

# **PEEL 2021/22**

## **Police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy**

An inspection of South Yorkshire Police

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# Overall summary

## Our judgments

Our inspection assessed how good South Yorkshire Police is in 10 areas of policing. We make graded judgments in 9 of these 10 as follows:

Outstanding	Good	Adequate	Requires improvement	Inadequate
Preventing crime	Recording data about crime	Responding to the public		
Protecting vulnerable people	Investigating crime			
Good use of resources	Treatment of the public			
	Managing offenders			
	Developing a positive workplace			

We also inspected how effective a service South Yorkshire Police gives to [victims](#) of crime. We don't make a graded judgment in this overall area.

We set out our detailed findings about things the force is doing well and where the force should improve in the rest of this report.

### Data in this report

For more information, please [view this report on our website](#) and select the 'About the data' section.

## Important changes to PEEL

In 2014, we introduced our police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy (PEEL) inspections, which assess the performance of all 43 police forces in England and Wales. Since then, we have been continuously adapting our approach and during the past year we have seen the most significant changes yet.

We now use a more [intelligence](#)-led, continual assessment approach, rather than the annual [PEEL inspections](#) we used in previous years. For instance, we have integrated our rolling crime data integrity inspections into these PEEL assessments. Our PEEL victim service assessment also includes a crime data integrity element in at least every other assessment. We have also changed our approach to graded judgments. We now assess forces against the characteristics of good performance, set out in the [PEEL Assessment Framework 2021/22](#), and we more clearly link our judgments to causes of concern and areas for improvement. We have also expanded our previous four-tier system of judgments to five tiers. As a result, we can state more precisely where we consider improvement is needed and highlight more effectively the best ways of doing things.

However, these changes mean that it isn't possible to make direct comparisons between the grades awarded in this round of PEEL inspections with those from previous years. A reduction in grade, particularly from good to adequate, doesn't necessarily mean that there has been a reduction in performance, unless we say so in the report.

## **HM Inspector's observations**

I congratulate South Yorkshire Police on its performance in keeping people safe and reducing crime. I have graded the force as outstanding in three areas of policing, reflecting its high level of performance in a challenging policing environment. But it needs to continue to improve its initial response to incidents to provide a consistently good service.

This is an ambitious force that we have seen progress over the years, and it is now achieving some outstanding grades through the hard work of its officers and [staff](#). We found multiple examples of good and innovative practice happening, initiated by staff. These are the findings I consider most important from our assessments of the force over the last year.

### **The force prioritises protecting vulnerable people**

We found the force's focus on [vulnerable people](#) to be strong in every area we inspected, from the initial calls being received through to the outcomes it gains for victims. It has achieved remarkable results in its approach to [domestic abuse](#) victims, keeping them safe, investigating their crimes and achieving good outcomes in court. Its work to safeguard children is also highly effective. The staff we met consistently sought to identify and protect vulnerable people.

### **The force works well to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour**

The force's overall approach to neighbourhood policing and problem-solving is highly effective. Its success in reducing crime and [anti-social behaviour](#) through

neighbourhood teams, working with partner organisations, is excellent. It makes early interventions to stop many incidents escalating into more serious crimes.

### **The force is good at recording crimes that are reported**

The force has improved its recording of crime to some of the highest levels we have seen. I recognise the effort that the force has put into achieving this, which means that nearly all crimes are being recorded. And the force now has the assurance that any reductions in crime, and its understanding of demand, are now measured against a more accurate baseline.

### **The force completes effective investigations**

Despite the high workloads investigators are experiencing, the quality of their investigations is good. The force has comprehensive governance in place to assure the quality of its investigations, and has invested in the learning and continuous professional development of its investigators. We found that these people were passionate about their roles and keen to do a good job.

### **The force works well with partners**

Across all the areas we inspected, the force's approach to working with partner organisations and charities is extremely positive. In every area across South Yorkshire, they work jointly to achieve the same common goal of reducing crime and anti-social behaviour and protecting vulnerable people. This is achieved through good sharing of information, joint plans and close working to put these plans in place.

### **The force needs to improve how quickly it responds to incidents**

We have seen the pressure that its officers and staff are under across its frontline teams. I am looking forward to seeing this pressure ease and response times improve once the force's newly recruited officers reach independent patrol status.



**Roy Wilsher**

HM Inspector of Constabulary

## Reducing crime assessment

We have identified seven themes underpinning a force's ability to reduce crime effectively which, taken together, allow an assessment of the extent to which the force is doing all it can to reduce crime. This is a narrative assessment, as police recorded crime figures can be affected by variations and changes in recording policy and practice, making it difficult to make comparisons over time.

The force has a focus on problem-solving and early intervention. We found good examples of the force working with other organisations to divert children and young people away from offending and to protect vulnerable people. We found good and innovative practice, introduced by the force, being used to solve local problems with other organisations and to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour.

Other factors contributing to the force's ability to reduce crime are:

- its effective communication with the public to build trust and understand their concerns about crimes so that it can address them;
- its effective approach to neighbourhood policing, working well with partner organisations to tackle crime;
- its support for vulnerable victims, and management of offenders, which helps reduce further harm to victims by preventing crimes from happening again;
- its effective investigations and comprehensive understanding of performance and assurance about how well it investigates these crimes;
- its Complete Victim Care Programme, which focuses on the victim from the point a call is received to when an outcome is reached; and
- its thorough understanding of the capability and resources it needs to reduce crime and the extensive learning and development provided to staff.

I am pleased that the force is addressing the right areas of policing to reduce crime.

But the following area may negatively affect the force's ability to reduce crime:

- its response to incidents within published timescales.

# Providing a service to the victims of crime

## Victim service assessment

This section describes our assessment of the service South Yorkshire Police provides to victims. This is from the point of reporting a crime and throughout the investigation. As part of this assessment, we reviewed 90 case files.

When the police close a case of a reported crime, it will be assigned what is referred to as an 'outcome type'. This describes the reason for closing it.

We also reviewed 20 cases each when the following outcome types were used:

- A suspect was identified and the victim supported police action, but evidential difficulties prevented further action ([outcome 15](#)).
- A suspect was identified, but there were evidential difficulties and the victim didn't support or withdrew their support for police action ([outcome 16](#)).
- Diversionary, educational or intervention activity has been carried out and it isn't in the public interest to take any further action (outcome 22).

While this assessment is ungraded, it influences graded judgments in the other areas we have inspected.

### **The force needs to improve the time it takes to answer emergency and non-emergency calls. Repeat and vulnerable victims are identified well**

When a victim contacts the police, it is important that their call is answered quickly and that the right information is recorded accurately on police systems. The caller should be spoken to in a professional manner. The information should be assessed, taking into consideration threat, harm, risk and vulnerability. The victim should also receive appropriate [safeguarding](#) advice.

The force is improving, but needs to continue to improve, the time it takes to answer emergency and non-emergency calls. When calls are answered, the risk to the victim is assessed using a structured process most of the time. Vulnerable victims and repeat victims are nearly always identified correctly. But call handlers don't always give victims advice on crime prevention and on how to preserve evidence.



### **The force, in most cases, responds to calls for service in a timely way**

A force should aim to respond to calls for service within the timescales it has set, which are determined by the level of prioritisation given to the call. It should change call priority only if the original prioritisation is deemed inappropriate, or if further information suggests a change is needed. The force's response should take into consideration risk and victim vulnerability, including any information obtained after the call.

On most occasions, the force responds to calls appropriately. But sometimes it doesn't respond within set timescales. Victims weren't always informed of delays and therefore their expectations weren't always met. This may cause victims to lose confidence and disengage from the process.

### **The force is good at recording reported crime**

The force's crime recording should be trustworthy. The force should be effective at recording reported crime in line with national standards and have effective systems and processes in place that are supported by its leaders and are backed up by the right culture.

The force has effective crime recording processes in place to make sure that all crimes reported to it are recorded correctly, but it should make sure crimes are also recorded promptly.

We set out more details about the force's crime recording in the crime data integrity section below.

### **Investigations are allocated to staff with suitable levels of experience**

All forces and constabularies should have a policy to make sure investigations are allocated to suitably trained officers or staff. Its policy should also establish when a crime isn't to be investigated further, and should be applied consistently. The victim of the crime should be kept informed of who is dealing with their case. They should also be fully informed of the decision to close the investigation.

We found the force allocated recorded crimes for investigation according to its policy. In nearly all cases, the crime was allocated to the most appropriate department for further investigation.

### **The force carries out effective and timely investigations**

Police forces and constabularies should investigate reported crimes quickly, proportionately and thoroughly. Victims should be kept updated about the investigation and the force should have effective governance arrangements in place to make sure investigation standards are high.

In most cases, South Yorkshire Police carried out an effective investigation in a timely way and completed relevant and proportionate lines of inquiry. Investigations were mostly well supervised, and all victims (100%) were consistently updated throughout. Victims are more likely to have confidence in a police investigation when they receive regular updates.

A thorough investigation increases the likelihood of perpetrators being identified and a positive end result for the victim. In most cases, victim personal statements were taken, which give victims the opportunity to describe how that crime has affected their lives.

When victims withdrew support for an investigation, the force didn't always consider progressing the case without the victim's support. This can be an important method of safeguarding the victim and preventing further offences from being committed.

The Code of Practice for Victims of Crime requires forces to carry out a needs assessment at an early stage to determine whether victims need additional support. The force didn't always carry out this assessment and record the request for additional support.

**The force doesn't always assign the right outcome type. Victims' wishes and offenders' backgrounds are usually considered but an auditable record of victims' wishes isn't always held**

The force should make sure it follows national guidance and rules for deciding the outcome type it will assign to each report of crime. In deciding the outcome type, the force should consider the nature of the crime, the offender and the victim. These decisions should be supported and overseen by leaders throughout the force.

When a suspect has been identified and the victim supported police action, but evidential difficulties prevent further action, the victim should be informed of the decision to close the investigation. We found that victims were usually informed of the decision to take no further action and to close the investigation. The force used [outcome 15](#) incorrectly on a few occasions.

When a suspect has been identified but the victim doesn't support or withdraws their support for police action, an auditable record from the victim, confirming their decision, should be held. This will allow the investigation to be closed. Evidence of the victim's decision wasn't recorded in some cases reviewed. This represents a risk that victims' wishes may not be fully represented and considered before the investigation is closed.

In some cases, when it isn't in the public interest to take any further action, diversionary, educational or intervention activity can be taken to address offending behaviour or prevent further offending. In such cases, the victim should be informed of this decision. We found that not all offences were suitable for this outcome, but where relevant, victims were informed of the decision to take such action and to close the investigation.

## Crime data integrity

Good

South Yorkshire Police is good at recording crime.

We estimate that South Yorkshire Police is recording 96.4 percent (with a confidence interval of +/- 2.0 percent) of all reported crime (excluding fraud). We estimate that, compared to the findings of our 2020 inspection revisit, this improvement means that the force recorded an additional 3,500 crimes for the year covered by our inspection. However, we estimate that the force didn't record a further 5,400 crimes during this same period.

We estimate that the force is recording 96.0 percent (with a confidence interval of +/- 3.4 percent) of violent offences.

And its performance in recording sexual offences is even better, with an estimated 99.0 percent (with a confidence interval of +/- 1.8 percent) of sexual offences reported to the force being recorded.

### Area for improvement

**This area for improvement from 2018 still applies: the force should improve how it collects diversity information from victims of crime and how it uses this to inform its compliance with its equality duty**

This was an area for improvement in the force's previous crime data integrity inspection in 2018. Since then, the force has made progress by implementing new IT systems and can now collect data on [protected characteristics](#). We found that data on age, gender, LGBTQ+ and disability is being recorded well. But data on ethnicity isn't recorded as frequently.

