

PEEL

Police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy 2018/19

An inspection of Sussex Police



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What this report contains

This report is structured in four parts:

1. Our overall assessment of the force's 2018/19 performance.
2. Our judgments and summaries of how effectively, efficiently and legitimately the force keeps people safe and reduces crime.
3. Our judgments and any areas for improvement and causes of concern for each component of our inspection.
4. Our detailed findings for each component.

Our inspection approach

In 2018/19, we adopted an [integrated PEEL assessment](#) (IPA) approach to our existing PEEL (police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy) inspections. IPA combines into a single inspection the effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy areas of PEEL. These areas had previously been inspected separately each year.

As well as our inspection findings, our assessment is informed by our analysis of:

- force data and management statements;
- risks to the public;
- progress since previous inspections;
- findings from our non-PEEL inspections;
- how forces tackle serious and organised crime locally and regionally; and
- our regular monitoring work.

We inspected all forces in four areas:

- protecting vulnerable people;
- firearms capability;
- planning for the future; and
- ethical and lawful workforce behaviour.

We consider the risk to the public in these areas important enough to inspect all forces every year.

We extended the risk-based approach that we used in our 2017 effectiveness inspection to the efficiency and legitimacy parts of our IPA inspections. This means that in 2018/19 we didn't inspect all forces against all areas. The table below shows the areas we inspected Sussex Police against.

IPA area	Inspected in 2018/19?
Preventing crime and anti-social behaviour	Yes
Investigating crime	No
Protecting vulnerable people	Yes
Tackling serious and organised crime	No
Firearms capability	Yes
Meeting current demands	Yes
Planning for the future	Yes
Treating the public fairly	No
Ethical and lawful workforce behaviour	Yes
Treating the workforce fairly	Yes

Our 2017 judgments are still in place for the areas we didn't inspect in 2018/19.

Force in context

		Sussex rate	England and Wales rate
999 calls per 1,000 population		146	175
12 months ending 31 March 2019			
		Sussex rate	Most Similar Forces rate
Recorded crime per 1,000 population		69	76
12 months ending 31 March 2019			
	Sussex workforce		
	FTE in post on 31 March 2019	FTE in post on 31 March 2014	Percentage change
Police Officer	2629	2805	-6%
Police Community Support Officer	216	349	-38%
Police Staff	1938	1941	-0%
		Sussex spend	England and Wales spend
Spend per head of population		£169	£203
2019/20 projection			

Overall summary

	Effectiveness	 Good	Last inspected
Preventing crime and tackling anti-social behaviour	 Good	2018/19	
Investigating crime	 Good	2017/18	
Protecting vulnerable people	 Requires improvement	2018/19	
Tackling serious and organised crime	 Good	2017/18	
Armed response capability	Ungraded	2018/19	
	Efficiency	 Requires improvement	Last inspected
Meeting current demands and using resources	 Requires improvement	2018/19	
Planning for the future	 Good	2018/19	

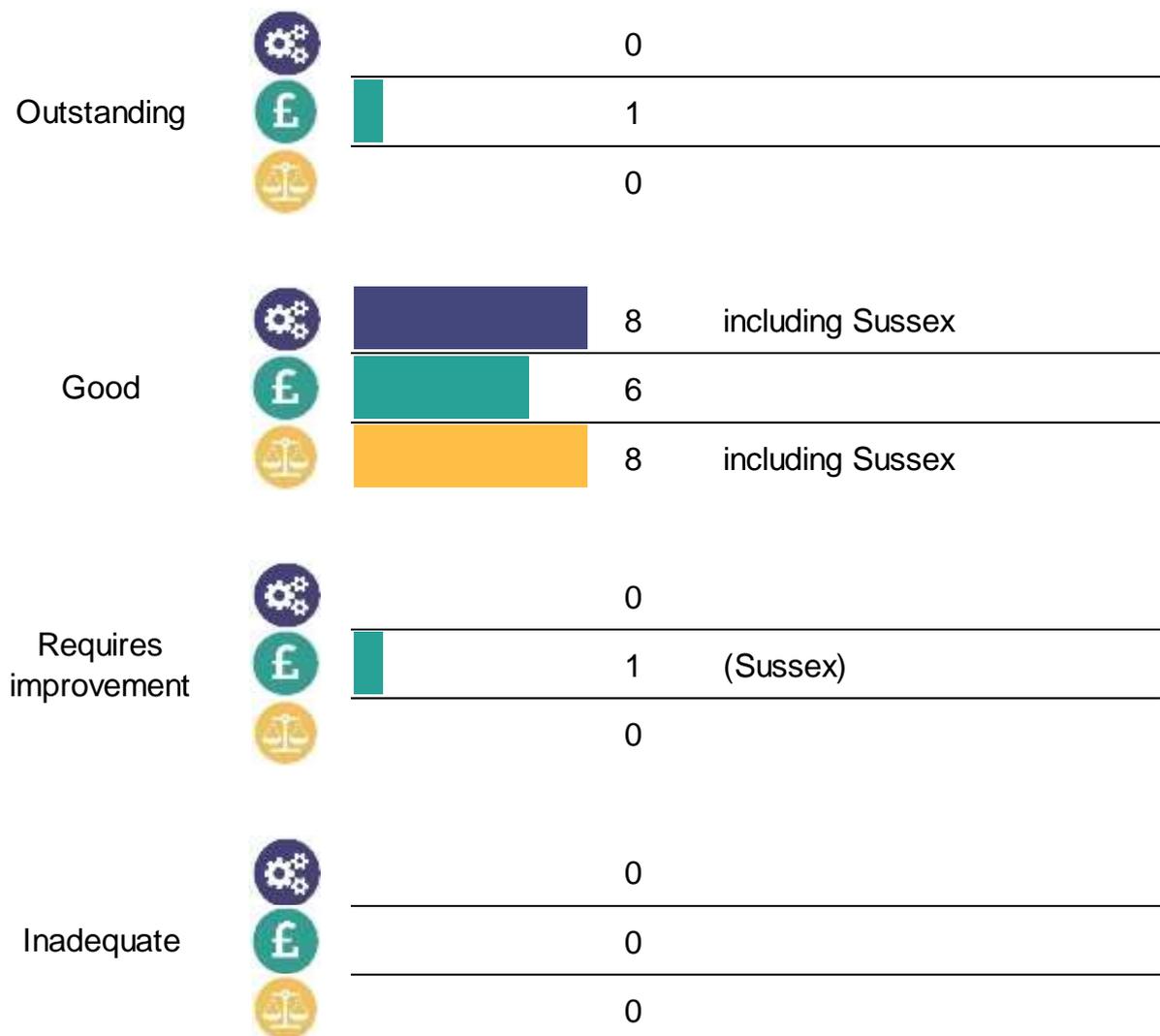
	Legitimacy	 Good	Last inspected
Fair treatment of the public	 Good	2017/18	
Ethical and lawful workforce behaviour	 Good	2018/19	
Fair treatment of the workforce	 Good	2018/19	

How does the force compare with similar forces?

We compare Sussex Police's performance with the forces in its most similar group (MSG). MSGs are groups of similar police forces, based on analysis of demographic, social and economic factors. [For more information about MSGs, see our website.](#)

Sussex Police's MSG forces are Hampshire Constabulary, Hertfordshire Constabulary, Thames Valley Police, Leicestershire Police, Essex Police, Avon and Somerset Constabulary and Staffordshire Police.

Figure 1: Pillar judgments for Sussex Police, compared with forces in its MSG



HM Inspector's observations

I am satisfied with most aspects of the performance of Sussex Police. But the force needs to make improvements in how it deals with [vulnerable people](#). It also needs to improve its efficiency if it is to provide a consistently cost effective service to the public.

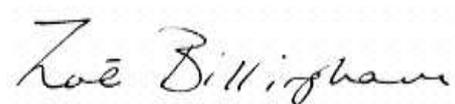
The force has a good track record of taking positive action following our inspections. I commend the force for the way it has improved how it prevents crime and [anti-social behaviour](#). There has been an investment in neighbourhood policing. And there is a clear plan as to how these resources will be used to support local communities and prevent crime from happening. The force also investigates crime well.

Despite these positives, I am disappointed that the force has not responded to our previous concerns and recommendations as to how it [safeguards](#) vulnerable people. It does not consistently assess the risks or respond to them in a timely manner, which means that people at risk may not always be adequately protected.

The force is struggling to meet demand for its services. It should gain a better understanding of how it uses and prioritises resources to meet current demand. This knowledge, along with a more detailed assessment of its workforce capabilities, should help it to develop strong and sustainable plans for its future.

The force continues to uphold an ethical culture and promote standards of professional behaviour well. It treats its workforce fairly and has improved how it supports staff wellbeing since our last inspection.

Given the force's previous track record and ability to respond positively to our inspection findings, I am confident that it will take the necessary steps to ensure that these issues are resolved quickly.



