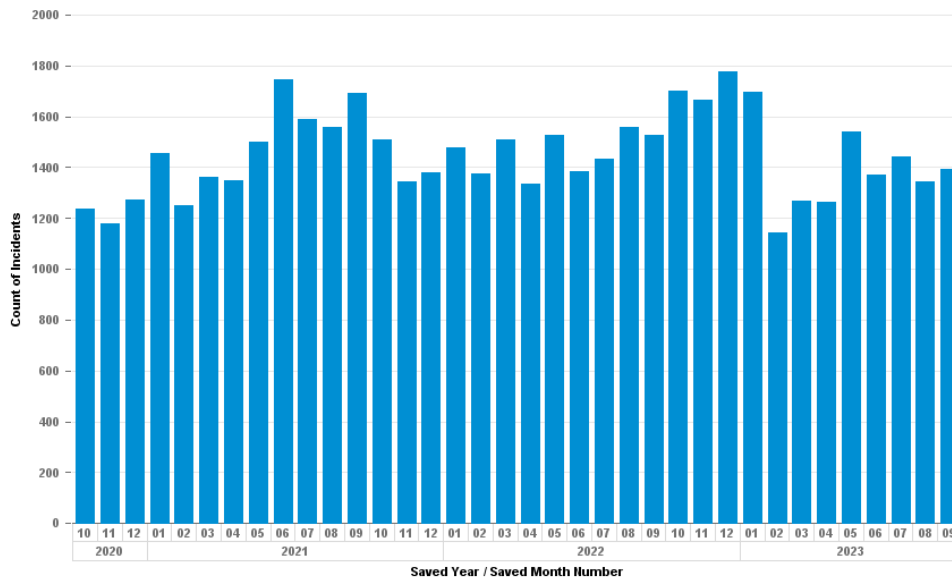
Data for 12 months to end of September 2023, in comparison to the previous 12 months:

12 Month ending September 22	12 Month ending September 23	Diff.	% Diff.
17363	17611	248	+1.4%

Table comparing data to previous 'pre-Covid' vs 12 months to end of September 2023:

12 Month ending December 19	12 Month ending September 23	Diff.	% Diff.
15178	17611	2433	+16.0%

Bar chart showing crimes recorded each month:



The data above shows a clear reduction in the volume of s136's, by 15.3% compared to the year previously and an even greater reduction of 17.4% since COVID. There has been a strong focus at both an internal and partnership level around ensuring officers only detain where absolutely necessary and signpost to other avenues where appropriate. This has been achieved through in-depth tracking and feedback on individual cases on a daily basis. Essex Police has also invested in a dedicated MH team who provide a holistic overview of MH across Essex, with one of their aims being to track and monitor compliance in this area. MH incidents have seen a slight increase over this period and continue to grow since COVID. Contact Management Command have invested in dedicated problem-solving officers to look at those highest service users.

Delivery achieved April – September 2023

- **Prevent** – Essex Police has worked closely with partners to formalise the Mental Health Risk Management Board subgroups aligning them to the set ICS areas. These subgroups act as the tactical forum for agencies including police to refer individuals with identified risk factors such as homicide or serious violence, who do not qualify for the MAPPA or PDP processes. These groups meet to discuss these individual cases around the risks posed and develop a 4P plan to mitigate the risks posed. This has been submitted to the College of Policing for consideration as best practice.
- **Investigate** – Essex Police, through the Mental Health Risk Management Board, have developed a multi-agency risk register. This aligning to the ongoing work of Right Care, Right Person, allows for all agencies to share gaps, risks and mitigations within their services, to ensure a joint up approach is in place to manage these risks. This provides both transparency and problem solving, when identifying these risk factors.

- **Response** – Following Op Beaumont, a training video was devised by DSU Rob Kirby of SCD. This was submitted and rolled out as a mandatory CPD for all officers and staff. This piece focuses on several elements including learning from the incident itself what the role of the Mental Health Team is, how to refer individuals of concern through the MHT1 form and the value/importance of information sharing both internally and with wider partnerships.