## **Main findings**

In this section, we set out our main findings that relate to how well the force records crime.

### **The force is good at recording rape offences**

Rape is one of the most serious crimes a victim can experience. Therefore, it is especially important that crimes are recorded accurately and promptly to make sure victims receive the service and support they expect and deserve.

We found that South Yorkshire Police recorded all rape offences that were reported to it, and all except one were recorded correctly. But it should improve the time it takes to record these crimes.

# Engaging with and treating the public with fairness and respect

Good

South Yorkshire Police is good at treating people fairly and with respect.

## Innovative practice

### **The force engages well with diverse communities to understand and respond to local problems**

The force has worked with sociology academics to understand how to engage better with communities who wouldn't previously interact with the police and where there had been a breakdown in communication. Officers, and staff from partner organisations, have since integrated themselves into some diverse communities by using vacant premises in those communities as a base.

This means that they see and experience what is happening for themselves and helps them build trust with the community. It gives officers a better understanding of people's concerns and problems, so they can better tackle these. It also allows the police and their partner organisations to help these residents live in a way that is more acceptable to other people in these communities.

The initiative has had a positive impact through helping to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour, clean up local areas and build cohesion in communities where there has previously been friction. For example, the force encouraged children to design artwork for a largely boarded-up estate, engaging with the young people responsible for breaking windows to help improve the area so they take more pride in it. And it works well with asylum seekers to provide them with knowledge and skills to integrate into society.

### **South Yorkshire Police actively seeks the views of people in the local area**

The force uses different ways to get people's feedback and views about the policing priorities they would like it to address. This includes placing posters with QR codes on stiles and fence posts along paths commonly used by walkers. (In rural areas, officers often find it difficult to engage with people on footpaths unless they are there at the same time.) This approach usually receives a good response, and has drawn attention to an anti-social behaviour problem involving off-road bikes. The force's 'You Said, We Did' page on its website communicates what happened because of this feedback.

### **The force seeks advice on how to engage specific audiences**

The force sought the views of women across South Yorkshire to inform its work on preventing violence against women and girls. It invited volunteers to be members of a violence against women and girls [independent advisory group](#) to give women a voice and say what matters to them. This has resulted in their views influencing a media campaign with strong messages and imagery. Using the words of women that experience unwanted attention and more serious violence, the campaign encourages people to move from being a 'bystander to an upstander' and to offer help when they see this happening. It includes a 60-second video providing safety advice, and images circulated online as well as on billboards, posters, radio adverts and T-shirts. The force has seen venues in city centres and town centres using the materials and their staff wearing the T-shirts to support the campaign.

### **The force uses technology in an innovative way for the external scrutiny of stop and search encounters**

The force uses an IT collaboration tool for external scrutiny meetings, which means that members of the stop and search scrutiny panel can all view body-worn footage remotely. All the members join an online panel meeting, during which they review the footage independently and record their observations, which are shared with the meeting in real time. This generates discussion among the whole group to decide what feedback should be given to officers. This is innovative use of technology to allow remote scrutiny.

## Area for improvement

### **The force should improve its recording of reasonable grounds for stop and search occurrences**

During our inspection, we reviewed a sample of 171 stop and search records from 1 January to 31 December 2021. Based on this sample, we estimate that 76.0 percent (with a confidence interval of +/- 6.4 percent) of all stop and searches by the force during this period had reasonable grounds recorded.

## Main findings

In this section we set out our main findings that relate to treating people fairly and with respect.

### **The force understands the make-up of its local communities and communicates well with them**

The force has a good understanding of its communities through its neighbourhood profiles. These are comprehensive documents that are informed by a range of data. It communicates well with people living in these communities. The force uses a range of ways to engage face-to-face and digitally. This includes an online community alert system, which 36,000 local people already subscribe to for text, email or voice messaging information and alerts. It is available in 104 languages and translates responses. It means that the force can have two-way communication with the members.

### **The force encourages people to share their concerns so that it can act on them**

Neighbourhood teams are active in their communities and engage with residents in a range of different ways such as surveys, newsletters, pop-up police stations in local areas and 'brew with a bobby' drop-in sessions in cafés. Regular 'days of action' (known as Operation Duxford) focus police resources on specific areas and give officers of all ranks an opportunity to speak with the local community, listen and act. Police community support officers use the force's social media accounts to publicise when they will be on patrol or on bike in different locations, saying, "ring if you want to speak to us and we'll call". Using GPS tracking, they post the route where they have been at the end of the day to make their work more visible and encourage local engagement.

### **The force makes good use of social media to engage with different audiences**

The force regularly uses social media to communicate with specific audiences. It has taken steps to address obstacles to engagement encountered in some people's reluctance to be seen to be following a police force on social media. It contacted influential closed social media groups that have thousands of followers, and now posts messages in these through the administrator. It also makes use of smart ads, which tailor TV adverts based on information users provide when subscribing. The force evaluates its use of social media to understand how effective it has been.

### **The force seeks independent advice from community representatives to inform its communication and engagement**

The force seeks advice from local people representing communities through its independent advisory groups. These groups advise on matters relating to protests, football matches and violence against women and girls. We commented on the positive way in which the force seeks and uses this advice in our [thematic inspection \*Getting the balance right? An inspection of how effectively the police deal with protests\*](#). The force receives advice from the voluntary sector on how to engage with communities that aren't always geographically located together (such as people with a hearing impairment and LGBTQ+ communities) to make sure that it takes into account the views of these groups.

### **The force encourages people to get involved and works well with volunteers from its local communities**

The force has a range of ways in which local people can get involved in its work. Its joint community safety department works with South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service to co-ordinate volunteering opportunities. These include opportunities with the special constabulary, police cadets programme, mini police project, travel safe partnership and [Prince's Trust](#) programme. Volunteers offer their time to help as part of the team at the Lifewise Centre, which promotes community safety. They help educate children about the dangers present in different scenarios. The force also brings together members of the public to prevent crime through Neighbourhood Networks. These are where local people take responsibility for their local area to help prevent anti-social behaviour and help stop children from becoming involved with gangs.



## **Officers and staff are trained in how to communicate effectively with the public and without bias**

The workforce receives communication training through the force's leadership academy. This provides training on the topics of resilience and confidence, communication skills, conflict management, and difficult conversations. Training in [unconscious bias](#) is also provided, and in addition, the force is now training its workforce on how to interrupt any bias in their thinking. The force expects this understanding to be applied during interactions with the public.

## **Officers and staff receive training in how to use force appropriately and how to interact during a stop and search encounter**

Training in personal safety, use of force, and the [national decision model](#) is given during an officer's initial learning when they join the force. Operational officers then complete mandatory annual training to refresh their skills in the appropriate use of force. The special constabulary receives the same level of training as regular officers.

All officers are trained in the use of [stop and search powers](#), in line with the [College of Policing's authorised professional practice](#). This is promoted through additional guidance to officers about the use of the [GO WISELY](#) acronym, stop and searching a person who may be vulnerable, and managing casual observers of these encounters. The force's policy requires officers to switch on their body-worn camera during a stop and search encounter. But its own monitoring shows that officers aren't doing this all the time. The force has made additional body-worn cameras available and communicated the requirement for these to be used for this purpose.

## **The force is improving its recording of the use of force**

Compared to many other forces in England and Wales, the force records a lower number of incidents where officers have used force. Its strategy recognises the need to increase the recording of all use of force. Its governance meeting is chaired by a [chief officer](#), which has improved the scrutiny of its data to understand how force is being used. This meeting reviews all types of force used by officers, including the use of handcuffing, taser devices, firearms and police dog bites. Representatives from the force's professional standards, training and health and safety departments attend the meeting to help encourage good practice and address any concerns identified.

## **The force acts in response to scrutiny and challenge to improve officers' use of stop and search powers and use of force**

The force reviews stop and search and the use of force through its governance structure. A range of data is analysed to inform its internal meetings and reporting to its independent ethics panel. The force carries out further reviews where people have been subject to multiple searches, to make sure that officers' actions were fair and justified.

The force scrutinises officer communication, use of force, and interactions during stop and search encounters. Its internal and external scrutiny panels review [body-worn video](#) footage and discuss the appropriateness of these interactions. These discussions are used to recommend development opportunities and highlight good practice to officers and their supervisors. Where common themes are identified, these are communicated to the wider workforce. If misconduct is suspected based on any of these reviews, it is reported to professional standards and investigated.

Our review of stop and search encounters found that officers interact appropriately and are generally respectful. They engage effectively with people who are searched. Where an officer used force, we found this was appropriate in all cases we reviewed.

# Preventing crime and anti-social behaviour

## Outstanding

South Yorkshire Police is outstanding at prevention and deterrence.

### Innovative practice

#### **The force actively engages with children, young and older people to educate them about how to protect themselves and deter them from crime**

The Lifewise Centre is a multi-agency approach to promoting community safety. The centre provides an immersive 'film set' environment that replicates a typical high street. It includes a full-size corner Co-op store, cybercafé, bus, hospital, magistrates' youth court, police station, park, [child's](#) bedroom, and lounge.

Participants enter different scenarios to learn about a range of dangers, including what to look out for and what they may experience. Police staff work closely with colleagues, partners and volunteers to bring these scenarios to life. They highlight issues such as child exploitation, bullying, anti-social behaviour, hate crime, knife crime, cyber crime, fraud, road safety and many more. This experience is free of charge, with support from volunteers and local businesses. The centre supports effective engagement with the community, in a way that children, young and older people can relate to. It helps to give them the knowledge and skills they need to protect themselves from crime.

#### **The force uses innovative campaigns to prevent people from being drawn into crime or becoming a victim of crime**

In 2021, a new programme for year 9 students was introduced by the force, called 'Your Life, Your Choice'. It is about how some children become involved in [county lines](#) and criminal exploitation, being asked to do more and more things to the point of carrying knives and firearms. Firearms officers attend and talk about their skills in responding to a shooting and how difficult it is to get to someone quickly enough to save their life. This makes the dangers more relatable for the pupils.

'Don't be Exposed' is a campaign that raises awareness about the dangers of talking to someone online that you don't really know. It consists of a short film, made on a small budget, that highlights the risks of sharing intimate images digitally. It tells the story of a girl called Emily, who shares her topless image with someone she feels comfortable with but then finds that it ends up being widely shared on social media. In this way, Emily is indecently exposed.

The film illustrates how some criminals connect with young people through social media sites, instant messaging or online gaming platforms. It describes how they spend time learning about a young person's interests from their online profile and then use it to build a relationship. The film also describes the effect Emily's activities have on her parents.

### **The force's approach to problem-solving extends beyond neighbourhood teams and is focused on understanding root causes to achieve sustainable results**

The force's armed crime team recently led a series of workshops, working with partner organisations and academics, to thoroughly explore and understand the causes of increased gun crime. This was informed by data and analysis relating to firearms discharges in South Yorkshire over a period of time. The work exposed two geographic areas that account for a large proportion of the discharges, with drugs being the main cause. This resulted in alternative methods being used to capture and disrupt drug dealers and drug lines. The force told us this resulted in 60 drug dealers being arrested and 11 county lines being disrupted. It worked with the national county lines co-ordination centre, [neighbourhood policing teams](#), local authority community safety teams, and social care services to manage vulnerability and community tensions following the arrests. This work also included rebuilding the local community after this disruption to prevent drugs and firearms taking hold again.

### **The force works well with other organisations to prevent and deter people from becoming involved in crime**

Officers and staff in safer neighbourhood services are located together with partner organisations to provide joint co-ordinated support to vulnerable people. This includes work with care homes and schools and having plans in place for children who regularly go [missing](#).