Zoë Billingham

HM Inspector of Constabulary

Effectiveness



Force in context

	Sussex proportion	England and Wales proportion
Proportion of officers in a neighbourhood or response function in post on 31 March 2019	38%	40%

Victim-based crime per 1,000 population

12 months ending 31 March 2019

	Sussex rate	Most Similar Forces rate
Violence against the person	23	25
Sexual offences	3	2
Theft Offences / Robbery	24	30
Criminal damage and arson	8	9

Crime Outcomes

12 months ending 31 March 2019

	Sussex proportion	England and Wales proportion
Proportion of crimes where action was taken	11%	12%
Proportion of crimes where suspect was identified	48%	46%
Proportion of crimes where victim did not support police action	22%	24%

Outcomes for crimes flagged as domestic abuse

12 months ending 31 March 2018

	Sussex proportion	England and Wales proportion
Charge/summonsed	13%	16%
Evidential difficulties: suspect identified; victim does not support	51%	49%

How effectively does the force reduce crime and keep people safe?



Good

Summary

Sussex Police's approach to neighbourhood policing has improved but it could do more to understand the threats facing its communities. The force identifies opportunities to work with local communities to understand them better. But they are limited to certain groups at present. When community problems are identified, prevention officers and [staff](#) work effectively with partner organisations to find solutions.

The force continues to improve its ability to identify [vulnerable people](#). Once officers and staff arrive at an incident, they assess victims' vulnerability well. The force is good at managing offenders who are a risk to vulnerable people. These include registered sex offenders and people sharing indecent images of children online.

The force is getting better at uncovering hidden harm. For example, it identified a record number of honour-based incidents this year. Also, we were pleased to see it has improved its arrest rate for perpetrators of domestic abuse considerably since 2017.

However, the force needs to improve its management of risk. Increased demand is affecting the force's ability to attend incidents and investigate crimes promptly. A lot of callers to its non-urgent police 101 number hang up. Risks to victims during these delays aren't always managed as effectively as they could be.

Preventing crime and tackling anti-social behaviour



Good

The force has a clear strategy for neighbourhood policing. It is about to invest in 100 extra police community support officers (PCSOs) after the recent confirmation of a rise in council tax funding.

Prevention teams are no longer responsible for specific 'beats'. They each cover one of six larger districts in the three divisions: West Sussex, East Sussex, and Brighton and Hove. Staff are given responsibility for specific community groups such as faith groups or elderly people to focus on in their districts. But they haven't received any extra training for this.

Prevention enforcement teams give extra support. The force accepts that they will be taken away on other commitments about half the time, unlike other prevention staff who are 'protected' by force policy.

[Anti-social behaviour](#) (ASB) incidents continue to fall: 23.44 per 1,000 population compared to 27.79 per 1,000 population nationally. However, the force could do more to use ASB powers more effectively.

The force's approach is reactive: demand is led through calls for service. However, once the force has identified patterns and issues, prevention staff work effectively with partners to find a solution.

Areas for improvement

- The force should work with local people and partner organisations to improve its understanding of local communities.
- The force should ensure that it spends more time on proactive prevention activity to prevent crime and disorder.
- The force needs to ensure that it applies a more consistent approach to its prevention model across all three divisions.
- The force should evaluate and share effective practice routinely, both internally and with partners, to improve its approach to the prevention of crime and anti-social behaviour.

We set out our detailed findings below. These are the basis for our judgment of the force's performance in this area.

Prioritising crime prevention

Sussex Police's approach to neighbourhood policing has improved – but there is more to do. As one of a range of decisions to meet its financial targets, the force decided to reduce local policing staff in 2015. For five years, we have been concerned that this has limited the force's ability to prevent crime and ASB.

The force launched its revised prevention model in November 2017. Through this model, it aimed to focus more clearly on prevention in local policing.

We were pleased to see that the force now has a clear strategy for neighbourhood policing. This strategy covers the principles set out in the [College of Policing's](#) neighbourhood policing guidelines.

The force is also about to invest in 100 extra PCSOs after the recent confirmation of a rise in council tax funding.

Prevention teams are no longer responsible for specific 'beats'. They cover one of six larger districts within the three divisions: West Sussex, East Sussex, and Brighton and Hove.

Police officers and PCSOs carry out community engagement and problem-solving activities in each area based on vulnerability and threat, harm and risk.

The force's approach is reactive: demand is led through calls for service. However, once the force has identified patterns and issues, prevention staff work effectively with partners to find a solution.

Most police officers and PCSOs on prevention teams have had problem-solving training and are aware of the [scanning, analysis, response, assessment](#) (SARA) model that the force has mandated to be used. However, the model is inconsistently applied across the force.

Staff are given responsibility for specific community groups such as faith groups or elderly people to focus on in their districts. But they haven't received any extra training for this.

The teams cover large areas. This, and the fact that the force has withdrawn PCSOs from rural areas, means that local knowledge and community intelligence are more limited, while community engagement has reduced. However, this is balanced by the force's ability to focus efforts on specific problem areas.

Prevention enforcement teams give extra support. The force accepts that they will be taken away on other commitments about half the time, unlike other prevention staff who are 'protected' by force policy.

Staff reported slight variations in the model across the three divisions. In some places, staff are drifting back to their old beats when they have the opportunity.

Frontline prevention staff also report being regularly taken away from their core duties to support response colleagues. They report that officers don't see this as a problem. The force doesn't have any data for this. So it is difficult to say how much time officers spend away from their main role.

Protecting the public from crime

Sussex Police could do more to understand the threats facing its communities. The force has produced community profile documents for all areas of the force. These use both police and partnership data to show information on specific groups living in each district – including emerging communities.

The force identifies opportunities to work with local communities to understand them better. But they are limited to the previously mentioned groups of people, like the faith community.

The force made the decision to attend community meetings only when there is a policing purpose and it would add value. This makes it more difficult for local officers to gain in-depth understanding of their local communities and any threats to them.

The force gives good analytical support to its prevention teams. Each of the three districts has an analyst dedicated to prevention. Their role is to review all crimes reported every fortnight, identifying any patterns or similarities that can be used to generate maps and tasks for prevention teams.

The analysts also work with partners. For example, they have worked with partners in children's services to evaluate the police's response to teenagers' ASB. The analysts also worked with the fire service to map a series of bin fires in a deprived area of Sussex, identifying two potential suspects.

The force is good at problem solving. Prevention teams use problem-solving templates to record activity against problems. The force supervises them effectively and they reflect good partnership working with partners like the local authority responsible for housing.

The force also takes part in various partnership meetings such as community safety partnerships and joint action groups. There is an effective partnership tactical tasking process working well in all divisions.

The force has recently been successful in a bid for funding for the 'reboot' initiative. This is aimed at early intervention to prevent young people from committing crime and ASB. It is too early to say how effective this will be.

ASB incidents continue to fall: 23.44 per 1,000 population compared to 27.79 per 1,000 population nationally. However, the force could do more to use ASB powers more effectively.

Data on the use of ASB powers shows that most interventions are dispersal orders (106) – which give police the power to disperse individuals or groups causing, or likely to cause, ASB in public places.

The force has only recorded 18 [criminal behaviour orders](#) and 12 community protection notices in the past 12 months. This is despite prevention staff's good understanding of the powers available to them and their partners. Officers recognised this as an issue.

The force recognises that it needs to improve how it evaluates its activity and identifies best practice and it has reviewed the role of its knowledge exchange team to work more closely with academic partners and the College of Policing to achieve this.

In the meantime, the force has published learning from two case studies on its intranet. Plus, every month there is a prevention working group, where the three analysts meet, along with their managers, district commanders and other invited people.

In this meeting, they discuss the tactics used by the force, how effective they are and how they can improve their work to help frontline prevention staff. Currently, there is limited evidence of how this learning is shared with prevention teams or used to improve services to the public.

Investigating crime



Good

This question was not subject to inspection in 2018/19, and our judgment from the 2017 effectiveness inspection has been carried over.

Protecting vulnerable people



Requires improvement

Officers and staff understand how to identify vulnerable people. The force also actively uncovers hidden harm. For example, it identified 149 honour-based incidents in the year ending 2018, the highest nationally.

However, Sussex Police needs to take significant action to improve its management of risk to vulnerable victims of crime.

In August 2016, Shana Grice was stalked and then murdered by Michael Lane in Brighton and Hove. Sussex Police apologised for how it handled the case, and was investigated by the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC). The force accepted recommendations made by the IPCC in 2017 and 2018. These included improvements to how staff and officers are trained in the use of risk assessments and how best to [safeguard](#) victims.

In April 2019, we published our findings from [our inspection of how Sussex Police managed stalking and harassment](#). We found it had made some improvements, but still had much more work to do.

Our [2016 effectiveness inspection](#) raised concerns about the force carrying out some risk assessments of domestic abuse victims by phone. In our [2017 inspection](#), we found that the force had changed the process to ensure that risk assessments were carried out face to face.

But, in this inspection, we found that the processes to manage risk were once again ineffective. Domestic abuse victims were often left for days without seeing a police officer. Risk to those victims was not being managed effectively. We also found that some investigations involving vulnerable people took too long. The force also wasn't reassessing any continued risk to some of those victims.