Delivery scheduled October 2023 – March 2024

- **Prevent** – Essex Police is working closely with partners at the most senior level, to work through and agree the Right Care, Right Person principles. This looks to put in place arrangements to work towards ending police involvement in the following situations, where the RCRP threshold is not met:
 - Initial response to people experiencing mental health crisis unless there is a real and immediate risk to life.
 - Responding to concerns for welfare of people with mental health needs (i.e., undertaking welfare checks), where the person is already in contact with a mental health service or other service commissioned to provide mental health support.
 - Instances of missing persons from mental health facilities, and walkouts of people with mental health needs from other health facilities (e.g., the Emergency Department).
 - Conveyance in police vehicles. This is being done in partnership through tactical and strategic boards, to ensure the identification of unintended consequences are identified and mitigated where possible.
- **Investigate** – The C&PP Mental Health Team have been working in conjunction with Eastern Region Forces and CPS to develop and roll out Op Cavell which is the national response to assaults within health care settings. This sets out a four-pillar framework under the mnemonic PACT, Putting the victim first, assuming capacity, consider all the options and take positive action. This work will look to improve the response for victims to both violence and hate crime in these settings. Work remains ongoing to ensure this is fit for purpose and rolled out across Essex through both comms and training.
- **Response** – Essex Police Strategic Change team have been commissioned to conduct an internal review in the Mental Health Street Triage provision, assessing its viability and value for money following HMIC recommendations. This review commenced in June 2023 and is looking at the opportunities for development, such as extending the services hours, whether the current process is fit for purpose and the viability of co-locating with partners into a single location under a multi-agency response hub model.

5.4 Vulnerabilities

5.4.1 Places

Thematic Lead: Superintendent Richard Melton

Insights:

The Manchester Arena Inquiry [Vol 2] have provided a clear set of recommendations that police (and wider partners) need to review and address any local gaps. Supt Melton has overseen three multiagency JESIP Senior Leaders forums which are systematically review all 149 recommendations to see what action must be taken to ensure that lessons are learned. This is also fed into single agency strategic leaders and the Essex Resilience Executive Board.

149 strands are relevant to the recommendations in Q2, albeit only 23 relate directly to policing now recorded in Q3.

Delivery achieved April - September 2023

- **Project Minerva** - Continues with good momentum across Essex. This project tackles VAWG within the county by intuitively mapping areas that are at elevated risk of experiencing VAWG. The mapping tool has been created by Nottingham Trent University in conjunction with Essex Police and will feed into Local Community Safety Partnerships for prevention activity. Community Safety Partnership bids evaluated and grants allocated. Launch of six month survey to gather perception data on women's safety across Essex.
- **Debrief of Ex Geopony** - And 3 x live operational multiagency deployments that occurred in Q3 to establish joint organisational learning and how we can better respond to major/critical incidents in the future. All learning was captured by the Joint Organisational Learning SPOC's and raised through the JESIP Senior Leaders Board in July.
- **Martyn's Law** - Is to be introduced across the UK having received approval in statute. Named after Martyn Hett, one of the victims of the 2017 Manchester Arena bombing, Martyn's law was implemented in the spring of 2023. The new law requires all nightlife venues to draw up preventative action plans against terror attacks, assessing the potential risks, dangers and scenarios to improve protection of the public. Plans are in place for ECC and Local Authorities to liaise with the P & P lead for Essex (Supt Melton) to cascade information throughout organisations.
- **Public Access Locations Assessments** - process is still being reviewed by National CT Policing to better assess the location within local forces that would qualify as 'crowded places'. This new PALs assessment will direct forces toward considering mitigation as to crowded place attacks, along with wider responsibilities being shouldered by Local Authorities under Martyn's Law. Once new PALs locations are established, P & P lead will.

Delivery planned October - March 2024:

- **Project Minerva** – Early evaluation of perception data and targeted communications to improve participation in survey. Monitoring of Community Safety Partnership activity and evaluation criteria.

- **Safe Space** – Colchester District launching a safe space initiative at a council run venue from funding linked to Project Minerva, this involves obtaining a suitable venue, training of staff and communications strategy. Launching in December 2023.
- **Women’s Charter** - Continue to develop the Women’s Charter work within LPAs.
- **Problem Solving** – work is well advanced to improve the way we approach problem solving within Essex, supported by the creation of the Problem Solving Hub which is starting to gain traction.