The force works with professional ‘navigators’ in partner organisations who provide early intervention for victims and detainees at a ‘reachable and teachable’ moment in time when they may want to change their lifestyle. Navigators are located in hospital A and E departments and custody suites and have access to a wide range of referral pathways to help support these individuals.

These approaches help to prevent problems from occurring or escalating, reduce harm and prevent future generations from becoming victims or perpetrators of crime.

### **The force is using [out-of-court disposals](#) to tackle the root cause of offending to prevent crime**

In our recent spotlight report, [The police response to burglary, robbery and other acquisitive crime – Finding time for crime](#), we report the innovative practice used by South Yorkshire Police in its policing approach to burglary, robbery and other acquisitive crime.

### **The force has a comprehensive performance framework for neighbourhood policing teams**

The force has developed and introduced a neighbourhood performance and effectiveness framework. This helps it understand what it achieves from the activity it carries out and make sure its work is aligned with the priorities set in the police and crime plan for South Yorkshire. The framework consists of data across the force’s four districts. It brings together information on anti-social behaviour incidents and crime rates alongside concerns raised by local communities through engagement activity. The data is available at district, ward and neighbourhood level. The framework is informed by data collected from neighbourhood officers through a ‘Neighbourhood App’ that collates all engagement activity, problem-solving activity in targeted areas, and the impact of any absences on officer availability. The force is developing the app further to include qualitative information about problem-solving, its social media presence, independent advisory groups and early intervention activity. This provides a comprehensive view of activity within a local area and by each neighbourhood team.

## Main findings

In this section we set out our main findings that relate to prevention and deterrence.

### **The force has a highly effective neighbourhood policing model that prioritises the prevention of crime, anti-social behaviour and vulnerability**

Neighbourhood policing is at the centre of how the force operates. Its approach is in line with the [College of Policing's neighbourhood policing guidelines](#) and national crime prevention strategy. It is overseen by a neighbourhood policing board chaired by an assistant chief officer, with leads for each of the strands within the CoP guidelines. A dedicated neighbourhood governance unit supports the performance of neighbourhood teams across the force's four districts to ensure consistency, provide guidance, monitor performance and share good practice. The force also has governance arrangements to oversee specific crime types. Neighbourhood teams are supported by other teams who focus on more [serious and organised crime](#) and vulnerability.

This strong commitment to neighbourhood policing and related governance arrangements has resulted in the force embedding neighbourhood policing in its work, and continuing to develop it beyond the basic requirements.

### **The force has a good understanding of neighbourhood demand to inform how many officers and staff it needs**

The force understands all types of neighbourhood demand. Its understanding is enhanced through using its Neighbourhood App and performance and effectiveness framework. This helps the force know what resources it needs for the demand it experiences. It has retained the neighbourhood policing model it put in place in 2017 and has increased the number of neighbourhood officer posts to 450. This includes officers in neighbourhood policing teams, and safer neighbourhood services who are co-located with partners. As at 31 March 2022 the force also had 119 police community support officers.

Its neighbourhood officers are protected from being routinely abstracted from their roles. The force monitors officers' abstractions against its policy to make sure that they are minimised and appropriate. While neighbourhood officers are very occasionally abstracted to other duties, this doesn't affect their ability to problem-solve to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour. This shows the priority that the force gives to neighbourhood policing in local communities.

### **The force has professionalised neighbourhood policing**

The force has developed its own professional and accredited neighbourhood policing training programme. This training is provided over three days and includes a full day on problem-solving and the early intervention powers available to officers and partner organisations. The development of officers and staff in this area of work continues through professional development days.

New police recruits are trained in problem-solving as part of their initial course, with input from criminology academics. Each student officer spends part of their initial training attached to a neighbourhood policing team to complete a piece of work that involves practically applying their learning. This allows the force to assess which officers would be most suitable for a role as a neighbourhood officer.

### **The force understands what is happening in local communities to inform its approach with partner organisations**

Comprehensive analysis and the sharing of information and knowledge between the force and its partner organisations provide an effective view of what is happening locally. This is done through documents and meetings involving the partner organisations, which include local authority community safety teams.

The analysis includes information about people who frequently call the police and other public services, repeat victims and repeat offenders. It identifies the people who need support to protect them and deter them from crime, or where intervention or enforcement is needed. Geographical locations where multiple incidents are reported are also featured. It is encouraging to see the joint sharing of information and knowledge to help plan and direct activity.

### **There is a positive culture of problem-solving across the force, using a structured approach**

The force has trained over 2,000 officers, staff and partner organisations in problem-solving techniques. This extends beyond its neighbourhood teams.

The force has good governance over its problem-solving to make sure there is consistent practice and that learning is shared. A structured approach based on an easy-to-use interactive portal gives officers and staff the guidance they need. Its problem-solving plans use the [SARA \(scanning, analysis, response and assessment\) model](#), and are informed by data, intelligence and analysis to understand the problem. We found that neighbourhood teams had comprehensive plans in place relating to individuals and geographical locations, aimed at solving crime as well as reducing risk, vulnerability and demand. The plans contain hypotheses to test, good use of the [problem-solving triangle](#), and an action plan with people assigned to actions, including partners. Actions follow a [4P approach \(pursue, prepare, protect, prevent\)](#) to help guide longer-term activity. The plans are evaluated using an assessment framework, which also considers the cost and benefits of the problem-solving work carried out.

We found that other teams also used problem-solving techniques to understand the root cause of problems to prevent harm and vulnerability. And they have plans in place to support this approach. We were also pleased to hear partner organisations talk about how they work with the force to understand a problem, develop a plan to address it, and work together to carry it out. The effectiveness of this joint use of structured problem-solving is demonstrated by the force's success in winning the category for 'problem-solving with partners' in the 2022 national [Tilley Awards](#).

### **The force actively seeks out and applies evidence-based policing practice**

The force uses evidence-based policing well. It looks for examples of evidence-based practice from other forces and applies these approaches to problems it has identified. It works with academics to develop and evaluate an evidence base where one doesn't exist. This helps the force understand what kinds of policing activity work well. A controlled trial on preventing burglary used different approaches across three streets that had experienced the same level of crime over a period of time. An evaluation demonstrated a decrease in burglaries in two of the three areas. The costs and benefits were also considered in the force's evaluation.

The chief constable is the national lead for problem-solving and the force regularly hosts a national problem-solving conference. This promotes evidence-based practice, bringing forces from across England and Wales together to share learning.



### **The force works well with partners to prevent crime, anti-social behaviour and recurring demand by supporting vulnerable people**

Officers and staff in neighbourhood policing teams work with partner organisations to reduce crime, anti-social behaviour and repeat demand. This includes community safety and other departments across the four local authorities in the force area, as well as charities and other organisations. The partners we spoke to were overwhelmingly positive about how officers and staff work with them. The priority locations, people and groups identified through joint analysis are discussed through a meeting structure that includes staff representing partner organisations. All participants contribute to develop a joint plan to support a [priority individual](#) or family, and tackle problems in particular geographical locations before they become worse.

### **The force carries out effective problem-solving, with partners, to protect vulnerable people and reduce crime and anti-social behaviour**

We found many good examples of problem-solving being applied in practice with positive outcomes for local communities. The force has successfully used tactics such as disruption, catch and convict, hotspot patrols and dedicated police houses within communities to help prevent crime and anti-social behaviour. Its approach is informed by [broken windows theory](#) – the concept that crime can be prevented by restoring and maintaining order and public norms of behaviour. It means dealing with lower-level crime to prevent more serious crime and disorder from occurring.

An example of problem-solving is the force's approach to reducing nuisance and environmental anti-social behaviour in an area of Sheffield. Working with a community that generally didn't want to engage had been difficult, and parts of the community lacked trust in police officers. And the force was receiving a high volume of calls from the wider community relating to anti-social behaviour.

The force and partner organisations have now created a community house within the estate, where they hold open surgeries and drop-ins, and provide crime advice and support for those in need. It is used mainly by police officers, who are joined by local authority staff, environmental and health advisors, youth outreach workers, a language interpreter and a local authority partnership manager. Police and other services advertise the times that they are in the house. The community now sees this as 'their' house.

This approach has built trust with the community, who became familiar with seeing police officers every day. It increased cohesion within the local community and resulted in an initial increase in the reporting of incidents and crimes so that these could be dealt with. It also led to disruption and other [positive action](#). The force told us it resulted in 58 arrests for assault, offensive weapons being retrieved, drug cultivation being identified and dealt with, and 194 vehicles being seized that were without insurance, unroadworthy, stolen or abandoned. Overall, the approach has reduced anti-social behaviour in the area and reduced the volume of calls and demand placed on all agencies.

A similar approach has been taken across other areas of South Yorkshire, which has contributed to the force reducing levels of anti-social behaviour.

South Yorkshire Police reduced the number of recorded anti-social behaviour incidents from 57,544 in the year ending 31 March 2018 to 27,322 in the year ending 31 March 2022. The public perception of the extent of anti-social behaviour in South Yorkshire aligns with the volume of incidents the force records. This parallel is positive.

### **The force values and recognises neighbourhood policing and problem-solving**

The force recognises and rewards officers and staff for their innovative practice in solving problems for local communities through its own Recognising Excellence awards. It submits entries to the national Tilley Awards and international [Goldstein Awards](#). It also seeks out and uses best practice and what works from other forces.

# Responding to the public

## Adequate

South Yorkshire Police is adequate at responding to the public.

### Innovative practice

#### **Officers and staff are trained to identify and assess vulnerable children when incidents are reported**

South Yorkshire Police introduced 'Child Matters' training to improve the skills, knowledge, and judgment of its workforce in recognising and recording child neglect when they respond to incidents. This course has been designed by South Yorkshire Police in partnership with the NSPCC, Diabetes UK, the British Paediatric Dental Association and a doctor of psychology. It has been given to over 4,000 officers and staff, including senior leaders, as well as partner organisations.

The training raises awareness in recognising child neglect and how to assess the risk to a child using the NSPCC's [risk assessment](#) tool. It is taught using real-life incidents to make sure that officers and staff can relate it to their daily work. Police officers often get to see the true environment a child is living in, unlike other professionals who often visit at a planned time. Since the training began, the force has seen a 48 percent increase in child neglect referrals and a 75 percent increase in the use of police powers to tackle child neglect. As a result, it has improved working relationships with its partner organisations and has a better understanding of neglect as a police responsibility. This training is now being rolled out in other forces.

## **The force has professionalised its workforce to better understand mental health**

In response to our [Joint thematic inspection of the criminal justice journey for individuals with mental health needs and disorders](#), the force has further trained its workforce. South Yorkshire Police formed a multi-agency mental health training group, which includes police, health, and local authority representatives as well as volunteers who have lived with mental health conditions and can share their experiences of these. The group carried out a gap analysis comparing national guidance and existing force training. The force then adapted its training based on feedback from the volunteers. It also included the 'six missed chances' published as [Independent Office for Police Conduct](#) recommendations in 2017 (in response to James Herbert's death in custody) within its training. It has since trained a total of more than 2,500 officers and staff from partner organisations. Further advice is given to the workforce through the force's mental health portal and a mental health toolkit.

## **Areas for improvement**

### **The force needs to make sure that call resolution officers give appropriate advice on the preservation of evidence and crime prevention**

We found that advice on preventing crime and preserving evidence wasn't always given when required. Call resolution officers gave advice on preserving evidence in 20 of 28 cases we reviewed, and on preventing crime in 28 of 35 cases. This could lead to the loss of evidence that would support an investigation, and the opportunity to prevent further crimes against the victim.