Cause of concern

Sussex Police is failing to manage risk effectively. In the force control room, some vulnerable victims are left without police attendance for considerable periods of time. Some victims may not be getting through to the police at all because on average 43 percent of calls to 101 are abandoned. Some investigations involving vulnerable people are taking a long time, without any reassessment of risk to the victim. This means that the force is missing opportunities to safeguard victims and secure evidence.

Recommendations

To address this cause of concern, we recommend that within six months the force should:

- improve its management of risk;
- ensure that staff and officers fully understand risk, and risk assessments such as THRIVE and DASH, through effective training;
- review its processes in the control room to ensure risk is mitigated where possible and vulnerable victims see police quickly enough;
- improve the quality of investigations involving vulnerable people, ensuring that the workloads of specialist investigators are always manageable and that such investigations are subject to regular and active supervision;
- ensure all staff and officers dealing with vulnerable victims put measures in place to effectively manage initial and continued risk to victims, and record their actions; and
- change its 101 call handling processes to reduce the number of callers who hang up.

We set out our detailed findings below. These are the basis for our judgment of the force's performance in this area.

Understanding and identifying vulnerability

Sussex Police has a clear vulnerability strategy and uses the College of Policing's definition of vulnerability. A person is vulnerable if, as a result of their situation or circumstances, they are unable to take care of, or protect themselves or others, from harm or exploitation.

The force continues to improve its ability to identify people who are vulnerable through their age, disability, or because they have been victims of repeated offences, or are at high risk of abuse.

Officers and staff understand vulnerability. Partners confirmed that the force's vulnerability identification was effective. Officers and staff have received online training and 60-second video briefings about vulnerability. They have also had training on domestic abuse and 'hidden harm' such as child sexual exploitation.

The number of honour-based incidents identified by the force proves the active steps it takes to uncover hidden harm. In the year ending July 2018, it identified 149 – the highest nationally.

Sussex Police identifies vulnerable and repeat victims the first time they make contact, although they may not get the support they need (see below). Staff in the contact centre use [THRIVE](#) consistently and effectively to assess risk at the first stage.

However, the force has a high abandonment rate on the non-urgent police 101 number. Calls are answered quickly by the switchboard and are assessed as non-urgent if callers don't need a 999 response. Of those non-urgent calls put through to call takers, on average 40 percent are going unanswered. The force can't identify potentially vulnerable people when these calls are dropped.

Responding to incidents

Sussex Police doesn't always respond to vulnerable victims quickly enough to keep them safe.

The force previously had target response times, promising the public it would arrive within 15 minutes for a Grade 1 (emergency) response, and 60 minutes for a Grade 2 (prompt) response. These targets have now been removed and replaced with 'tolerance' levels. But it is unclear what these levels are.

There is more demand for police at incidents that need a Grade 2 (prompt) response than the force has staff for.

For example, the average time it takes for the force to get to a Grade 2 call has doubled, rising to 2 hours 45 minutes on average for the year ending February 2019.

Sussex Police's senior leaders suggest that managing risk effectively is better than meeting attendance times. But excessive delays mean the force can't always address all the risks.

Sergeants are ready to review incidents waiting for a response. However, their view of risk is mixed and there is limited evidence of THRIVE being reassessed when needed. If sergeants do identify an incident that needs a quicker response, they are unable to ensure that response teams take appropriate action.

The force understands the importance of assessing vulnerability and uses tools such as [DASH](#). But it doesn't have a good understanding of managing the risks around it.

The control room uses an unstructured, non-diarised appointment system for delayed response to incidents, including domestic abuse. If the first THRIVE assessment results in a Grade 3 response (which doesn't need immediate attention), the force asks the victim when they would be available for an officer to attend. This creates an 'appointment' for the force to see the victim.

There are daily examples of these 'appointments' being missed by the force as it struggles to respond to more urgent calls. As a result, there are often significant delays before any officer sees the victim, despite an initial assessment that they may be vulnerable.

Inspectors should be told if the 'window' has been missed three times. But this was not always the case. Once reviewed, inspectors sometimes make a decision to give the incident to an officer to investigate, even though the victim hasn't been seen.

Sometimes the officer was on nights or rest days, delaying the police response even more. Worryingly, we found examples of incidents involving vulnerable victims (including victims of domestic abuse) that had not been attended by the police for ten days or more.

One example was a victim who suffered from mental health problems and was suicidal. She reported mental, physical and financial abuse by her partner. The force first classified the incident as Grade 2, for a prompt response. However, it missed many appointments with the woman over nine days. At one point, the control room had written on the incident log that there were more than 50 calls in the queue with 40 unresourced, just for the Chichester area of Sussex. The victim was finally seen by an officer nine days after her first report, and a criminal investigation was started.

In our 2017 effectiveness inspection, we commended the force on introducing a 'vulnerability queue' monitored by a member of staff in the contact centre 24 hours a day. The force's domestic abuse incidents, risk assessed as not needing immediate attention (Grade 3 incidents), were reviewed and reassessed over and over until officers could make face-to-face contact with the victims.

Because of the delays we have mentioned, this has turned into a system where staff make repeated attempts to call a victim to rearrange missed appointments. Sometimes the victim can be difficult to contact. Victims are often reluctant to answer an unknown number in case it is the suspect. Staff leave messages for victims to make contact quoting a code name, so they avoid the call queue. But this rarely happens and so staff can't make a THRIVE reassessment.

There was evidence of victims disengaging with the force after staff repeatedly failed to attend appointments. This could have an impact on the public's confidence to report crimes in the future, and leave victims at risk of further harm.

Once officers and staff arrive at an incident, they are good at assessing victims' vulnerability. They promptly complete and submit single combined assessment of risk forms (SCARFs) and a safeguarding template for all vulnerable victims on the force crime recording system, Niche.

However, increased demand is also having an impact on the force's ability to investigate crimes promptly. Investigation teams are struggling to meet demand. Officers and staff report high workloads and significant delays.

The force's investigations continue to be of a reasonable standard. But the force doesn't continually reassess risk. And delays of several months in some cases mean that hidden risk and vulnerability may be missed as other crimes take priority. The force has worked hard to relieve the pressure caused by increased demand on its safeguarding and investigation teams (SIUs), which deal with the most vulnerable victims. But this puts increased pressure on teams that investigate the remaining higher-risk crimes such as serious violence and sexual assaults. The force plans to increase the headcount of these teams. But these are long-term plans – there is limited evidence of any attempts to address the more immediate issues.

We were pleased to see that Sussex Police has improved its arrest rate for victims of domestic abuse considerably since 2017. The average arrest rate for the year ending September 2018 was 47 percent, against 38.8 percent in 2017. This was considerably higher than the England and Wales rate of 32 percent.

The force recognises that a domestic abuse incident with a Grade 1 response achieves a much higher arrest rate of 60–70 percent. It has given guidance to officers encouraging them to take positive action whenever appropriate.

We noted some good practice around domestic abuse incidents. Officers can now listen to the victim's original call while they are going to the incident. This gives them a better understanding of the call's context. The force hopes it will help increase arrest rates in the future.

The force has an effective [mental health triage](#) partnership arrangement with Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, providing a joint response to people in mental health crisis. A mental health nurse works alongside a police officer in a 'triage car' in six locations across Sussex. The triage car is highly regarded by both the force and partner agencies.

Following the evaluation of a successful pilot, funding has been approved for an extra mental health nurse in the control room to help with the increasing number of mental health-related incidents.

Supporting vulnerable victims

The force is improving its support to vulnerable victims. Its use of legal powers to protect victims of domestic abuse has steadily increased. These legal powers include [domestic violence protection notices \(DVPNs\)](#) and [domestic violence protection orders \(DVPOs\)](#). The force applied for DVPOs 216 times over the year to July 2018. To ensure consistency, the entire court side of the process has been handed to the force's legal team.

The force could improve the way it uses Clare's Law (the [Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme](#)). Force applications for 'right to know' are below average for England and Wales at 0.05 applications per 1,000 population (the average is 0.13). There is a similar picture for 'right to ask' applications.

Sussex Police uses pre-charge [bail](#) appropriately to keep victims of domestic abuse safe. The force needs to understand how it can use these options to the greatest effect.

Sussex Police contributes effectively to the three [multi-agency safeguarding hubs](#) (MASHs) across the county. All the force's SCARF forms are submitted to the MASH and all those relating to adults are sent to the council-led adult social care team.

There is no representation from adult social care in the MASH and so no joint triage or strategy meeting process for adults. However, the force also participates in [multi-agency risk assessment conferences](#) (MARACs) where staff discuss adult safeguarding with partners.

The force's referral rate for MARACs is 30 cases per 10,000 women. This is below [SafeLives](#)' recommended number of 40 cases. Most of these referrals are from the police. All high-risk cases are referred. Prevention teams receive referrals from MARACs to support ongoing safeguarding of the most vulnerable victims. The force carries out surveys of domestic abuse victims, which it uses to improve its understanding and the service it gives whenever possible.

The force is good at managing offenders who are a risk to vulnerable people. This includes registered sex offenders and people sharing indecent images of children online. The police online investigation team referral unit uses the Kent internet risk assessment tool. The current backlog for assessment meets national guidelines.