5.4.2 **Dwelling Burglary and Street Robbery**

Thematic Lead: Superintendent Tim Tubbs

Burglary (Dwelling) Offences

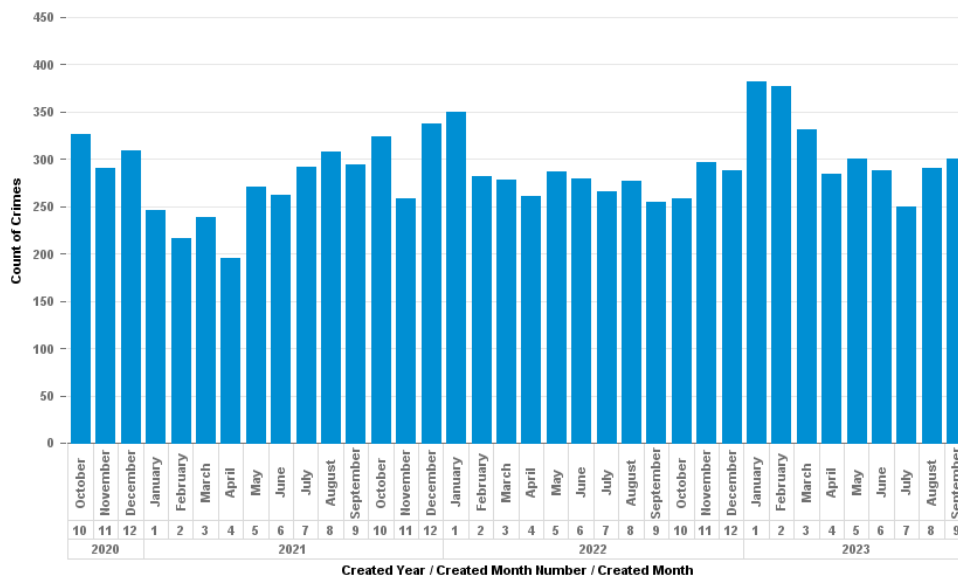
Data for 12 months to end of September 2023, in comparison to the previous 12 months:

12 Month ending September 22	12 Month ending September 23	Diff.	% Diff.
3455	3647	+192	+5.6%

Table comparing data to previous ‘pre-Covid’ vs 12 months to end of March 2023:

12 Month ending December 19	12 Month ending September 23	Diff.	% Diff.
5615	3647	-1968	-35.0%

Bar chart showing crimes recorded each month:



As the above table and graph show, we have seen an overall increase of residential burglary offences year on year. This is still below the number of offences recorded pre-covid. We have seen a recent decrease after yearly highs in quarter four of last year. Month on month, the number fluctuates depending on specific local crime trends and seasonal factors. The above tables show period 12 months to 30/09/23 and the period 12 months to 30/09/22. There has been an increase of 192 offences (5.6%) between these two periods. The number of offences “pre-covid” for the year ending December 2019 were 5615; there have been 1968 (35%) fewer residential burglaries.

Delivery achieved April – September 2023

- A new Burglary Improvement Board (BIB) has been created to provide force wide oversight around all things burglary which covers seven thematic areas. This brings subject matter experts from across the force to discuss processes, performance and working practices to deliver improvement in how we prevent, respond and investigate. All areas of the force are represented and allows consistent messages and emerging good practice to be shared across the force. Through this board a force Burglary Improvement Plan has been created to track progress against improvement of processes, performance and working practices.
- There is a renewed focus on residential burglary attendance as we look to uphold the pledge to attend all residential burglaries. As a force we have improved our overall attendance and now sit above 90%. This continues to climb every month and is being monitored and reviewed at chief officer level.

The overall attendance and crime recording process has been reviewed which has resulted in improvements in better working practices. In previous years, this would sit below 80% so there has been a noticeable improvement.

- We have started to deliver a programme of training to improve knowledge around key identified areas such as intelligence interviews, the national mobile property register (NMPPR) and first response to Burglary and have created guidance for first responders to provide consistency in how we respond and investigate.

Delivery scheduled October 2023 – March 2024

- Trial scheduled for forensic comparisons against known prolific offenders, linking intelligence teams with forensics to increase the likelihood of forensic evidence being linking to known offenders.
- Burglary intensification week (likely to be January/February 2024) to focus on offending hotspots to reduce offences, catch the offenders and bring them to justice.
- Taken into consideration (TIC) policy and procedure is currently being reviewed for implementation which will look to improve knowledge in the process and increase the use of the process.