### **The force should attend all calls for service in line with its published attendance times**

The force assigns a grade to incidents that need police attendance, according to the level of threat, harm and risk. The force's response times for incidents that are urgent are risk assessed and prioritised as requiring either an emergency response (within 15 minutes) or a priority response (within an hour). The force doesn't have a separate target for its response to incidents in rural areas. The force's data shows that it responds to most emergency incidents within 11 minutes and most priority incidents within 52 minutes. But it isn't meeting its own targets to respond to all incidents within its published timescales. In the year ending 31 August 2022, 67.1 percent of emergency incidents were responded to within 15 mins and 54.2 percent of priority incidents within an hour.

When the force's response to an incident is delayed, the victim is notified. We saw examples of numerous attempts made by officers at addresses, and through phone calls, to make sure vulnerable victims were safe and well. Incidents that are delayed are triaged by the control room and are reviewed and prioritised through daily meetings in each district.

## **Main findings**

In this section we set out our main findings that relate to how well the force responds to the public.

### **Call resolution officers treat callers politely and with respect**

People who call the police, particularly in an emergency, may be under pressure and may not always communicate calmly and rationally. We found that call resolution officers (call handlers) were polite and professional, and showed empathy in dealing with members of the public, in 64 of the 66 cases we reviewed. In two cases, we found that they could have shown more empathy towards the victim.

### **The force is improving how quickly it answers emergency calls and reducing the number of non-emergency calls that are abandoned**

On 31 May 2022, the Home Office published data on 999 call answering times. Call answering time is the time taken for a call to be transferred to a force, and the time taken by that force to answer it. In England and Wales, forces should aim to answer 90 percent of these calls within 10 seconds. We have used this data to assess how quickly forces answer 999 calls. We do acknowledge, however, that this data has only been published recently. As such, we recognise that forces may need time to consider any differences between the data published by the Home Office and their own.

According to this data, the force hasn't always been able to answer 999 calls promptly. Between 1 November 2021 and 30 June 2022, the force answered 27.1 percent of 999 calls within 10 seconds, below the target of 90 percent in 10 seconds. But we note that data released since our inspection shows that 73.9 percent of 999 calls between 1 July and 30 September 2022 were answered within 10 seconds.

### **The force has improved how quickly it answers [101](#) non-emergency calls.**

The force has changed its call handling processes so that calls are presented to a call resolution officer quicker, without any loss in quality of the service given to the caller. It now answers 101 calls quicker, with fewer callers abandoning their call. The force told us that in August 2022, 10 percent of these calls were abandoned, which is an improvement against the national target. But it still has more to do to meet this target, which is 5 percent where a force has a switchboard in place. The force has made improvements by introducing new software that improves the customer experience. It has also extended the opening times of its switchboard. And there are now other methods people can use to contact the force including callback, online chat, online reporting and emails. These other routes are dealt with by a digital team and are actively promoted on social media when 101 call volumes are high.

### **Vulnerable people are identified quickly and risk assessed when they contact the force**

Call resolution officers have been trained to identify vulnerable people and risk assess their needs. They have access to information held in force systems and use a structured risk assessment model ([THRIVE](#)), which is informed by a vulnerability assessment framework. We found that THRIVE was used correctly on most occasions, with good identification of vulnerable people and repeat victims. We are satisfied that call resolution officers are researching and using all the relevant information available in force systems. This allows them to plan the most appropriate response. Officers are given a full picture of what is happening before attending an incident. And effective supervision makes sure that the standard of call handling and the force's response to a call are appropriate.

### **The force has a good understanding of the demand it receives from calls and the staff numbers it needs to address this**

The force has reviewed the demand it receives from calls. The type and volume of calls have changed since the pandemic. In the year ending 31 March 2022, the force received 291,549 emergency 999 calls and 540,007 non-emergency 101 calls. These volumes represented the fifth highest and seventh highest rates per 1,000 population respectively across all forces in England and Wales.

It has recruited the number of call resolution officers it needs to answer the volume of calls it receives. But some of these staff are still in training. Once these staff are fully trained, this is likely to improve the force's ability to answer its 999 and 101 calls quickly. The force has made changes to its switchboard opening times to better align with the demand it now receives. And it is consulting with staff to make further changes to their shift patterns to better align these with current demand.

## **The force has professionalised staff working its control room**

The force's call resolution officers receive an intensive 13-week course to prepare them for answering calls from people who need help. Most of the staff we spoke to were positive about the training they had received. This professional training includes enhanced hate crime training from specialists, as well as training on cyber crime, counter-terrorism, [female genital mutilation](#), modern slavery and human trafficking, and non-fatal strangulation. The staff also receive additional training in how to respond to vulnerable people, which includes input from social care teams, the NHS and independent domestic abuse advisors. The call resolution officers are trained to determine whether children live in a household where a domestic abuse incident has occurred. This helps to identify any concerns relating to children, such as possible child neglect.

## **The force considers the well-being needs of staff working in its control room**

The [force control room](#) can be a stressful and demanding environment to work in. Most staff we spoke to who work in the force control room told us they receive good well-being support. This finding is backed up by low levels of sickness absence.

A life coach has been working with control room staff on mindfulness and managing stress. And a sleep therapist has talked to them about how to get meaningful rest on their days off. Managers carry out staff surveys to ask about staff's well-being and working environment, and deal with any issues that these reveal. [Trauma risk management](#) is also made available to staff, following calls about traumatic incidents or a series of such calls. And staff have access to a well-being room and garden if they need time out during the working day.

## **Incidents are prioritised and allocated appropriately by the force control room**

The force's incident grading and response policy are clear. It aims to make sure there is an appropriate response that considers risk and vulnerability. The force aims to provide "a proportionate and effective response to incidents in line with the identified threat, risk and harm". This is consistent with the national contact management strategy. We found that nearly all the incidents we reviewed were allocated to the appropriate team in line with this policy.

## **Officers attending incidents understand and assess vulnerability well**

The force uses referral forms to assess and understand risk and vulnerability when attending incidents involving a [vulnerable person](#) or child, including domestic abuse incidents. Using an assessment tool, officers assess a child's safety, hygiene, attachment, responsiveness, environment, diet and discipline.

As part of our case file review, we found that officers were good at identifying vulnerability and at determining whether there were children present at a domestic abuse incident. To do this, there is good use of systems and all available information.



Relevant information is passed to the attending officer, and supervisors make sure a risk assessment is completed. We recognise the good progress the force has made in this respect.

### **The force has a good understanding of the demand it receives from incidents and the number of officers it needs**

The force understands its incident demand and it has the officer numbers required to respond to that demand. But most of its student officers are still in training. The duration of the new [policing education qualifications framework](#) recruitment programme means that many of these officers aren't yet at full independent patrol status. Until they are, they still need to be accompanied by an experienced officer. And they spend weeks away from the force studying at university. Between 1 October 2020 and 30 June 2022, the force recruited 577 new police officers and is now starting to see these student officers reach independent patrol status. This means that the speed at which officers can respond to incidents should improve, and the pressure faced by more experienced officers should ease.

### **The force has professionalised officers working in its response teams**

The force has worked hard to train its officers to understand their responsibilities when responding to vulnerable people, including children. This professional training includes all officers being trained in domestic abuse, a first-line responder programme, and the force's own accredited Child Matters programme. Frontline officers are also given further development through skills training days, Wednesday webinars that cover a range of topics to raise awareness, and 'bitesize' learning about issues arising relating to vulnerable people, including children.



# Investigating crime

Good

South Yorkshire Police is good at investigating crime.

## Innovative practice

### **An investigator handbook gives guidance on investigating different crime types**

The force has produced a handbook for investigators as part of its 'back to basics' approach to investigation. The handbook covers the entire investigation process. It brings together key points from individual force policies and includes links to where further detail can be found. It covers crime types that investigators may not respond to on a regular basis, such as kidnap, extortion, modern slavery, rape, and domestic abuse-related homicide. It gives guidance on how to investigate these different crime types, as well as identifying investigative opportunities, the direction of resources, and risk assessment meetings. It also advises on how to take forward an evidence-led prosecution, where the victim doesn't support this.

### **A domestic abuse handbook guides investigators and supervisors on how to support victims of domestic abuse**

This handbook gives investigators and supervisors an improved understanding of what happens at each stage when domestic abuse is reported. It brings together the relevant individual policies and guidance. It is a practical guide that makes it easy for investigators to understand the process from beginning to end. The handbook emphasises the importance of safeguarding, victim engagement, quality investigations and the use of protective orders.

### **The force provides supplementary learning and development for police staff investigators wanting to progress to the next level**

The force has developed an introduction to child investigation course to bridge the gap between professionalising investigation programme (PIP) 1 and PIP2 trained investigators. As a result, it now has 7 PIP2 police staff investigators. The training is an online course that covers topics such as understanding acronyms, what a child strategy meeting is, and legislation relating to child investigations.

## **Area for improvement**

### **The force should improve its consideration of enhanced services to vulnerable victims and how it records victim needs assessments in investigations**

A victim needs assessment is a way to understand and document a person's requirements. It also shows that the force has considered using enhanced services to support people, such as those who are vulnerable, intimidated or persistently targeted, or are victims of serious crime. We found that officers considered all elements of the victim needs assessment in 50 of 70 cases we reviewed. The force should do more to make sure that this happens on all occasions. Not considering these needs consistently could lead to vulnerable people not supporting prosecutions or losing faith in the criminal justice process. The force has taken steps to educate its workforce about the importance of complying with the rights in the [Victims' Code of Practice](#) and gives some practical support to officers so that they can do this. But it can still do more to make sure that they routinely ask victims about the support they need and record it effectively.

## **Main findings**

In this section we set out our main findings that relate to how well the force investigates crime.

### **The force is good at investigating crime**

The force has an effective investigations strategy, and associated policies, which are applied well. We found that the majority of investigations we reviewed were effective. Investigative opportunities were taken in most cases and there were very few delays in taking investigations forward. Clear supervisory oversight provides meaningful direction and determines appropriate actions to support the quality of investigations. And the right outcome type was applied to the investigation in most cases.

We found that the overall service given to victims was good in most cases. The force agrees the frequency of contact with the victim and gives regular and timely updates about the progress of the investigation.

### **The force has comprehensive oversight of the performance and quality of investigations**

The quality of investigations is overseen at every level, from supervisors of individual investigation teams to a chief officer. The force has developed an assurance framework to assess the quality of its investigations, known as quality assurance thematic testing. This regular auditing of practice takes place across all investigation teams. It is supported by an investigation improvement unit working alongside the force's crime department and training team. Issues that are revealed by the audits are incorporated into training for investigators, and the unit raises awareness of important issues through webinars. Performance is reported through the force's investigation governance group and other performance meetings at all levels.

### **We found a more effective and consistent approach to child protection and vulnerable adult investigations**

The force uses its assurance framework to test the quality of its decision-making about children and vulnerable adults. Its central protecting vulnerable people (PVP) governance team carries out regular auditing of the quality of specialist investigations relating to vulnerable children and adults. From our case file review, we found an effective and consistent approach to child protection and vulnerable adult investigations across the force's four districts. These are positive findings, and significant improvements have been made in this area.

### **The force has a comprehensive view of its crime demand, skills and capability**

The force has a good understanding of the demand it faces from investigations. It has a detailed understanding of the capacity and capability it currently has, and what it requires to meet future demands.

It has used different types of entry routes into the force to attract people to apply for investigator roles. This includes the [National Detective Programme](#) and the [degree holder entry programme for detectives](#), and transferees from other forces. The force has also been successful in recruiting and training a higher than expected number of police staff investigators who are accredited to do PIP2 investigations.

The force has a moderate shortfall in the number of investigators it needs. As at 31 March 2022, the force had 90 percent of its 615 investigator posts filled with accredited PIP2 investigators or trainee investigators working towards this qualification. The force's 10 percent shortfall of investigators was broadly in line with the shortfall throughout England and Wales.