Officers' workloads are typically around 16 investigations per person. The force describes this as manageable. The unit is sufficiently resourced and has capacity to react dynamically and quickly to high-risk incidents and offenders.

For example, a referral was made reporting a man on his phone allegedly in bed sexually abusing his daughter. The team got a warrant and were at the address and apprehending the man within 45 minutes. The force also makes effective use of ancillary orders to protect the public. These include sexual risk orders and [sexual harm protection orders](#) (132 over the year to July 2018).

The force could do more to ensure that prevention teams are made aware of registered sex offenders in their area. Staff reported that they were advised on the highest-risk offenders in their district through their daily team briefing. However, this information is only given if there have been any changes in those offenders' circumstances – like moving house or new intelligence reports. The prevention teams generally did not know where registered sex offenders lived in their communities.

Tackling serious and organised crime



Good

This question was not subject to inspection in 2018/19, and our judgment from the 2017 effectiveness inspection has been carried over.

Armed policing

We have previously inspected how well forces provide armed policing. This formed part of our 2016 and 2017 effectiveness inspections. Subsequent terrorist attacks in the UK and Europe have meant that the police service maintains a focus on armed capability in England and Wales.

It is not just terrorist attacks that place operational demands on armed officers. The threat can include the activity of organised crime groups or armed street gangs and all other crime involving guns. The [Code of Practice on the Police Use of Firearms and Less Lethal Weapons](#) makes forces responsible for implementing national standards of armed policing. The code stipulates that a [chief officer](#) be designated to oversee these standards. This requires the chief officer to set out the firearms threat in an [armed policing strategic threat and risk assessment](#) (APSTRA). They must also set out clear rationales for the number of armed officers (armed capacity) and the level to which they are trained (armed capability).

Understanding the threat and responding to it

Sussex Police operates joint arrangements with Surrey Police to provide armed policing. This means that the standards of training, armed deployments and command of armed operations are assured in both forces.

The force has a good understanding of the potential harm facing the public. Its APSTRA conforms to the requirements of the code and the [College of Policing guidance](#). The APSTRA is published annually. It prioritises the threats to communities in Sussex and Surrey and ensures professional standards of armed policing. The [designated chief officer](#) reviews the register frequently to maintain the right levels of armed capability and capacity.

All armed officers in England and Wales are trained to national standards. There are different standards for each role that armed officers perform. Most armed incidents in Sussex are attended by officers trained to an [armed response vehicle](#) (ARV) standard. However, incidents sometimes occur that require the skills and specialist capabilities of more highly trained officers.

The availability of specialist officers in Sussex and Surrey is guaranteed by excellent working relationships with the regional counter-terrorist unit (CTU). Tried and tested arrangements mean that specialist officers can immediately be called upon should their skills be needed. We also recognise how effectively both forces have worked with the CTU to determine where best to situate operational bases in the south-east of England. This means that armed officers from a number of forces have access to them and choose to develop their careers with the CTU. This includes a number of Sussex officers. As well as providing benefits to the individual, the arrangement helps to ensure that the CTU can maintain its establishment of highly skilled armed officers.

Working with others

It is important that effective joint working arrangements are in place between neighbouring forces. Armed criminals and terrorists have no respect for county boundaries. As a consequence, armed officers must be prepared to deploy flexibly in the knowledge that they can work seamlessly with officers in other forces. It is also important that any one force can call on support from surrounding forces in times of heightened threat.

This is an area where Sussex Police performs well. Close working with Surrey Police means that armed officers can deploy quickly and efficiently in the two counties. Effective plans are also in place with other forces in the south-east of England should additional support be needed.

We also examined how well prepared forces are to respond to threats and risks. Armed officers in Sussex are trained in tactics that take account of the types of recent terrorist attacks. However, we consider that the force could do more, alongside other organisations, to plan exercises that simulate these types of attack. In other forces we visit, the involvement of ARV officers in these exercises has uncovered useful learning points and led to improvements.

We found that Sussex Police regularly debriefs incidents attended by armed officers. This helps ensure that best practice or areas for improvement are identified. We also found that this knowledge is used to improve training and operational procedures.

Efficiency



Force in context

	Sussex spend	England and Wales spend
Spend per head of population 2019/20 projection	£169	£203

Spend per head of population by category

2019/20 projection

	Sussex spend	England and Wales spend
Visible frontline	£51	£68
Non-visible frontline	£63	£66
Frontline Support	£13	£17
Business support	£38	£45
Other	£4	£8

How efficiently does the force operate and how sustainable are its services?



Requires improvement

Summary

Sussex Police has a good understanding of public demand. The force uses specialist software to understand the nature and complexity of the crimes it deals with and how these shape demand.

However, the force's approach to managing demand isn't working as it expects. For example, officers gave examples of inefficiencies in their roles. These included travelling long distances to deal with prisoners in custody who could be dealt with by officers nearby. Also, officers work in isolation, which may mean they are duplicating the work of other staff.

The force is under pressure. Officers face high levels of stress and sickness. Calls are being missed. For example, in March 2019, 45 percent of calls transferred to 101 were abandoned.

The force is good at working with outside partners like the ambulance service to make sure it can support [vulnerable people](#) who repeatedly contact the emergency services.

The force will recruit an extra 100 PCSOs to expand its prevention teams and help manage local priorities. Change programme governance has improved and management of low-risk incidents is now good.

Sussex Police is good at planning future demand using innovative technology. It is working hard to understand future demand and how its complexity will shape its response.

Meeting current demands and using resources



Requires improvement

Sussex Police has a good understanding of public demand. The force is using specialist software to help it understand how the crime it deals with affects demand. However, it is struggling to meet current demand.

For example, in March 2019, 45 percent of calls transferred to 101 were abandoned. On average, over the year to March 2019, 43 percent of public 101 calls transferred to the contact centre from the switchboard were not answered.

Records show that the force is regularly finding it difficult to resource demand for incidents that need prompt or immediate attendance. It is currently looking to understand why.

The force will recruit an extra 100 PCSOs to expand its prevention teams and help manage local priorities. However, officers in investigation teams are routinely taken away to support response teams. This halts progress on investigating crimes.

Sussex Police works with other organisations to reduce demand and give a better service to the public. For example, the force dedicates one person to review high-volume repeat calls. It also works with partners like the ambulance service to make sure it can support vulnerable people who repeatedly contact the emergency services. Over a two-year period, this approach has successfully reduced repeat calls by 6,000.

The force finds innovative ways to develop new funding. It has employed staff with specific skills to develop this work. For example, the force has employed a town and country planner to get financial contributions from private developers under the Town and Country Planning Act (1990). It has already secured £1m as a result.

Areas for improvement

- The force should review its assessment and management of demand and make the necessary changes to meet current demand.
- The force should review its existing policies in relation to the local policing model to ensure they are being implemented and are working as intended.

We set out our detailed findings below. These are the basis for our judgment of the force's performance in this area.

Assessing current demand

Sussex Police has completed demand analysis for individual projects such as the [force management statement](#). This shows an increase in demand across the force.

Also, the contact transformation programme has a detailed business case that uses demand analysis to design a new model for contact management. The force provides senior managers with a performance pack every month. Plus, there is analytical support for further work on areas highlighted as concerns.

The force is now developing analytical work through PowerBi software. This will help it understand the nature and complexity of the crimes it deals with, and how these affect demand. We will monitor this with interest.

The force uncovers some hidden demand through its prevention teams and operations such as Discovery – a multi-agency approach led by the police to tackle human trafficking and modern slavery. But it is unclear how the force uses data from these operations to understand demand.

In the meantime, Sussex Police is struggling to meet its current demand.

On average, over the year to March 2019, 43 percent of public 101 calls transferred to the contact centre from the switchboard were not answered. For example, in March 2019, there were 30,183 calls transferred to 101 – and 45 percent (12,905 calls) were abandoned. Calls to the police have increased by 3.5 percent over the past year. Call incident logs show that the force is regularly finding it difficult to resource demand for incidents that need prompt or urgent attendance. The force is aware of this and seeking to understand why.

The force has taken steps to respond to the increased public demand as follows: in the areas of investigations and public protection it plans to create an extra 36 posts to supplement existing resources. It has an investigative improvement plan to increase its number of detectives, and will recruit an extra 100 PCSOs to expand its prevention teams and help manage local priorities.

We will be seeking further evidence from the force to demonstrate its inability to meet current demand has been resolved.

Understanding factors that influence demand

Sussex Police needs to do more to understand the factors that influence demand. The force has policies it expects to be carried out for managing demand around responding to emergency calls. This includes telling officers where and when to attend incidents, rather than asking for any officer available to attend ('Task not ask'). It also uses the best available resources to attend, not necessarily from response teams.

The force introduced 'borderless' response. This means that the nearest available officer can be deployed anywhere in the county, and is not kept to a specific area or district. The force also says that officers should patrol alone, except in situations where they may be sent with another officer. This increases the number of staff available to attend to emergency calls.