Street Robbery

Robbery (Personal) Offences

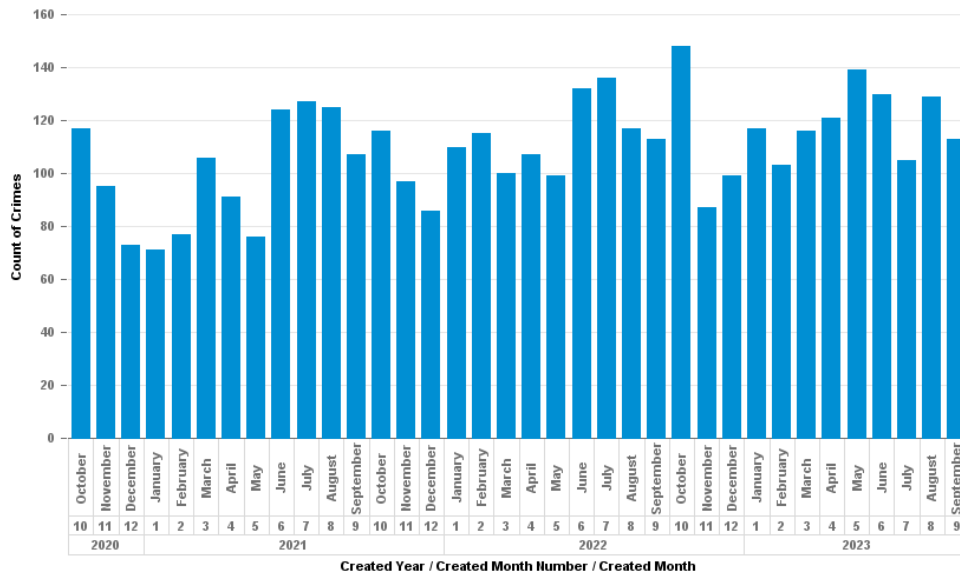
Data for 12 months to end of September 2023, in comparison to the previous 12 months:

12 Month ending September 22	12 Month ending September 23	Diff.	% Diff.
1331	1419	88	+6.2%

Table comparing data to previous 'pre-Covid' vs 12 months to end of September 2023:

12 month ending December 19	12 Month ending September 23	Diff.	% Diff.
1567	1419	-148	-9.4%

Bar chart showing crimes recorded each month:



Although there has been a recent increase in personal robbery offences year on year, it remains lower than pre-covid levels. That said, the trend seems to indicate that we may be returning to pre-covid levels, but they do vary month to month depending on seasonal trends and local issues. The above tables show two periods: one being 12 months to 30/09/23 and the other being 12 months to 30/09/22. There has been an increase of 88 offences (6.2%) than the previous year. The number of offences pre-covid for the year ending December 2019 were 1567 and when compared to this year there are 148 fewer offences (9.4%).

Delivery achieved April - September 2023:

- The Robbery Improvement Board has been created to provide force wide oversight around all things robbery and covers seven thematic areas. This sees subject matter experts from across the force to discuss processes, performance and working practices to deliver improvement across the board. Through this board a Robbery Improvement Plan has been created to track progress.
- Increased knowledge in electronic monitoring project pilot which compares known prolific offenders to offence locations using electronic monitoring tags. This has resulted in a recent robbery investigation identifying an out of force suspect and convicting them of a serious robbery.
- A Crime Pattern Analysis (September 2023) has just been produced for robbery across the force which will provide a good baseline to focus efforts. It has produced recommendations which will be absorbed into the Robbery Improvement Plan.

Delivery scheduled October 2023 – March 2024

- Op Calibre, which is a national week of intensification for personal robbery is scheduled to take place week commencing 13th November. This will pull together several activities to enhance all aspects of robberies. This will seek to utilise resources from across the county including specialist departments as well as volunteers.
- A new NMPR policy is currently in consultation and is hoped to be approved at the next Investigation Improvement Board. This will look to mandate the use of property searching when offenders come into custody which will in turn provide increased evidential and intelligence opportunities through the service.
- Work will commence soon to review whether the agreed allocation process for robbery investigations is working as intended. This will look at the quality of investigations to ascertain who the best team to investigate this high harm crime.

5.4.3 Prevent

Thematic Lead: Superintendent Naomi Edwards

Insights:

Essex police has 211 Prevent Champions who are embedded within the LPAs. The knowledge hub provides an updated list of those Champions in Essex for easy access locally. Education establishments continue to provide the highest level of referrals, 56% (31 referrals).

April to July saw 55 referrals made. Essex continues to provide the highest amount of referrals across the Eastern region. Harlow, Chelmsford, Southend and Colchester

see the highest referrals. This quarter showed three referrals which came directly from family, this shows that the current work being promoted by police and agencies is having a positive impact and signposted and ensuring all parts of the community know how to make a prevent referral. There were nine policing CPT referrals, which is 16% of all referrals made.

Work is underway with ERSOU regarding the quality of the referrals and to highlight those referrals which relate to safeguarding and not prevent. Education provided the highest number of referrals, this is therefore reflective in the age range of referrals as school age males, 11-17 years old.