## **Provision of digital forensic evidence isn't always timely**

Like other forces, the force is experiencing increasing demand for its digital forensic services. It understands the demand for examinations that are submitted to its digital forensic examination unit. We found that there were no cases awaiting an initial assessment. But there were some cases awaiting examination that had failed to meet the service level agreement timescales. In turn, this can lead to lengthy delays in some investigations. Most of these cases are considered for outsourcing to an external forensic provider so that demand can be met. The force has a new case management system in place. It is now developing a submissions portal, attached to this system, for all types of digital forensic submissions. The force has a clear plan to meet its projected future demand for digital forensic examinations.

## **The force has invested in the development of its investigators**

The training of investigators has been developed into a learning journey. Initial training is followed by a work-based assessment to observe whether the learning is being applied correctly. Accreditation is required for all investigators, overseen by a central assessment team. This extensive training programme has led to an improvement in the standard of investigations.

The force has also developed its own supplementary training to enhance training that is available nationally. It continues to professionally develop investigators through skills training days, webinars covering a range of topics, and bitesize learning, to increase their skills and refresh their knowledge. The force successfully taught some specialist courses remotely during COVID-19 restrictions, and has since continued this new way of providing learning.

This comprehensive approach to the development of investigators means that victims are likely to receive a quality investigation, consistent victim contact, and good support.

# Protecting vulnerable people

## Outstanding

South Yorkshire Police is outstanding at protecting vulnerable people.

### Innovative practice

#### **The force knows who the most vulnerable repeat victims are to be able to safeguard them**

In November 2020, South Yorkshire Police introduced a Repeat Victim Index that helps officers and staff identify victims and locations of multiple incidents. It includes an assessment of the number of incidents, how recent the incidents are, the harm caused, the severity of incidents and the risk that remains. It also helps to identify any cumulative risk to victims. A weighting of the specific criteria provides a score, which is used to prioritise people and locations.

This index brings all repeat victim names together so that they can be seen in one place. And it provides a comprehensive overview of all these victims. The index helps with understanding whether different teams are safeguarding or investigating the same person. And it is used to inform the force's meetings where individuals are discussed and a decision is made on which people need a plan to support them. We found examples where action has been taken that has reduced the risk to individuals and prevented more repeat incidents, or reduced the seriousness of incidents occurring.

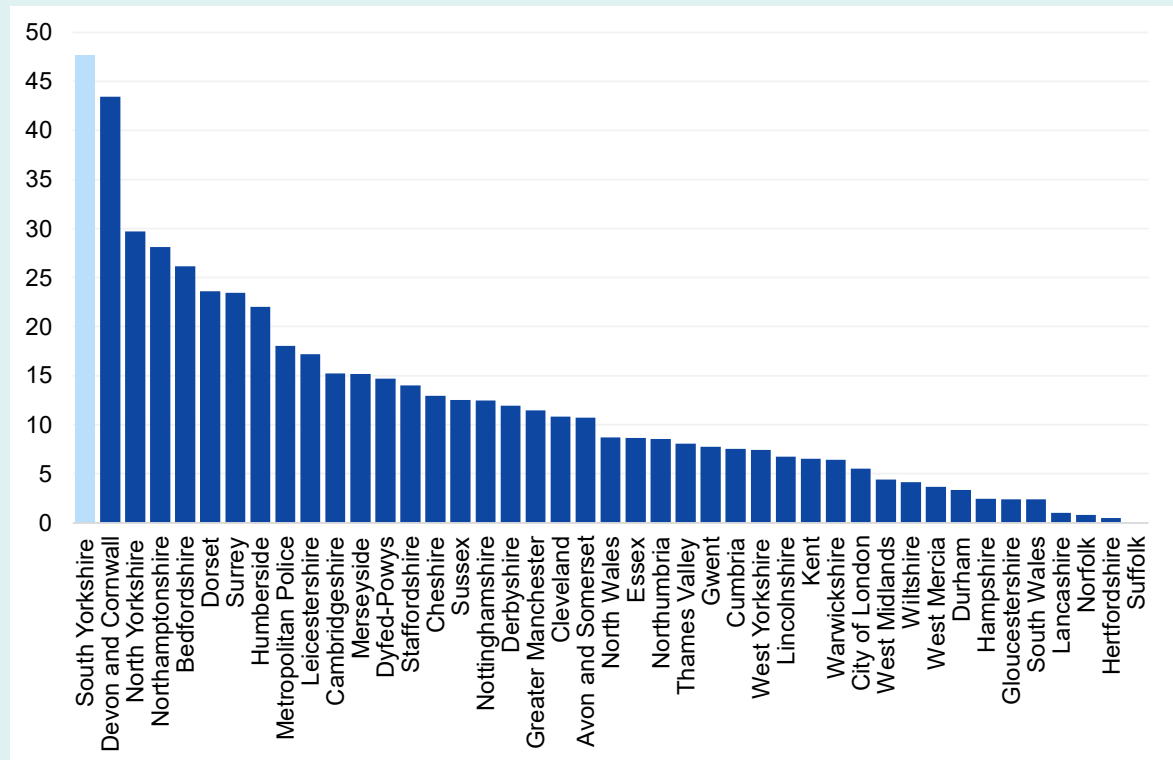
### **Partner organisations provide information and intelligence that support future plans to safeguard children**

Professionals who work with the force can submit intelligence about vulnerable children and their circumstances directly to the police. Completed forms go to the force's local referral unit for assessment and, where appropriate, police records are updated. We have seen examples of intelligence submissions provided by social workers, school safeguarding leads, housing association staff and victim support workers. This approach means that when decisions are made about the risk to a child's safety, the action to be taken and safety planning required, they are made based on information from multiple agencies.

### **The force makes good use of a police staff team to take forward protection orders to safeguard victims of domestic abuse**

The force has a dedicated [Domestic Violence Protection Order \(DVPO\)](#) team, led by police staff. The team has been legally trained by the force's solicitor responsible for DVPO support. A package of mock assessments and training in the courtroom takes place over a five-day period. Team members are also given a DVPO Manual on Law and Practice to support their understanding. These staff represent the cases in court, instead of officers having to attend. In the year ending 31 March 2022, the force had the highest rate of applications for DVPOs across all forces in England and Wales, at 47.7 per 1,000 recorded domestic abuse-related crimes. This means a lot of representations in court are required. The DVPO team understand the expectations of judges when presenting in court. They are providing a more consistent approach to DVPO applications and freeing up the time of officers and force solicitors.

**DVPOs applied for per 1,000 recorded domestic abuse-related crimes, across all forces, in the year ending 31 March 2022**



In the year ending 31 March 2022, South Yorkshire Police applied for 823 DVPOs, of which 723 were granted by the courts.

**The force uses GPS to locate people who go missing and keep them safe**

The force provides GPS devices to help locate vulnerable people with dementia who regularly go missing. This effective use of technology began following the disappearance of an otherwise healthy marathon runner who has dementia. Because of this condition, they couldn't always remember how to find their way home, so might put themselves at risk miles away from home. The last time they went missing, for three days, they were found sleeping in someone's back garden.

The force worked with the family to devise a solution. It assessed the ethics and legality of tracking someone who isn't able to give consent. It then sought consent from the family. The person now goes running with a GPS tracker, which allows the family to locate and rescue them when they can't find their way home. The force has given 500 GPS devices to people across South Yorkshire who have memory loss and go missing regularly. It has since worked with the NHS, who have trialled this as a treatment option for people with dementia. And it has worked with memory loss and dementia charities. This approach was initially suggested by an officer through the force's '[innovation station](#)', which is a space that allows members of staff to make suggestions about ways to improve their well-being. It makes good use of technology and keeps vulnerable people safe. It has also reduced the demand on police officers who would otherwise be searching for these people.

### **The force has a child-centred approach when children are held in custody**

The force has a separate booking-in desk for children who are detained, which is in an area away from other offenders. And it uses a separate needs assessment for children, including questions about when they last ate and if they should be in school. We found that children in custody were reviewed every four hours, which is positive. This is more frequently than required, with the intention of speeding up the investigation so the child can be released from custody sooner than may otherwise happen. We also found good provision of fidget toys, sponge footballs, books, pencils and paper for children. The force's approach acknowledges that custody isn't a place for children, and that children, by definition, are often vulnerable.

### **The force communicates well with people who are vulnerable and detained in custody**

In March 2020, the force introduced ebooks known as 'widgets' into its custody suites. These are easy-to-read electronic books, including images, to explain what happens when someone is detained in custody. The ebooks are suitable for people who have communication difficulties due to autism, learning disabilities, acquired brain injuries or not speaking English. They also help officers to determine whether there is any risk to the detainee, and if they need help.



## **Main findings**

In this section we set out our main findings that relate to how well the force protects vulnerable people.

### **The force has highly effective governance in place to protect vulnerable people**

Protecting vulnerable people is a priority for the force. This is reflected in its strategy and action plan. All the staff we spoke to told us that this is a priority throughout the organisation.

The force works well with leaders in other organisations throughout South Yorkshire to make sure that vulnerable people are kept safe. Alongside the force's own internal arrangements, a chief officer chairs the local strategic safeguarding partnership board. This includes senior representatives from the four local authorities in the force area. Similarly, other senior leaders meet regularly with their counterparts within children's services in each local authority area. In each of these areas there is a tiered meeting model, with partners, to identify and respond to vulnerable victims and offenders. This allows for the escalation of the most vulnerable people to be discussed on a case-by-case basis, so that the force can seek the support that it needs from other services, including health.

As a member of the local integrated commissioning service for health, the force makes joint decisions, with health partners, about providing adult and children's crisis pathways. This has given the force better access to mental health services and ended the use of custody as a place of safety. This level of joint oversight is positive.

Within the force, an assistant chief constable chairs the vulnerability governance group. This is supported by a vulnerability strategy and action plan.

### **The force understands the scale and nature of vulnerability**

The force's strategy identifies a wide range of different types of vulnerability. Each type has an expert 'theme lead' in the force. They commission analysis and have a comprehensive understanding of that type of vulnerability, informed by data and analysis. The theme leads work hard to raise awareness and develop officers and staff to understand each type of vulnerability. They work well with police inspectors leading these areas in each of the force's four districts. Jointly, the theme leads and inspectors make sure the force's vulnerability strategy and plan are implemented in the same way throughout the force. This oversight ensures consistency, sharing of good practice, and a drive to continuously improve what the force does to protect vulnerable people, including children. This work is further supported by a comprehensive performance and quality framework.

### **The force has an effective performance and quality assurance framework**

The force's governance unit makes sure there is compliance and consistency across its four districts on all matters relating to protecting vulnerable people. It has a good understanding of how well its teams are performing. The force regularly audits the work of its teams through its quality assurance process. It has comprehensive oversight of performance from the data it collects and reviews, including data about workloads, training and accreditation. The force makes good use of independent scrutiny of its investigations into child abuse and hate crime. This combined approach means that it understands how well it protects vulnerable people. Where issues are identified it acts quickly to resolve them.

The force has also been assessed against the [National Vulnerability Action Plan](#), with areas of good practice identified.