However, these policies aren't often applied. Response officers are very largely 'asked' to respond by the control room, based on divisional boundaries that shouldn't apply. Two officers patrolling together is common and specialist resources, such as investigators, are rarely deployed first.

The force isn't sticking to its own policies. So it isn't managing demand in the way it means to.

Officers gave examples of inefficiencies in their daily role. These included travelling long distances to deal with prisoners in custody who could be dealt with by officers nearby. Another example was officers working in isolation, which may mean they are duplicating the work of other staff.

Officers in investigation teams are routinely taken away to support response teams or for force-wide commitments. This is despite the force recognising that these teams face some of the biggest pressures in the force. This means they don't make progress on the crimes they are investigating.

In collaboration with Surrey Police, the force has a staff forum, an online portal called 'Innovate', for staff to post ideas. The force would benefit from encouraging officers to identify inefficiencies, so it can take action.

Working with others to meet demand

Sussex Police demonstrates that it is willing to work with other organisations to reduce demand and give a better service to the public. For example, the force dedicates one person to review high-volume repeat calls. It also works with partners like the ambulance service to make sure it can support vulnerable people who repeatedly contact the emergency services. Over a two-year period, this approach has successfully reduced repeat calls by 6,000.

The force also leads a daily phone-in with representatives from Sussex Fire and Rescue Service and South East Coast Ambulance Service. They discuss resourcing issues, demand and significant incidents.

Mental health partners are frustrated at not being able to contact the force directly without using the 101 number. This is made worse by the delays we have already mentioned.

There are examples of up to 24-hour delays for mental health services to accept the handover of care of mental health patients from the police. The force needs to recognise the impact this has on demand for both services and make changes.

The force's analytical team reviews force performance at a bi-monthly 'grading meeting'. It highlights and prioritises any concerns so it can take action. For example, the force recently highlighted that it records a high number of crimes for possession of offensive weapons compared with other forces. The grading meeting agrees terms of reference and methodology with relevant interested parties – like police safety teams. It then reviews processes, data and qualitative evidence, including reviewing how other forces are managing the problem. The force then puts the right processes and mitigation in place.

Sussex Police has a strong partnership with Surrey Police and collaborates fully, sharing resources across operations command, specialist crime command, information technology (IT) and people services. The force continues to look for opportunities for further cost savings through collaborations with Surrey, Thames Valley, Kent and Hampshire forces. Sussex Police also works with the fire and ambulance services to identify opportunities to collaborate on estate and fleet provision. For example, the force and fire service have combined fleet workshops.

Innovation and new opportunities

The force invests in staff to improve innovation and best practice. For example, it has recently reinvigorated its 'Prospero' knowledge exchange. This includes investing in three extra posts to support research. The research will inform evidence-based policing, working with academic partners, sharing knowledge through seminars, meetings and online, and promoting new and improved practices.

The force finds innovative ways to develop new funding. It has employed staff with specific skills to develop this work. For example, any new housing or business development has an impact on policing resources. By law, developers have to consider the impact of development on public services under section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, providing financial compensation for planning permission to be granted.

The force has employed a town and country planner to increase opportunities to get financial contributions from private developers under the Act. It has already secured £1m in capital funding as a result.

Investment and benefits

Sussex Police has improved its governance around change programmes since our last inspection in 2017. The force collaborates with Surrey Police holding a joint change board that reviews and prioritises change projects across both forces.

Investment decisions can be taken to either the change board or a joint chief finance officer board with Surrey. The latter is for decisions on investment outside the change programme, like the capital programme. The force carefully scrutinises every decision.

Both forces demonstrate a good track record for making savings. When they see savings, they remove them from budgets. The force sees non-cashable savings, but there is limited evidence that it can demonstrate what has been achieved.

For example, both Sussex and Surrey Police introduced handheld mobile devices to be more efficient. But neither has measured the benefit so there is limited evidence of success. Sussex Police should make sure that identifying non-cashable efficiencies improves performance and outcomes.

Prioritising different types of demand

The force has improved how it manages lower-risk incidents. But it needs to do more to manage the rest of its demand.

Demand that the force assesses as a lower priority (around half) is sent to the investigation resolution centre (IRC) to be dealt with. The IRC used to be called the 'incident resolution centre'. But the force renamed it to recognise the number of investigations that it deals with, and to reflect the force's investment to support the teams with qualified detectives.

Staff effectively prioritise all incidents using a colour-coded rating. The IRC has a service level agreement to respond to the public within 48 hours. Most incidents we reviewed during the inspection were appropriately allocated to the IRC – an improvement on our previous inspection.

However, in our 2017 efficiency inspection, we said the force should ensure that it has enough resources to fulfil its resourcing model, and so meet demand, while also considering workforce wellbeing. It is disappointing to see that the force has made limited progress outside the IRC.

The force is running 'hot'. This means it doesn't have enough resources to meet demand. Many staff feel burnt out.

On average, police take 16 minutes to attend an emergency call. But calls graded for a prompt response are averaging nearly a three-hour wait.

People, including those involved in domestic abuse incidents, are sometimes waiting days for an officer. The force discusses high-risk incidents that need prompt action in daily meetings. But these incidents are often carried over to the following day as higher-priority incidents take precedence.

Officers describe their workloads as high. Teams across the whole force report high levels of stress. The force has the fourth highest sickness absence rate in the country (5.2 absences per officer). There is limited evidence of the force redistributing resources to meet operational pressures.

Assigning resources to demand and understanding their costs

Sussex Police has a good understanding of the costs of its services. It appreciates what service can be provided at what cost. The force's funding per head of population is lower than that of many others. It relies considerably on council tax to boost funding.

Council tax has been set at the maximum for several years and the [police and crime commissioner](#) (PCC) has indicated that this will continue. The force manages finance well. We found good examples of managing contracts, using assets and generating income.

The force has met its target savings throughout austerity. It has further plans to achieve savings of around £3m, without having an impact on operational areas.

The force plans to increase its establishment (the number of staff budgeted for) in the areas it has decided are at the highest risk through increased demand. It has carried out considerable demand and financial analysis to support its position. Recruitment will take some time, and it is less clear how the force will manage demand more effectively in the meantime.

Workforce capabilities

In our 2017 efficiency inspection, we said that the force should carry out activities to fully understand its workforce's capabilities, identify any gaps and put plans in place to address them. It has made progress, but there is still room for improvement.

The force has a limited but improving understanding of the skills it needs. It recognises that there is a knowledge gap across the workforce. It has now carried out a skills audit for most managers and it is confident that it has a good understanding of the skills they have. But it is unclear how it intends to address any skills gaps or use the information to plan for the future when staff leave.

The force has not yet done the same skills audit for the wider workforce. But it plans to do so to inform Equip – its new human resources software launching later in 2019.

The force doesn't understand how the skills needed will change in the future. This means that it can't fully identify the skills gaps that it needs to fill, through either recruitment or training. The force would benefit from a workforce plan more linked to demand and future operational needs.

More efficient ways of working

In 2017, the force allocated resources based on its new local policing model. But an unanticipated increase in demand since then meant the workforce was stretched and struggling to meet demand. Neighbourhood policing, and so crime prevention, was suffering because of reduced resources. It is a similar picture in 2019.

However, the force has reinvested in extra establishment posts. In the past financial year (2018/19), it focused on strengthening local policing with 250 police officer posts. In 2019/20, it has decided to invest in 100 extra PCSOs and 50 specialist staff and investigators, considering business requirements, public expectations and demand.

Sussex Police monitors its performance on a day-to-day basis, reviewing demand against resources. It hopes that in the longer term, additional staff will help to meet the unmet demand. Also, force processes are scrutinised within the change programme. But it is unclear how this all comes together in the management of future plans for greater efficiency.

The force has a good track record for making savings. It has made savings of £100m since 2010/11, including £12m in the past financial year.

Working with others

The force is committed to working with others to offer a better service to the public.

It has collaborated widely with Surrey Police and achieved considerable savings as a result. Because the forces have already joined departments where possible, there is limited opportunity for further collaboration. But the forces continue to save money through joint approaches to finance and technology.

Sussex and Surrey Police use the same governance structures to oversee both forces' change programmes. Sussex Police considers whether any proposal can be applied to both forces.

The forces have evaluated completed change programmes for savings. But it is unclear whether they have carried out a more comprehensive analysis of the wider benefits of their joint departments, to inform future decision making.

Using technology

The force has an innovative technology strategy. In collaboration with Surrey Police, it is forming a new digital division. This will create a new set of foundations to simplify commercial contracts and create savings. The team will feature both officers and [staff](#). They will review digital transformation across the whole organisation (like digital forensics, the paedophile online investigation team, [body-worn video](#)) to make sure that staff using the technology get the maximum benefit.

The force has a capital programme for IT investment. This includes network infrastructure as well as investing in specific systems such as Equip, which it believes will create further efficiencies.

Planning for the future



Good

The force has improved how it identifies future demand for its services. Its new digital division will look at the risks and opportunities from technology used by the police and criminals.