CPD days have been delivered locally within the LPAs which provided the opportunity for officers to understand the referrals process and how this is assessed. It was identified that good practice should see ERSOU providing feedback to officers so they can benchmark what a good referral entails.

Delivery achieved April – September 2023:

- 211 prevent Champions and refresher training provided.
- Improving the quality of referrals for prevent and identifying what is safeguarding.

Delivery scheduled October – March 2024:

- Joining up hate crime more with prevent around radicalisation and asking investigators to check for signs.
- CPT will be given hate crime training to incorporate referrals from prevent and will review radicalisation referrals.

5.4.4 Hate Crime

Thematic Lead: Superintendent Naomi Edwards

Insights:

Hate Crime Offences

Data for 12 months to end of September 2023, in comparison to the previous 12 months:

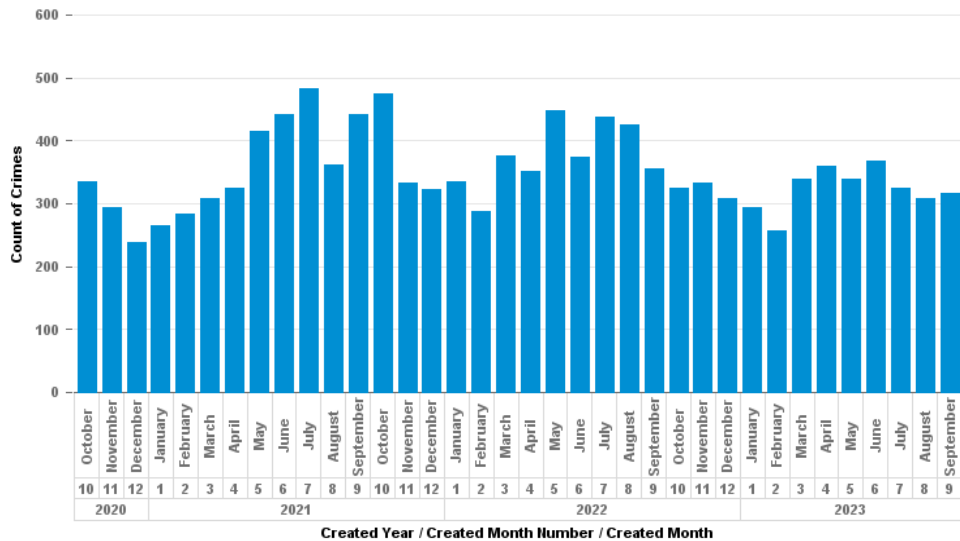
12 Month ending September 22	12 Month ending September 23	Diff.	% Diff.
4523	3870	-653	-14.4%

Table comparing data to previous 'pre-Covid' vs 12 months to end of September 2023:

12 month ending December 19	12 Month ending September 23	Diff.	% Diff.

2982	3870	888	+29.8%
------	------	-----	--------

Bar chart showing crimes recorded each month:



Hate crime reports are steadily increasing. At times we see a slight decrease, but overall hate crime reports are increasing. This is an area of crime where we promote increase of reporting crime as this is where we see an accurate reflection of hate crime taking place in our communities. Over this quarter we have identified our more vulnerable communities and those impacted by hate crime. There is a recognition that antisemitic hate crime is under-reported. Our CPT Inspectors are working with religious leaders and community leads to build the rapport with the local community to report hate crime.

Concerns are that the community will accept such incidents of egg throwing and name calling because they do not wish to continue reporting the same crimes. Therefore we have begun to look at the perpetrators and their behaviours. A deep dive into antisemitic hate crime showed that our perpetrators were mostly young people of secondary school age.

Anti-Semitism is also part of the Prevent strategy for Education. This therefore provides an opportunity to identify those schools with victims and perpetrators of antisemitic hate crime (the schools will not be made aware if the students are victim or perpetrator) to work with schools regarding awareness of hate crime. We have the support of achieving this outcome with a joint delivery through Essex Education Safeguarding and Well-being Team.

We have identified educational supported resources from CST (Community Security Trust) for the Jewish Community who are willing to support this. Q3 will begin with

those presentations being delivered. All hate crime presentations will be assessed by a child psychologist regarding age suitability.

Delivery achieved October- March 2023

- Deep dive into antisemitic hate crime - Q3 will now deliver on the actions and outcomes
- An increase in reporting antisemitic hate crime. This is a positive indication of confidence within the community
- Increase of Solved rates to 12.43%

Delivery scheduled April - September 2023

- Reduction in hate crime where young people are the perpetrators
- Delivery of hate crime awareness to schools
- Training delivered to all CPT staff re the investigation and service delivery standards to victims of hate crime.