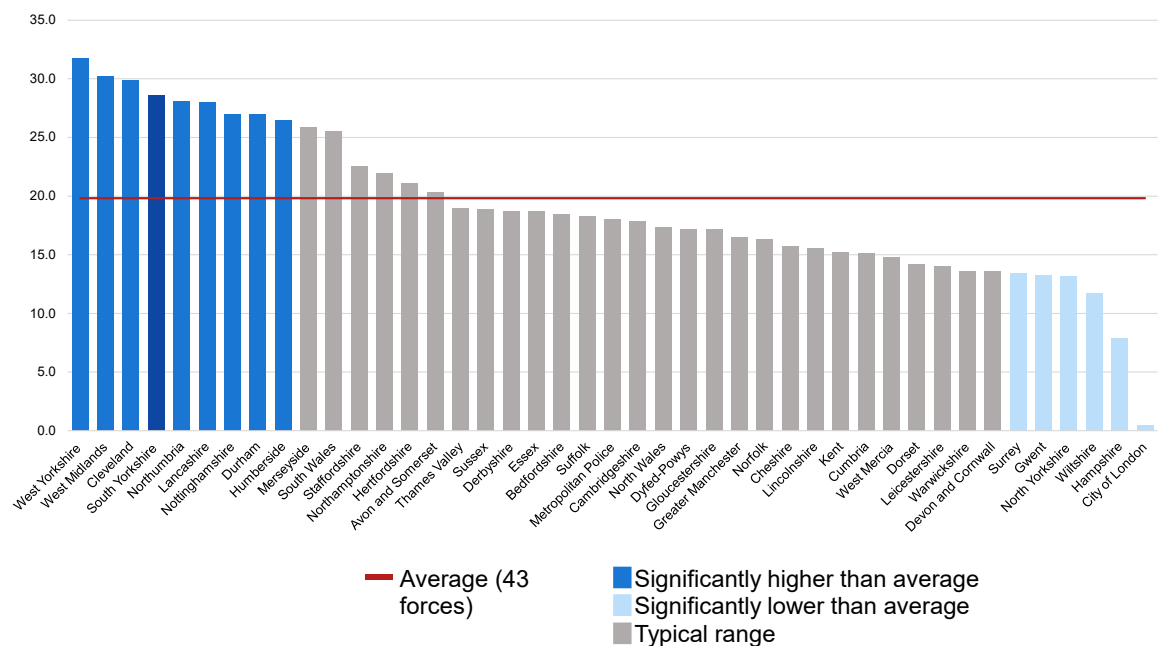
### **The force listens to the views of victims to improve its processes**

The force receives feedback from victims through a range of surveys, including bespoke surveys for domestic abuse, and for [stalking](#) and [harassment](#) victims. Its complete victim care group reviews this feedback to understand where the force needs to improve, allocate actions and track improvement. This group includes representatives from across the force, as well as from partner organisations such as victim support and [restorative justice](#) services. Victim satisfaction for hate crime investigations is also reviewed by the force's independent ethics panel to track progress. Where feedback is received from [serious case reviews](#), the force's [organisational learning](#) board makes sure action is taken.

### **The force works well to protect victims and children from domestic abuse**

South Yorkshire Police records high levels of domestic abuse. In the year ending 31 March 2022, it recorded over 40,000 domestic abuse-related incidents. It records a higher rate of reports of domestic abuse compared to other forces. Domestic abuse is a priority for the force, which it demonstrates in the actions it takes.

## Recorded domestic abuse-related incidents per 1,000 population, across forces, in the year ending 31 March 2022



We found that domestic abuse is identified correctly when a victim contacts the force. Call resolution officers know what to ask and what to look for. Victims are identified, and assessed correctly, including repeat victims. Officers respond well, and consistently complete a risk assessment to help them understand what support the victim needs. They identify children in the household and assess their lived experience and their living conditions.

Officers take positive action to safeguard victims at the scene of an incident. In the year ending 31 March 2022, South Yorkshire Police had the highest arrest rate of all forces in England and Wales for domestic abuse offenders, at 59.5 percent. This is notably higher than the rate across all forces in England and Wales of 27.3 percent. The force works well with partner organisations that support domestic abuse victims and perpetrators. It refers victims to independent domestic abuse and sexual abuse advisors for support. And it makes good use of a lifestyle programme, run by an external provider, that it refers domestic abuse offenders to.

Officers use their powers well to protect potential victims who are living with a known perpetrator. They do this by notifying people about an offender’s history of domestic violence through the [Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme](#) (also known as the ‘[Clare’s Law](#)’ right to know scheme). In the year ending 31 March 2022, South Yorkshire Police made the third highest rate of right to know disclosures across all forces in England and Wales, at 5 disclosures per 10,000 population. It makes good use of DVPOs to further safeguard victims of domestic abuse.

We found that all domestic abuse-related crimes that we reviewed had effective investigations. And the force achieved the highest charge rate for offenders of domestic abuse compared with other forces. The force encourages victims to go ahead with a prosecution. As a result, it has a relatively low use of [outcome 16](#) (where a suspect has been identified but the victim no longer supports the prosecution) compared to other forces, which is positive. In the year ending 31 March 2021, 36.9 percent of domestic abuse-related crimes were assigned this outcome type. Officers make good use of evidence from their body-worn video footage to bring an offender to justice and keep the victim and wider public safe.

### **The force works well with other organisations to keep vulnerable people safe**

The force has formal measures in place that allow for effective information sharing, through multi-agency arrangements to keep people safe. These arrangements include:

- safeguarding hubs;
- risk assessment conferences;
- joint tasking and co-ordination meetings;
- a multi-agency approach to child exploitation; and
- a multi-agency approach to organised crime.

Officers and staff from partner organisations work together in the same offices within each local authority area. This includes officers from the police local referral unit working alongside children's social care, health and education services.

This co-location makes it easier and quicker to share information and make joint decisions. Secondary partners who take part in partnership meetings include local probation, housing and mental health services, independent domestic abuse and sexual advisory services, and drugs rehabilitation and lifestyle programmes. The force has co-ordinators who do research for and attend these meetings. They communicate what is known by the force, and partner organisations share what information they have.

### **The force works well with other organisations to keep children safe**

We reviewed 40 case files relating to domestic abuse and child protection. We found that the decisions and actions raised at strategy meetings and child protection case conferences, held with partners, were clearly recorded on force systems. And we found that all relevant documentation was uploaded to force systems in all cases. We saw clear recording on force systems of children who are on a child protection plan, and the reasons for this. And we also found that comprehensive research was carried out by the force's local referral units when a request was received ahead of a strategy meeting. This includes a review of officers' body-worn video footage. This review is summarised and shared at strategy meetings along with the other research. Photographs of neglect cases are also shared to give a better understanding of what is happening. This means that decisions about the next steps to protect children are informed by all available information. These are positive findings.

### **The force has access to mental health support services for people in need of support**

The force's involvement in the local multi-agency public health strategy and joint commissioning of services means that it has access to the mental health support it needs. The force experiences high levels of incidents involving people with mental health problems. It understands this demand well, including the busiest times of day for these incidents. The force monitors its use of [section 136 of the Mental Health Act 1983](#) for people who are at risk of harming themselves and others. It also monitors the mental health support available (via a telephone service and street support service) and the use of police vehicles to take patients to a place of safety. The combined understanding of all the services involved informs decisions about the mental health services available locally. The force also works well in its approach to low-risk individuals experiencing mental health problems who regularly contact the police and other agencies for help. Through its safer neighbourhood services, it finds the right support for these people.

### **The force has stopped the use of custody as a safe place for people detained under section 136**

In the year ending 31 March 2022, South Yorkshire Police detained 1,134 individuals under [section 136](#) of the Mental Health Act 1983. Since 2019, the force has stopped detaining any adult or child within its custody cells under this legislation. Instead, it seeks to return these people to a place of safety at home, with another family member, or in the care of medical staff. While it isn't unusual for forces to use custody as a place of safety for adults or children, it isn't the best environment to cater for their needs.

### **The force understands the capacity and capability it needs to respond to vulnerable people**

The force continually reviews the demand it receives against the staffing levels it has within its PVP teams. This demand continues to increase. The force has reviewed over 700 crimes to determine what level of workforce experience would be needed to deal with different crime types. This has then been compared with the level of experience that it has across the organisation.

There is a clear understanding of which roles have responsibility for different types of vulnerability. All teams throughout the force are focused on identifying, safeguarding and supporting vulnerable people. The force has made significant investment in training and guidance about vulnerability. In doing so, it has increased the capability of its workforce to identify, address and assess vulnerability. This learning is supported by continuous professional development, including multi-agency safeguarding courses with health and social care services every three months.

### **The force has improved the well-being of officers and staff who investigate complex cases involving vulnerable people**

The well-being of officers and staff working in the force's protecting vulnerable people teams is a priority. In addition to the force's overall well-being provision, and a mandatory annual psychological assessment for these people, it has a dedicated PVP well-being group. The group acts on feedback given through a survey. This feedback includes factors that affect well-being, such as obstacles to doing effective work and their working environment. Its actions are also informed by the new well-being toolkit for investigators provided by the [National Police Well-being Service \(Oscar Kilo\)](#). We found that investigators working in the force's PVP teams were positive about their role. Although workloads are high, most feel their well-being is supported.

# Managing offenders and suspects

Good

South Yorkshire Police is good at managing offenders and suspects.

## Main findings

In this section we set out our main findings that relate to how well the force manages offenders and suspects.

### The force pursues offenders and suspects well

The force arrests most offenders and suspects promptly. They are all risk assessed and prioritised. High-risk suspects and offenders who haven't yet been arrested are monitored and continue to be sought. Their details are communicated through daily, weekly and fortnightly meetings. These meetings also consider other suspects who are proving difficult to locate, including prison absconders and foreign national offenders. Officers are informed about who these people are so that they can be quickly sought and arrested. These wanted offenders are also circulated promptly on the [police national computer](#) so that they are known to other forces.

### The force makes good use of bail conditions to prevent re-offending

The force uses pre-charge [bail](#) effectively as a proactive measure to deter offenders from re-offending. There is consideration of the risk to the victim and wider public, and the offending history, to inform this decision. A clear process is in place for authorising bail conditions, with regular reviews. And a new process to better manage reviews of bail has been put in place. The force has low numbers of offenders who are [released under investigation](#), which we found is used appropriately for lower-risk cases. Officers show a good understanding of when to use pre-charge bail or release a suspect under investigation, with consideration given to the victim's safety.



## **The force has effective structures in place to manage offenders**

The force has effective governance and oversight of its management of offenders. This includes an integrated offender governance group that makes sure there is consistency in how offenders are managed across the force's four districts. Probation managers and policing teams work together in probation service buildings, which results in better information sharing.

The force's integrated offender management (IOM) programme is in line with the national strategy. It is based on offenders who pose the greatest risk of further offending under the new 'fixed, flex and free' model. This national change has seen an increase in the number of offenders for burglary being included. Domestic abuse offenders and other high-risk offenders continue to be managed through this programme. IOM teams also manage offenders who are on prevention and protection orders, and respond to breaches of these orders.

## **The force works well with partner organisations to prevent individuals from re-offending**

Offenders on the IOM programme are jointly managed. An assessment of the level of risk the offender poses is completed through joint case conference meetings between the police, the probation service and other partner organisations. These conferences consider a wide range of information and intelligence. We observed these meetings and found that this joint approach provides a better picture of the crimes the person has committed over a period of time, and their overall lifestyle. The force and probation managers work with other organisations that can offer support, including housing services and alcohol and drug support.

A range of interventions is offered to individuals to stop them from re-offending. This activity is acted upon through bespoke plans. The plans make sure that monitoring is in place to check the offender keeps to any bail or licence conditions placed on them. They also include referrals to programmes that provide support. All partners seek opportunities to encourage the person to participate in these programmes, which can help them change their lifestyle, find housing and get into work.

## **The force works hard to protect victims from domestic abuse offenders**

The force works with partner organisations to reduce the frequency of domestic abuse through a multi-agency approach. This is for offenders who commit domestic abuse on a regular basis, but which isn't serious enough for them to be convicted or supported through the IOM programme.