The force has a good understanding of what the public expects of it. The PCC carries out extensive public consultation, including monthly online polls on matters of interest to local people, series of county-wide focus groups and larger community conversations alongside the chief constable. This helps the PCC understand the public's view of, and confidence levels in, Sussex Police and helps inform the police and crime plan.

The force is trying to balance public expectation and demand. It has comprehensively analysed its data to identify and categorise gaps in demand and capability across the force. It identified gaps in local policing, specifically response and prevention teams. This is mainly because demand is increasingly complex.

The force is good at financial planning. It raised £24m in increased council tax and used some [reserves](#) to smooth the change over time. In 2019/2020, 90 percent of this money has been spent on officers and staff posts.

Areas for improvement

- The force should undertake appropriate activities to understand fully its workforce's capacity and capability to identify any gaps in meeting future requirements, put plans in place to address these, and carry these out.

We set out our detailed findings below. These are the basis for our judgment of the force's performance in this area.

Assessing future demand for services

The force is good at identifying and assessing emerging or likely future demand for its services. This is a big improvement since our last inspection in 2017.

It has invested in innovative new IT software called 'PowerBi', which predicts current and future demand. Plus, it also assesses how severe the demand is to create a more informed analysis.

The force is starting to use this tool to measure the complexity of investigations as well as the number of active investigations. It will use this information to plan more effectively.

In developing the tool, the force has already shown it can identify the most demanding investigative workloads down to individual level. It is currently piloting it on divisions to see how it can achieve the maximum benefit. We will monitor this with interest.

The force is using work on hidden demand to improve services using data analytics and professional judgment.

The new digital division will start to look at risks and opportunities from technology used by the police and criminals. But it is too early to say whether it will consider how technology may help reduce, or increase, future demand.

Understanding public expectations

The force has a good understanding of what the public expects of it. It consults members of the public, but could do more to specifically address their changing expectations of the police.

The force has a Citizen Focus team that completes public satisfaction surveys. It tries to use the public's views in projects when appropriate and it uses social media to engage with the public.

The PCC also carries out quite extensive public consultation. This includes consulting smaller community focus groups and holding larger community conversations alongside the chief constable. This helps it understand the public's view of, and confidence levels in, Sussex Police. It also aims to understand concerns about local community problems.

The public has various ways to contact the force through the PCC's website.

Prioritising

Sussex Police is trying to balance public expectation and demand.

The force has comprehensively analysed its data to identify and categorise gaps in demand and capability across the force. This is based on current and predicted demand.

The areas it describes as the most critical involve a lack of detectives, particularly in public protection and investigation roles. The force has a comprehensive plan in place

to address this. This includes making the work more effective in attracting and retaining detectives, developing career paths and providing financial incentives.

The force identified more moderate gaps in local policing, specifically in response and prevention teams. This is mainly because demand is increasingly complex.

Public consultation has informed the force's decision to increase its prevention team's PCSO establishment by 100. The force has decided to increase its officer establishment by 36 to support the critical gaps in public protection and investigations.

It isn't clear how these numbers relate to the force's own analysis, which prioritises public protection and investigations over the seemingly more moderate gaps in prevention teams.

Future workforce

In our 2017 efficiency inspection, we said that the force should undertake appropriate activities to fully understand its workforce's capabilities, to identify any gaps and put plans in place to address them.

The force has made some progress but could do more. It does have a workforce plan, but there is limited evidence that this is based on changing demand. It has taken steps to understand the skills and capabilities of its leaders, but not the wider workforce.

Therefore, the force does not have the full picture in relation to the skills and capabilities of the workforce, and so the plan cannot be comprehensive. The national shortage of detectives is starting to affect the force.

The force is hopeful that Equip, its new computer system for human resource functions, will be able to address some of these issues.

The force has used [direct entry](#) for inspectors and [fast-track](#) schemes, and it has some [Police Now](#) candidates. It has an active volunteer programme and is addressing key skill shortages like a lack of detectives, which is a national problem.

The number of detectives in the force is gradually falling. It is currently 47 below establishment (the total number of detectives budgeted for). The force has a comprehensive plan including financial incentives and more developed career paths to attract people into the role.

Finance plans

The force is good at financial planning. It has raised £24m in increased council tax and used some reserves to smooth the change over time. In 2019/2020, 90 percent of this money has been spent on officers and staff posts.

However, not all this money has been spent on staffing because the force understands this won't be affordable in the long term. It has reduced its savings gap to £3m and made assumptions about inflation, funding settlements and pay in its midterm financial plan. The force currently has £39.75m in reserves. This is down from £54.25m in 2017/18. It is going to continue to use those reserves to support its financial spending position, forecasting 6 percent of its net revenue budget in reserves in 2022/23.

The force's workforce and finance plans are closely co-ordinated with its priorities. It plans to make further savings, to effectively use its reserves and assets.

The force's planning assumptions are reasonable and agreed with the PCC. However, the force has assumed that the 2019/20 pension grant will continue in future years. This isn't guaranteed. The force should create alternative plans assuming this funding will end.

Leadership and workforce development

The force has a good understanding of its workforce and leaders at first-line (sergeant and equivalent) level. But it needs to develop this more.

The force has a clear and comprehensive first-line leaders' development pathway to identify, select and promote people to first-line leadership. It developed this following an essential skills audit of first-line officers and staff in early 2018. The audit, which achieved an 85 percent response rate, captured and recognised existing knowledge. It saved £350,000 in unnecessary training for officers and staff.

The force has used the data to see capability gaps and risks at a force, division and individual level. However, it is unclear how it intends to fill those gaps. It is in the process of replicating the audit for second-line leaders and middle managers.

Succession planning allows a force to make sure that skills don't disappear when staff leave. There is no formal succession planning process and officers are moved between teams without consideration for the gaps they leave behind. There doesn't appear to be any succession planning for senior leaders.

The force is taking positive steps to monitor workforce information to identify and understand disparities in recruitment, retention and progression across different [protected characteristics](#).

Ambition to improve

Sussex Police has ambitions to improve.

The force has an extensive change programme covering around 100 projects. It is set to review almost every part of the organisation.

The change programme is well governed and documented, and adequately resourced. The force identifies savings and removes them from budgets. There is good co-ordination between human resources, finance and the change programme.

The force reviews changes after they are put in place. But it is clear that the local policing model is not working as intended. This has an impact on demand, because there are fewer resources available to use than intended.

It is hoped that recruitment plans will resolve unmet demand in the long term. But it is unclear how the force plans to meet the increased demand with the resources it has in the short term.

The force would benefit from a review of its local policing model to ensure that it is maximising its current resources against the increased demand.

Legitimacy



Force in context

Comparison of Sussex workforce ethnicity with local population

as of 31 March 2019

	Sussex proportion	Local population proportion
Black, Asian and minority ethnic as % of those with stated ethnicity	2.5%	6.3%
White as % of those with stated ethnicity	97.5%	93.7%
Not Stated as % of total	5.6%	

	Sussex proportion	England and Wales proportion
Proportion of female officers in post as of 31st March 2019	32%	30%

Stop and search by ethnicity

12 months ending 31 March 2019

Sussex
disproportionality

Stop and Search likelihood of
BAME individuals compared to
white individuals

3.8

Stop and Search likelihood of
Black or Black British individuals
compared to white individuals

14.1

Sussex
rate

Number of stops and searches
per 1,000 population

3.7

12 months ending 31 March 2019

England and Wales
rate

6.4

How legitimately does the force treat the public and its workforce?



Good

Summary

The force needs to work on its communication – especially between staff and senior leaders. For example, it has started to pose ethical dilemmas to staff on the intranet to get their comments and improve decision making. However, these dilemmas don't come from the staff themselves.

The [professional standards department](#) (PSD) is mainly effective at communicating lessons about ethics to the wider workforce. It would benefit from being more visible to encourage more communication between the PSD and staff.

Sussex Police treats [abuse of position for sexual purpose](#) as serious corruption. Staff have mandatory training on the subject. But few could remember what signs to look for, despite this being part of the training.

Staff mainly trust grievance procedures. The force meets timescales, manages outcomes and captures any learning from grievances.

The force is much better at supporting staff wellbeing than in our last inspection. It has achieved this through the work of wellbeing champions and offering activities to support mental and physical health.

Despite this, officers describe their workloads as high. Plus, teams across the whole force report high levels of stress. Sickness rates are high too. The force has the fourth highest sickness absence rates in the country (5.2 absences per officer).

High workloads are mainly caused by demand and a lack of staff in key positions. This is reflected in the force's significant overtime spend. For example, in the SIUs, the option of working double shifts is relatively common among people who feel they can. So there is still more that the force can do to improve wellbeing.

Treating the public fairly



Good

This question was not subject to inspection in 2018/19, and our judgment from the 2017 legitimacy inspection has been carried over.

However, we reviewed a representative sample of 282 stop and search records to assess how reasonable the recorded grounds were. We found that 85 percent had reasonable grounds. Our assessment is based on the grounds recorded by the searching officer and not the grounds at the time of the search.

In our [2017 legitimacy report](#), we recommended that all forces should:

- monitor and analyse comprehensive stop and search data to understand reasons for disparities;
- take action on those; and
- publish the analysis and the action by July 2018.