5.5 Delivery/Challenges by Exception

The current conflict in the Middle East following the abhorrent terrorist attacks on Israel by a recognised terrorist organisation, Hamas, has understandably led to an increase in tensions within the UK. As a result of those terrorist attacks and subsequent response by Israel to those terrorist attacks, there have been numerous protests and rallies within the UK showing support for the two countries caught up in the conflict. Essex however has seen smaller relatively peaceful protests with very few counter protests. It is unsurprising to see that reported antisemitic hate crime has increased but we continue to work very closely with all communities and Safer Essex to support.

5.5.1 Covid Recovery

Covid-19 has undoubtedly led to significant challenges within many areas of policing. Q2 2021/22 took us through the government roadmap to a stage where all restrictions were lifted whilst Q3 saw the start of us facing post-lockdown challenges to policing. These challenges and our responses to those challenges continued into Q3 and Q4 of 2022/23. There is no doubt that Covid-19 impacted and accelerated the changes we were seeing to crime types, e.g. increase in cybercrime and online offences and a decrease in dwelling burglary due to more people being at home (initially during lockdowns, and subsequently due to changes in working patterns, with more people now regularly working from home).

Within this report pre-covid data continues to be included for comparison, along with comparison to the previous twelve months. However, moving forward it is not felt that the pre-covid comparison needs to continue long-term, and therefore it is not intended for this data to be included in future reports as it is felt a straight comparison for year-on-year changes will suffice as we move forward, away from the lockdown segments of previous years.

6.0 Implications (Issues)

There are no strands at risk across nine thematic strands.

6.1 Links to Police and Crime Plan Priorities

The thematic strands deliver against the priorities identified within the Police and Crime Plan, namely:

- Further investment in crime prevention
- Reducing drug driven violence
- Protecting vulnerable people and breaking the cycle of domestic abuse
- Reducing violence against women and girls
- Preventing business crime, fraud and cybercrime
- Increasing collaboration

6.2 Demand

Not applicable

6.3 Risks/Mitigation

Overall, if areas of the strategy are not delivered then there is potential risk of crime figures increasing in relevant areas, and ultimately potential risk to members of the public. This, in turn has a potential reputational risk to the organisation. Each thematic strand has a force lead responsible for their individual areas, enabling appropriate oversight, review, and focus to ensure appropriate action takes place within each thematic area to identify and mitigate these risks, working to improve our response and ultimately prevent crime.

6.4 Equality and/or Human Rights Implications

There are no protected characteristics adversely affected by the strategy. Whilst there are no specific equality and/or human rights implications identified, any actions which take place in relation to the strategy will take account of such matters, ensuring compliance with relevant legislation and the force Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Strategy.

6.5 Health and Safety Implications

No Health and Safety Risks identified.

7.0 Consultation/Engagement

Thematic leads have all contributed to this report.

Knife Crime:	Detective Superintendent Gary Biddle
Rape:	Detective Superintendent Neil Pudney
Night-Time Economy:	Chief Inspector Paul Hogben
County Lines and Exploitation:	Detective Superintendent Gary Biddle
Serious and Organised Crime:	Detective Chief Inspector Justin Beacher

Cyber Crime and Fraud:	Detective Chief Inspector Ashley Howard
Child Abuse and CSE:	Detective Chief Inspector Dan Morrissey
Domestic Abuse:	Detective Superintendent Matt Cornish
Drugs and Alcohol:	Chief Superintendent Simon Anslow
Mental Health:	Detective Superintendent Natalia Ross
Places:	Superintendent Richard Melton
Dwelling Burglary and Street Robbery:	Superintendent Tim Tubbs
Prevent:	Superintendent Naomi Edwards
Hate Crime:	Superintendent Naomi Edwards

8.0 Actions for Improvement

There are no outstanding HMICFRS improvement plans or Areas for Improvement (AFIs) relating to the Crime Prevention Strategy.

9.0 Future Work/Development and Expected Outcome

The new Crime Prevention Strategy is based upon a whole system approach, with a strong focus on partnership working, using intelligence and evidence to predict the future challenges we face over the next five years, and prepares us for the anticipated increase in volume and complexity of crime within a significant political, economic and community recovery period post-Covid. Work is ongoing via Safer Essex to enhance our partnership working/reporting.