Multi-agency tasking and co-ordination meetings are in line with good practice taken from other forces. These meetings with partner organisations are held in each of the local authority areas that the force is responsible for. They meet regularly to discuss perpetrators of domestic abuse, and those who are assessed as high-risk are referred to the IOM programme. Those who commit lower-level abuse are encouraged to change their lifestyle through a range of available interventions. These include a domestic abuse perpetrator programme.

The programme has been in place for several years. It is a voluntary programme, on referral, for offenders who are 16 years and above. The service is commissioned by the [police and crime commissioner](#) jointly with the four local authorities. The force and children's social services make referrals to it. The programme is now being extended to include children aged ten years and above where children are the offenders (for example, where child on parent abuse takes place).

### **The force understands the benefits and outcomes of managing offenders**

A national system gives the force an understanding of the re-offending rate of offenders within its IOM programme. The force told us that 72 percent of offenders stop offending while they are on the programme. But in the latest group measured, 38 percent went on to re-offend in the 8-month period after leaving the cohort. This data is used to assess the cost of re-offending and how effective the programme is. It has recently been made available from a national system and will give the force a better comparative understanding when there is more data over a longer period.

### **The force has improved its management of registered sex offenders**

The force's management of offenders is in line with the College of Policing's [authorised professional practice](#). The force uses nationally recognised risk assessment tools to assess the risk that registered sex offenders pose. Staff who assess risk are properly trained in using these assessment tools. But during our initial assessment of the force we found a backlog of overdue risk assessments, risk management plans and visits. The force has since reduced this backlog considerably in a short period of time. As at 6 October 2022, the force told us that the backlog had reduced to 20 risk assessments, 81 overdue visits and 21 risk management plans to be completed. We dip-sampled the records that had been completed and found that the quality of the risk assessments and plans is good. This is positive improvement. The force continues to improve in this area. It now has appropriate governance and oversight of its management of violent and sexual offenders.

### **The force is effective in its investigations of indecent child abuse images**

The force has a dedicated team to assess the risk of and act against offenders who may share indecent images of children online. These investigators take a proactive approach against offenders suspected of committing these offences. They arrest suspects quickly and make good use of bail, with conditions and [sexual harm prevention orders](#) to protect the public. It is positive that the force puts safeguarding measures in place early in its investigations. This is informed by research and checks with social services and its safeguarding hub.

The force uses specialist software to assess sources of sharing indecent images of children. This is done monthly. The force may wish to consider accessing this software more frequently to assess the volume and level of risk within South Yorkshire.

### **The force uses ancillary orders to keep people safe**

The force makes good use of sexual harm prevention orders to protect vulnerable people. In the year ending 31 March 2022, it had 194 orders granted by the courts. This is an increase compared to 117 in the previous year. During the same period, the number of orders that were breached increased from 25 to 43. This shows that the force is proactive in managing the orders that are in place, is proactively identifying breaches of these orders and investigating them as an offence.

The force could make better use of sexual risk orders, which impose a restriction that the court considers necessary on an offender's behaviour. In the year ending 31 March 2022, the force issued five sexual risk orders. We found that the force's legal department was running clinics with staff working in protecting vulnerable people teams, to help them secure more of these orders through the courts.

### **The force understands its demand and the resources it needs to manage suspects and offenders effectively**

The force has assessed its demand for managing offenders and is planning to make further investment of staff in this area. The force has already provided additional staff in its busiest districts. There are vacancies in some teams, but not many. The force already had plans to increase staffing levels in its management of violent and sexual offender teams. Since our initial assessment, two additional staff have joined.

# Disrupting serious organised crime

We now inspect [serious and organised crime \(SOC\)](#) on a regional basis, rather than inspecting each force individually in this area. This is so we can be more effective and efficient in how we inspect the whole SOC system, as set out in HM Government's SOC strategy.

SOC is tackled by each force working with [regional organised crime units \(ROCU\)](#). These units lead the regional response to SOC by providing access to specialist resources and assets to disrupt [organised crime groups](#) that pose the highest harm.

Through our new inspections we seek to understand how well forces and ROCUs work in partnership. As a result, we now inspect ROCUs and their forces together and report on regional performance. Forces and ROCUs are now graded and reported on in regional SOC reports.

Our SOC inspection of South Yorkshire Police hasn't yet been completed. We will update our website with our findings (including the force's grade) and a link to the regional report once the inspection is complete.

# Building, supporting and protecting the workforce

Good

South Yorkshire Police is good at building and developing its workforce.

## Innovative practice

### **South Yorkshire Police is increasing the diversity of its workforce**

The force has good representation of women. As at 31 March 2022, 48 percent of the workforce across all ranks and roles is female. The force has been working towards improving its wider workforce representation to better reflect its local communities.

It holds sessions with members of the community, encouraging them to apply. It has recognised that sometimes it is a family decision about whether a family member should join the policing profession. So, it has adapted its approach and now sends invites that include a 'plus one' so that a family member can also go to the sessions. It provides leaflets in different languages for people to take home to their parents who may not speak or read English. These help to explain the role being applied for and the application process. Assistance is given where people don't have access to a computer to complete the application process.

The force offers online talks with officers and staff from different backgrounds, whom people can ask about their experience of working in the force. It runs workshops that help people understand each stage of the application process, and provides online interview practice and support for the fitness test so that potential applicants know what to expect. It also completes dyslexia screening so that they can be given the right support if they need it. The force is encouraging applicants for police staff roles through a jobs club at local community centres, and advertises a 'job of the week' through a wide network of contacts. This has resulted in an increase in the number of people who better represent the local community applying for jobs in the force.

### **The force raises its workforce's awareness of well-being and where to find help**

A 36-page force well-being magazine called SYP&Me gets to the heart of well-being. It is packed with articles that focus on the workforce. Topics include personal stories, Q and As, cooking and recipes, celebrating newborn babies, and how members of the South Yorkshire Police 'family' use sport to help their physical and mental well-being. The magazine covers new approaches being tried to educate people about their mental well-being. Other subjects have included why it's important to be happy and how some people achieve this and how they help each other. And, building a working environment that supports people to "thrive, develop and prosper".

The magazine contains adverts for staff networks and Backup Buddy – the force's app that supports both mental and physical health of police. It gives updates on well-being dogs and new police dog recruits. And there is a well-being directory on the back page. The magazine originated from an idea that an operational officer put into the force's ['innovation station'](#). It won support from senior leaders, and continues to be authored and published by the same officer.

### **The force helps its workforce manage their mental health**

Policing can be a demanding and stressful working environment. The force introduced a 'Mind Over Mountain' well-being initiative during the pandemic. The aim of this is to get staff to exercise in the fresh air, which is good for mental health and well-being. Four staff members, who are trained as mountaineering guides, arrange walks on a weekly scheduled rest day. The staff attending are given a day of leave back, so that they 'get time out but don't lose out'. A local well-being lead joins the group to support participants as they walk and talk. This is an initiative that is offered to personnel whose line managers can see their well-being would benefit. It goes through a triage process because the force gives a day back.

### **The force has trained and developed its volunteer officers to the same level as regular officers**

South Yorkshire Police invests in the training of its special constabulary volunteers. It has two accredited special constabulary trainers, who are volunteers themselves, and are part of the force's operational training team. They impart all the training for the special constabulary. This means that volunteer officers receive the same level of training as regular officers, which isn't diluted in any way. During 2022, the force's special constabulary senior leaders were asked by the College of Policing to help develop a First Line Leaders Development Programme. This course is built on the sergeant training course that the special constabulary in South Yorkshire Police were already using to train their officers. The force has since supported the development of the national programme.

## **Main findings**

In this section we set out our main findings that relate to how well the force builds and develops its workforce.

### **The force continues to have an ethical and inclusive culture**

Staff are proud to work for South Yorkshire Police and a feeling of belonging exists in the organisation. The force continues to develop the positive ethical culture we found in our 2019 inspection. In July 2021, the new chief constable began her role and during 2022 worked with staff to refresh the values she wants to see. These are fairness, integrity and trust. The [College of Policing's Code of Ethics](#) sets the standards of behaviour for everyone working in policing. We found that this was widely understood by the workforce. The code continues to be promoted within the organisation through 'the Pledge' – a contract that commits the workforce to high standards of ethical behaviour.

The force regularly surveys its workforce to understand people's views. It has a range of active staff networks, and an equality hub, who support people within the organisation. These also give feedback and advice to senior leaders. The workforce is encouraged to speak freely and discuss ethical dilemmas, and they generally feel that they can do so. Its Free2Be@SYP project helps create an inclusive culture and gives guidance for line managers to support their staff while recognising that equality, diversity and inclusion can be sensitive to talk about. The force continues to seek advice and guidance from its four independent advisory groups and panels about making ethical decisions and doing the right thing.

## **The force encourages the reporting of genuine mistakes and inappropriate behaviour**

The force has a 'no blame' culture and continues to use its [organisational justice](#) model to guide its decision-making. This model promotes a culture of learning and development. It uses reflective practice rather than blame and punishment when things go wrong. It encourages the reporting of genuine errors and mistakes to identify learning opportunities. The force emphasises that standards and integrity are important in public service. It supports officers and staff who make honest mistakes, with a focus on individual learning. But where it finds serious misconduct, it deals with this robustly. The continued use of this model to inform decision-making about staff behaviour continues to be positive practice.

## **The force understands the well-being of its workforce**

The force has a good understanding of how its workforce is feeling. An annual well-being report provides data, analysis and a plan for the year ahead. It considers a range of measures including survey results, data, feedback from focus groups and individual departmental and district well-being dashboards. A quarterly well-being assessment helps the force understand the 'temperature' throughout the organisation and see which areas are 'running hot', with well-being concerns identified.

The force explores the causes when it sees any increases in sickness. For example, an increase in gastrointestinal problems prompted a discussion that concluded that this was a symptom of stress. This discussion with staff involved the force's occupational therapist, well-being co-ordinator, business change team, and senior leaders. It helped to identify the root cause of a staff well-being issue, so that a more rounded approach could be taken to address concerns.

## **The force looks for and removes barriers to well-being**

The force aims to remove barriers that stop or hinder people from doing their jobs. It has asked its workforce what these are through its annual staff survey, more frequent 'pulse' surveys and governance meetings. It has an 'innovation station', which is a space that encourages people to make suggestions about what barriers they face and potential ways of resolving any issues. These issues are dealt with through the force's governance meetings. The force recognises that sometimes it is small things that make a difference for its workforce. Examples of these that it has provided include an ice machine, a sink that works properly and better office surroundings. It also recognises that IT is a frustration for the workforce and continues to make IT improvements, although some issues are linked to systems that are supported nationally.



## **The force maintains the well-being of its workforce**

The force provides support for its workforce, and senior leaders play a positive role in raising the awareness of well-being. Since our 2019 inspection, the force has assessed itself against the [Oscar Kilo framework](#) and has had a [peer review](#) done by another force.

The force has low levels of short and long-term sickness absence. It manages staff sickness well and gives good support when this is required. It helps to bring people back to work by providing effective support through reasonable adjustments. Since our last inspection, the force has made further investment in its well-being and occupational health provision. It now has a well-being co-ordinator, three more counsellors and an occupational therapist. Referrals for physio treatment are now made to an external provider. In our 2019 PEEL inspection, we found that staff were waiting 44 days from referral to treatment. We are pleased to see that this situation has improved. Between 1 January and 31 March 2022, there was an average wait time of 14 days.

## **The force has a good range of well-being initiatives available to staff, but some struggle to find the time to participate**

The force has a wide range of well-being options available to officers and staff. A dedicated well-being page on the intranet signposts the workforce to where they can find help. The force has active staff networks that provide support for men's and women's health. And an employee assistance programme is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. The workforce can use this for support and practical advice on matters that might affect their well-being, such as financial management, relationships, stress and anxiety and family issues.