The force has complied with some of this recommendation. But it doesn't monitor how far [find rates](#) vary between people from different ethnicities and across different types of searches. This includes separate identification of find rates for drug possession and supply-type offences.

It isn't clear that the force monitors enough data to identify how often possession-only drug searches happen, or how much these match local or force-level priorities.

We reviewed the force's website and found no obvious mention of its analysis to understand and explain the reasons for inconsistencies, or any action taken.

Ethical and lawful workforce behaviour



Good

Sussex Police has built an ethical culture. The force has clear and accessible policies around ethics. It also refers to the [Code of Ethics](#) in training and communication with its staff. However, there is limited evidence that supervisors pass on these messages to the workforce.

The force's confidential reporting line is used a lot. This clearly demonstrates that staff are confident using the system. The PSD gives bi-annual updates through the internal force intranet on acceptable standards of behaviour. It also offers case studies to communicate the correct standards.

Sussex Police is good at tackling potential corruption. It treats abuse of position for sexual purpose as serious corruption. Staff have had mandatory training on this. However, few people could remember what signs to look for, despite this being in the training.

The force now has 'focused conversations' rather than [performance development reviews](#). There is no formal recording process. So the force can't be confident that supervisors are reminding staff of duties such as notifiable associations or business interests (personal links that might influence their work). Because the conversations aren't monitored and demand is high, some supervisors openly say that they have either not taken place or are not a priority.

Areas for improvement

- The force should take steps to make sure that officers and staff are aware of how to raise and refer ethical issues within the force. Learning outcomes should then be shared with the workforce.
- The force should improve its workforce's knowledge and understanding of the abuse of position for a sexual purpose.
- The force should ensure it has full information technology (IT) monitoring to effectively protect the information contained within its systems.

We set out our detailed findings below. These are the basis for our judgment of the force's performance in this area.

Maintaining an ethical culture

Sussex Police develops and maintains an ethical culture. The force has clear and accessible policies and refers to the Code of Ethics in training and communication with its staff. This means that supervisors understand the importance of ethics and victim focus.

However, there is limited evidence that supervisors pass on these messages to the workforce. Officers and [staff](#) mainly learn about the Code of Ethics from e-learning.

The force has recently posed ethical dilemmas to staff on the intranet for the first time to get their comments and improve decision making.

However, these aren't dilemmas that come direct from the staff and it is too soon to tell whether this activity will have a positive impact.

The force also includes ethical dilemmas on the agenda for its joint legitimacy board with Surrey Police. The force should consider how it engages with members of the workforce to allow them to inform these ideas.

Force leaders make ethical decisions – like shifting some decisions on low-level misconduct towards performance and management action.

This helps to resolve complaints at a local level (65 percent of complaints are dealt with locally) and keep staff interested in learning. The PSD takes proactive steps to communicate lessons learned to the workforce. This communications strategy is mainly effective. However, it would benefit from being more visible to officers and staff to encourage communication between the PSD and staff.

Sussex Police complies with the national vetting authorised policing practice. There is no backlog on vetting. The force monitors vetting decisions for any negative impact on minority groups. This informs recruitment and positive action.

The force encourages people to report concerns about its staff's behaviour. It gives abuse of position for a sexual purpose briefings to partners including survivor groups and independent domestic violence advisers. Concerns from partners make up 3 percent of all referrals.

The force's confidential reporting line is used a lot. This clearly demonstrates that staff are confident using the system.

The PSD gives bi-annual updates through the internal force intranet on acceptable standards of behaviour. It also offers case studies to help staff meet the right standards.

Tackling corruption

Sussex Police is good at tackling potential corruption. The force's counter-corruption strategic threat assessment and control strategy is done in several ways. This includes briefing partners on abuse of position and assessing roles where corruption risks are more likely. The PSD uses the work of the Police Mutual Assurance Society to support staff in financial difficulties.

The force can't yet monitor all its IT systems. If it could, it would be easier to check that officers and staff aren't misusing them. The force is fully aware of this and is working to solve the problem.

Sussex Police treats abuse of position for sexual purpose as serious corruption. It makes sure referrals are made to the [Independent Office for Police Conduct](#). Staff have had mandatory training. However, few could remember what signs to look for, despite this being in the training. The force has worked with partner agencies that support [vulnerable](#) victims. This has increased intelligence submissions.

The force now has 'focused conversations' rather than performance development reviews. It offers a menu of options to supervisors to shape effective management conversations. However, there is no formal recording process. So the force can't be confident that supervisors are reminding staff of duties such as notifiable associations or business interests (personal links that might influence their work). Because the conversations aren't monitored, and demand is high, some supervisors openly say that they have either not taken place or are not a priority.

Treating the workforce fairly



Good

The force has mixed results for fairness at work. It encourages suggestions to improve things that are important to staff. But staff say they don't always get feedback on their ideas.

Staff mainly trust grievance procedures. The force meets timescales, manages outcomes and captures any learning from grievances. This has helped make the promotion process fairer. People with caring responsibilities (for children or parents, for example) are now given priority in promotions.

Workload pressures have caused high levels of stress leading to sickness absence. Staff on investigation teams are often taken away from their work to support planned events, which adds to the stress.

Some staff were very positive about mentoring and development, and felt that selection processes were fair. Others were less aware of them. These included female staff despite the reach of the Evolve network (a networking group for female officers and staff). The force also seeks the views of candidates following each promotion process to get feedback on the process.

The force has wellbeing champions who work hard to support staff. For example, there are initiatives supporting people to successfully complete the fitness test. Sports and social opportunities for taster sessions in sports are also well received.

Areas for improvement

- The force needs to provide a more consistent preventative approach to wellbeing and prioritise the health of its staff by identifying and supporting staff who are struggling and taking any necessary action.
- The force should improve how it records and monitors its 'focused conversations' to ensure they are consistently applied across the force and effectively capture issues such as poor performance.
- The force should ensure that it has a talent programme that is open to everyone and consistently applied.

We set out our detailed findings below. These are the basis for our judgment of the force's performance in this area.

Improving fairness at work

Fairness at work at Sussex Police is mixed. The force encourages feedback from members of its workforce to improve things that are important to them. This is mainly through the online portal, Innovate.

For example, one staff member challenged what they saw as a lack of autonomy in domestic abuse arrest procedures. They have been invited to review other alternatives. However, other staff say that, while the force acknowledges suggestions, they don't always get feedback.

Staff can easily get information on grievance procedures through the intranet. They mainly trust these procedures. Both human resources and staff report a greater focus on local mediation. Human resources partners give guidance on the process when they need to.

We reviewed the force's grievance files. They showed the force meets timescales, manages outcomes and captures any learning.

Grievance outcomes have helped make promotion processes fairer. For example, people with known caring responsibilities are a priority in promotion postings.

The force has a good understanding of the make-up and diversity of its workforce. It is making good efforts to reduce gaps in workforce representation, including working with under-represented groups.

For example, the force carried out a feedback session with a recruit from a minority ethnic background to learn any lessons from the recruitment process that would benefit others. This was presented to the equality and diversity board, which meets quarterly and monitors data on recruitment and retention.

Fair workloads are the sign of a 'workplace' where staff are treated fairly. Workload remains a significant concern for staff in public protection and investigation roles.

Workload pressures have caused high levels of stress leading to sickness absence. Staff on investigation teams are often taken away from their work to support planned events, like the local Pride festival. This stops them making progress in their investigations.

The force often doesn't meet minimum staffing levels. This is made worse by high sickness levels in a unit that already has a vacancy rate of up to 25 percent on one team.

From 1 May 2018 to 30 April 2019, the average number of days lost through sickness in investigation teams across all three divisions was 1,702 (12.46 days per person). Response teams report similar levels.

Public protection SIUs had a slightly higher rate of 14.36 days lost per person. The option of working double shifts is relatively common for those who feel they can. Because of this, the overtime spend for investigation teams was £911,912 for the year ending 31 March 2019 – £593,874 over budget.

The force has clear plans to increase establishment and recruit detectives in the long term. However, it should consider what more it can do to relieve pressure on officers and staff now.

Supporting workforce wellbeing

The force has improved its approach to workforce wellbeing. In our 2017 legitimacy inspection, we identified that Sussex Police needed to prioritise workforce wellbeing and improve how it identifies and understands the concerns of its workforce, using a range of data, information and analysis to do so. The force has made a great deal of progress in this area. There is now a well-established wellbeing board, held jointly with Surrey Police. This board considers a wide range of data. For example, at a recent meeting, the data from the employee assistance programme was discussed. This included the numbers, types and reasons for contact; numbers of counselling referrals; and other interventions such as debt and legal services.

The force complies with the [Oscar Kilo](#) action plan and has developed standards beyond national best practice. This includes sharing what works across agencies including the local authority and health. These changes help the workforce to feel valued. It is engaged with the action plan through its 30 wellbeing single points of contact and champions in each area. These passionate staff work hard to meet colleagues' needs. For example, there are initiatives supporting people to successfully complete the fitness test. Sports and social opportunities for taster sessions in sports are also well received.

These changes are now formalised in the new wellbeing policy. This includes a full day dedicated to wellbeing across the entire workforce. It also includes a wellbeing commitment in the estates strategy (providing wellbeing rooms and improved facilities). [Occupational health](#) improvements mean that referrals are made earlier compared with 2017.

The force needs to ensure that it is consistent in its wellbeing approach. Supervisors and leaders see wellbeing as part of their role. However, their efforts can be undermined by gaps in supervision and pressures coping with demand.

For example, some supervisors feel unable to spot signs of pressure because staff feel constantly under pressure, particularly in investigation roles. In one area of the force, supervisors are managing staff wellbeing through a monthly traffic light system. One district SIU asks staff to report whether they feel 'green, amber or red' about work so they can support staff who need it.

This is a good approach. However, if all staff feel 'red' despite the wellbeing initiatives available, this could cause problems for the force. Plus, only one area of the force uses this approach so other teams with similar concerns may not feel as valued.

Managing performance and development of officers and staff

The force's approach to performance management has changed since our last inspection in 2017. The early signs are positive.

The force has moved from formal performance development reviews to more informal 'focused conversations' between staff and their line managers. These discussions are regularly taking place and have been well received by staff. They cover the person's wellbeing, integrity issues, performance issues and managing talent.

However, the discussions are informal and not recorded. This means that the force can't show they are applied in the same way across the force. It also can't show that talent is being developed, or that issues such as wellbeing and counter-corruption are being captured and dealt with by supervisors. The force is currently unable to collect data around the first stage of unsatisfactory performance procedures.

The force offers talent management and mentoring. However, not all staff know about them.

Some staff were very positive about mentoring and development, and felt that selection processes for these were fair. Others were less aware of them. These included female staff despite the reach of the Evolve network (a networking group for female officers and staff).

Some supervisors felt the new 'focused conversations' stopped them identifying and supporting talented staff because they're not recorded. The force would benefit from a talent programme open to everyone and consistently applied.

The promotion process in Sussex Police is seen as fair and transparent for both officers and staff. The force has a joint promotion process with Surrey Police for police officers up to the rank of chief superintendent.

Sussex Police publishes its promotions calendar to staff, so they can plan for promotion processes in advance. The force consults the Police Federation on the process. The Police Federation also forms part of the selection process providing independent oversight and scrutiny.

There is an appeals process, offering an impartial review, for people who may feel that a promotion has been unfairly awarded. The force also seeks the views of candidates following each promotion process to get feedback. This allows the force to identify any themes. We found that most staff were in support of the force's promotion processes and work was ongoing to ensure that police staff have similar opportunities for career progression made available to them.

Annex A – About the data

Data in this report is from a range of sources, including:

- Home Office;
- Office for National Statistics (ONS);
- our inspection fieldwork; and
- data we collected directly from all 43 police forces in England and Wales.

When we collected data directly from police forces, we took reasonable steps to agree the design of the data collection with forces and with other interested parties such as the Home Office. We gave forces several opportunities to quality assure and validate the data they gave us, to make sure it was accurate. For instance:

- We shared the submitted data with forces, so they could review their own and other forces' data. This allowed them to analyse where data was notably different from other forces or internally inconsistent.
- We asked all forces to check the final data used in the report and correct any errors.

We set out the source of this report's data below.

Methodology

Data in the report

British Transport Police was outside the scope of inspection. Any aggregated totals for England and Wales exclude British Transport Police data, so will differ from those published by the Home Office.

When other forces were unable to supply data, we mention this under the relevant sections below.

Most similar groups

We compare each force's crime rate with the average rate for forces in its most similar group (MSG). MSGs are groups of similar police forces, based on analysis of demographic, social and economic factors which relate to crime. We could not identify any forces similar to City of London Police. Every other force has its own group of up to seven other forces which it is most similar to.

An MSG's crime rate is the sum of the recorded crimes in all the group's forces divided by its total population. All of the most similar forces (including the force being compared) are included in calculating the MSG average.

[More information about MSGs can be found on our website.](#)

Population

For all uses of population as a denominator in our calculations, unless otherwise noted, we use ONS mid-2018 population estimates.

Survey of police workforce

We surveyed the police workforce across England and Wales, to understand their views on workloads, redeployment and how suitable their assigned tasks were. This survey was a non-statistical, voluntary sample so the results may not be representative of the workforce population. The number of responses per force varied between 0 and 372. So we treated results with caution and didn't use them to assess individual force performance. Instead, we identified themes that we could explore further during fieldwork.

BMG survey of public attitudes towards policing (2018)

We commissioned BMG to survey public attitudes towards policing in 2018. Ipsos MORI conducted a similar version of the survey in 2015–2017.

The survey consisted of about 400 respondents for each of the 43 forces. Most surveys were completed online, by members of online research panels. However, a minority of the surveys (around 750) were conducted face-to-face. These face-to-face surveys were specifically targeted to groups that are traditionally under-represented on online panels. This aimed to make sure the survey respondents were as representative as possible of the total adult population of England and Wales. A small number of respondents were also surveyed online via postal invites to the survey.

Results were weighted by age, gender, ethnicity and indices of multiple deprivation to match population profiles. The sampling method used is not a statistical random sample and the sample size was small, which may be more problematic for larger force areas compared to small ones. So any results provided are only an indication of satisfaction rather than an absolute.

[The findings of this survey, and previous surveys, are available on our website.](#)

Review of crime files

We reviewed police case files for these crime types:

- theft from person;
- rape (including attempts);
- stalking;
- harassment;
- common assault;
- grievous bodily harm (wounding); and
- actual bodily harm.

Our file review was designed to provide a broad overview of how well the police:

- identify vulnerability;
- conduct investigations; and
- treat victims.

We randomly selected files from crimes recorded between 1 June and 31 August 2019 and assessed them against several criteria. We reviewed 60 case files in each force, except for West Yorkshire Police where we reviewed 90.

For our file review, we only selected a small sample size of cases per force. So we didn't use results from as the only basis for assessing individual force performance, but alongside other evidence.

Force in context

999 calls

We collected this data directly from all 43 police forces in England and Wales.

Recorded crime and crime outcomes

We took this data from the October 2019 release of the Home Office [police recorded crime and outcomes data tables](#).

Total police-recorded crime includes all crime (except fraud) recorded by all forces in England and Wales (except BTP). Home Office publications on the overall volumes and rates of recorded crime and outcomes include British Transport Police, which is outside the scope of this HMICFRS inspection. Therefore, England and Wales rates in this report will differ from those published by the Home Office.

Police-recorded crime data should be treated with care. Recent increases may be due to forces' renewed focus on accurate crime recording since our 2014 national crime data inspection.

Other notable points to consider when interpreting outcomes data are listed below.

- Crime outcome proportions show the percentage of crimes recorded in the 12 months ending 31 March 2019 that have been assigned each outcome. This means that each crime is tracked or linked to its outcome. So this data is subject to change, as more crimes are assigned outcomes over time.
- Under the new framework, 37 police forces in England and Wales provide outcomes data through the HODH every month. All other forces provide this data via a monthly manual return.
- Leicestershire, Staffordshire and West Yorkshire forces participated in the Ministry of Justice's out of court disposals pilot. As part of the pilot, they stopped issuing simple cautions or cannabis/khat warnings and restricted their use of penalty notices for disorder for adult offenders. These three forces continued to follow these procedures since the pilot ended in November 2015. Later, other forces also limited their use of some out of court disposals. So the outcomes data should be viewed with this in mind.

For a full commentary and explanation of outcome types please see the Home Office statistics, [Crime outcomes in England and Wales: year ending March 2019](#).

Domestic abuse outcomes

In England and Wales, 29 police forces provide domestic abuse outcomes data through the Home Office data hub (HODH) every month. We collected this data directly from the remaining 14 forces.

Domestic abuse outcome proportions show the percentage of crimes recorded in the 12 months ending 31 March 2018 that have been assigned each outcome. This means that each crime is tracked or linked to its outcome. So this data is subject to change, as more crimes are assigned outcomes over time.

Workforce figures (including ethnicity and gender)

This data was obtained from the Home Office annual data return 502. The data is available from the Home Office's published [police workforce England and Wales statistics](#) or the [police workforce open data tables](#). The Home Office may have updated these figures since we obtained them for this report.

The data gives the full-time equivalent workforce figures as at 31 March. The figures include section 38-designated investigation, detention or escort officers, but not section 39-designated detention or escort staff. They include officers on career breaks and other types of long-term absence but exclude those seconded to other forces.

Spend per head of population

We took this data from the [HMICFRS value for money profiles](#).

These profiles are based on data collected by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy, through the Police Objective Analysis. The spend over time figures are adjusted for inflation. The population figures are ONS mid-year estimates, with the 2019/20 value calculated by assessing the trend for the last five years. [More details on this data can be found on our website](#).

Stop and search

We took this data from the Home Office publication, [Police powers and procedures, England and Wales year ending 31 March 2019](#). Stop and search totals exclude vehicle only searches and searches where the subject's ethnicity was not stated.

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