The force's SYP&Me magazine and Mind Over Mountain initiatives are just two examples of ideas from the workforce that have been put in place to support well-being. The force also has 25 well-being dogs, who are the pets of members of staff and have gone through a training process as part of the national Oscar Kilo framework. Staff have access to the Backup Buddy app, which the force has tailored to support its workforce and, during the pandemic, put regular messages out to staff using this method. An app that supports sleep and meditation is available for staff and officers to download and use on their work phones. This was introduced after concerns were raised about people struggling with sleep after they had worked a busy shift.

Occupational health takes a preventative approach, carrying out mandatory psychological screening for staff and officers who require it as part of their role. [Trauma risk management](#) is used for those who have dealt with catastrophic incidents. Supervisor referrals to trauma risk management now also consider the cumulative effect that several serious incidents can have.



Supervisors know what signs of possible well-being concerns to look for, and have conversations with staff if they think something may be wrong. Newly promoted sergeants receive training about well-being, including their responsibility to proactively monitor the people they supervise. A well-being guide for supervisors gives them further guidance about what to look for when considering the well-being of their staff. They also carry out an annual health check as part of the annual performance development review.

The workforce feels that well-being is improving. But officers and staff often say that their workloads are high, and some are working long hours. This is affecting their well-being and limiting the time they have to access the range of well-being support available. The force recognises this, and expects this pressure to ease when student officers reach independent patrol status and gain the necessary experience to support their colleagues. In the meantime, the force should make sure it puts in place measures to ease the pressures on the workforce and support their well-being.

### **The force is expanding its workforce for the future**

The force understands its recruitment needs for both police officers and police staff. This is outlined in its workforce plan. The force's aim is to attract high-quality talent across all roles, and make sure the organisation reflects the diversity of the communities it serves. By 31 March 2026, the force plans to increase its number of police officers to 3,200. It has already recruited the number of officers it needs to meet the Police Uplift Programme target, and through its local uplift, funded through a precept increase.

The force is an early adopter of the [policing education qualifications framework](#) recruitment programme. It has both [police constable degree apprenticeships](#) and [degree-holder entry programme](#) students. The force also recruits many officers through [Police Now](#), and more recently through the National Detective programme. The force has an effective partnership with Sheffield Hallam University for student officers.

### **The force is developing and professionalising its workforce for the future**

The force is a learning-centred organisation. It makes substantial investment in the development of its workforce. It understands the capability it needs from its workforce now and in the future, and has assessed the workforce's learning and development needs. The force has a fully costed learning and development plan that aligns with the [National Police Chiefs' Council Policing Vision 2025](#). Mandatory and initial training skills sessions are planned in addition to the further development for officers and staff.

The force makes a substantial investment in training. It has a leadership academy, a crime training department, and central assessment and practice teams for student officers in each of its districts. It considers what the most cost-effective option is to provide training (often this is in-house). It has invested in a new training facility with state-of-the-art technology to support its move towards digital learning. And it has increased the number of accredited trainers it has. Additionally, its practice educators do work-based assessments, which allows the force to assess whether what officers learn is being applied in practice. This approach is used in crime training, and in the central assessment and practice teams for student officers.

The force also prepares those working towards specialist accreditation by running in-house courses to support their learning. Where the force finds a gap in training available nationally, it develops its own training. For example, its Child Matters training and a neighbourhood policing training programme are both courses that the force has developed with other professionals and then gained accreditation through Skills for Justice.

The force makes sure that the training it provides is of a good standard. It uses a curriculum management strategy to make sure that all training provision meets national standards. It is guided by the Ofsted educational assessment framework, approved policing practice and national policing curriculums.

The force continues to develop its staff throughout their career. It provides a continuous professional development portal, which includes bitesize learning and SYPtv – a video streaming platform where videos can be uploaded by subject matter experts and promoted across the force. ‘Wednesday Webinars’ are used to refresh the knowledge of the workforce through brief online sessions that give people the opportunity to join from any location.

## Vetting and counter corruption

We now inspect how forces deal with vetting and counter corruption differently. This is so we can be more effective and efficient in how we inspect this high-risk area of police business.

Corruption in forces is tackled by specialist units, designed to proactively target corruption threats. Police corruption is corrosive and poses a significant risk to public trust and confidence. There is a national expectation of standards and how they should use specialist resources and assets to target and arrest those that pose the highest threat.

Through our new inspections, we seek to understand how well forces apply these standards. As a result, we now inspect forces and report on national risks and performance in this area. We now grade and report on forces' performance separately.

South Yorkshire Police's vetting and counter corruption inspection hasn't yet been completed. We will update our website with our findings and the separate report once the inspection is complete.

# Strategic planning, organisational management and value for money

## Outstanding

South Yorkshire Police is outstanding at operating efficiently.

### Innovative practice

#### **The force seeks opportunities to improve through problem-solving and innovation**

The chief constable describes the organisation as one that is about problem-solving, no matter what area staff work in. The force's 'innovation station' encourages ideas from staff. It focuses on the problem, the solution and how ideas support the force's plans.

The force has supported this scheme with an investment of £100,000, which the workforce can bid for to develop their ideas. To access this funding pot, ideas developed at a local level can be put forward to the quarterly innovation board. If approved, the ideas can then be taken forward.

For example, the innovation project provided £10,000 for [Automatic Number Plate Recognition](#) cameras for local police vehicles. This was aimed at developing a more intelligent approach to how the force manages [county lines](#) activity. The force made sure it tracked the benefits of the investment and idea to understand the impact and value.

It also funded the use of GPS trackers to find people reported missing who have dementia. The force has issued 500 devices to people who go missing and have dementia or memory loss. The system provides a trail of where the person has been. Over time, this helps develop a picture of where the person goes regularly and on what days. The force has since worked with the NHS on this approach, who have trialled it as a treatment option for people with dementia.

Both of these investments show the willingness of the force to listen to its workforce and encourage innovation. The Automatic Number Plate Recognition cameras supported officers with additional technology to fight serious crime proactively by developing better intelligence. The use of GPS trackers effectively supports vulnerable people with dementia and gives reassurance to their family and friends.

### **The force is efficient in its use of police staff roles to free up officer time**

The force has modernised its workforce to make sure that the right people are in the right roles, with a high proportion of police staff. As at 31 March 2022, 45 per cent of its workforce was police staff, and 55 percent police officers. It actively looks for ways in which it can be more efficient to reduce demand on frontline officers, to allow them to do their roles as warranted officers. This means that it employs police staff to do the jobs that don't require police powers. This includes many police staff roles that reduce some of the burden on police officers of doing research, paperwork and representations in court.

Examples of this include:

- Call handling and the allocation of incidents in the force's control room are carried out entirely by police staff.
- Staff co-ordinators do the research for and attend [multi-agency risk assessment conferences](#).
- The domestic abuse risk assessment team includes staff researchers who do all the background checks for the disclosures under Clare's Law.
- The force was the first to introduce a dedicated staff team who do all the research and representations in court for [domestic abuse protection orders](#).

The force also works well with volunteers through its special constabulary, the Lifewise Centre and cadets to support its frontline policing.

## Main findings

In this section we set out our main findings that relate to how well the force operates efficiently.

### **The force has an effective strategic planning and performance framework, making sure it tackles what is important locally and nationally**

The force's strategic planning process uses a comprehensive understanding of demand, capability, capacity, future risks to service provision, and opportunities for working in different ways. This informs the force's decision-making about its priorities and future operating model. It also informs its needs assessment as part of the police and crime commissioner's financial requirements. Throughout its plans the force shows consideration of value for money and the importance of listening to its communities to inform the service it provides. Its planning is supported by good governance and a mature performance framework throughout the organisation. This helps ensure a focus on the force's strategic priorities at all levels.

A good working relationship and a co-ordinated approach to strategic planning help make sure that the force's plans align with those of the office of the police and crime commissioner.

### **The force understands and manages its current demand well**

The force has a clear demand strategy, which focuses on the following four areas:

- demand analysis
- capacity management
- prediction
- partnerships.

When analysing demand, the force asks ten strategic questions. These include:

- In what ways will our communities and society change?
- How will partners and other agencies change their services?
- How will the public and partners access our services differently?

The force's demand strategy determines the topics it will work on with partner organisations to better understand current and future demand. For example, violence against women and girls throughout South Yorkshire.

The force's investment in comprehensive data and analysis means that it determines demand challenges and takes steps to mitigate the risks. There is a strong approach to using academic research and skills, and data sharing with partner organisations, to find ways to reduce demand and work differently. The force uses software to simulate its processes and model different scenarios, to inform its understanding of demand. Its development and use of data from its own systems in this context are impressive.

### **The force understands future demand and is planning to make sure it has the right resources in place to meet future needs**

The force has a good understanding of its future demand. It actively seeks feedback through existing processes and meetings. For example, an annual event for partner organisations, run by the force and police and crime commissioner, provides a detailed understanding of changes in demand and expectations across South Yorkshire. This informs the force's future planning and its consideration of how to adapt to changes.

The force makes sure that its investments in systems and people are aligned with its understanding of demand. This is subject to intense scrutiny, with a clear review and assessment process through its strategic demand board and strategic change board. The force's due diligence process checks all assumptions and decisions made before they take effect.

The force reviews and recognises changing demand to make sure it allocates resources appropriately. This supports its understanding of what is needed to meet its future challenges.

### **The force makes the best use of the money it has available, and its plans are both ambitious and sustainable**

The force is rigorous in managing its finances. It has developed sophisticated approaches to [priority-based budgeting](#), which make sure its most important objectives always guide how it allocates money and resources.

The force has a balanced Medium Term Financial Plan, which is based on realistic assumptions about future costs. The financial plans forecast a balanced budget with the use of reserves to balance the legacy costs the force faces. The force has business plans for each of its districts and departments, which allows it to analyse spending against priorities. This helps it understand where investment is needed and supports the development of targeted projects to increase efficiency.

It has established which savings it needs to make and has detailed plans in place to make them, accompanied by impact assessments. This means that it understands whether the saving is achievable, both from a financial perspective and in terms of any potential impact on services. The force's comprehensive understanding of demand is helping it recognise where efficiencies can be made while maintaining its provision of services.

## **The force effectively tracks the benefits its changes achieve, leading to better value for money**

The force has an effective process to track the benefits it expects to see from the changes it makes. These include increased efficiency, increased quality of service, cashable savings and improved staff satisfaction. This measurement of benefits is led by its business change and innovation team. The team has taken a mature approach in developing its understanding, including considering how organisations outside policing have developed their approaches to understanding benefits.

The force has identified and provided benefits through its new ways of working programme, including savings of more than £2m. This is allowing it to consider reinvestment to improve its services. For example, the force has invested in a [digital forensics](#) technician in its digital forensics unit. This should lead to further benefits in taking cases forward and supporting efficient and effective investigations.

The force is open to learning from other organisations and actively shares what it has learned.

The force founded, leads and runs the national benefits practitioner working group through its business change department, which shares learning across the public sector. It has also hosted events nationally to share its work with other forces and organisations.

## **The force has an ambitious IT strategy, which will help it improve its effectiveness**

The force has an effective IT strategy and a 'tech-enabled programme'. These support its development, use and adoption of technology to improve its efficiency and services. There is a good process for establishing what is required. Where new technology is needed, the force makes use of support in IT and business processes to help it achieve effective design, uptake and use. The force's investment in people with the right skills for this work – including project managers, business analysts, specialists and project support officers – is impressive.

Current projects include implementing a new digital assessment management system, integrating multiple force systems, rolling out Microsoft 365 and adopting technology that allows the control room to video call members of the public to help visualise situations and make sure the right resources are deployed. The force is also investing in robotics. It is currently examining the possible use of automation in several areas of work to help make processes more efficient.



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