



PEEL 2023–25

Police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy

An inspection of West Yorkshire Police

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Overall summary

Our judgments

Our inspection assessed how good West Yorkshire Police is in ten areas of policing. We make graded judgments in nine of these ten as follows:

Outstanding	Good	Adequate	Requires improvement	Inadequate
Recording data about crime	Preventing crime	Police powers and public treatment	Investigating crime	
		Responding to the public	Developing a positive workplace	
		Protecting vulnerable people		
		Managing offenders		
		Leadership and force management		

West Yorkshire Police was awarded no inadequate grades.

We also inspected how effective a service West Yorkshire Police gives to victims of crime. We don't make a graded judgment for this 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.

We also assess the force's performance in a range of other areas and we report on these separately. We make graded judgments for some of these areas.

Data in this report

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

PEEL 2023–2025

In 2014, we introduced our police efficiency, effectiveness 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.

We have moved to a more [intelligence](#)-led, continual assessment approach, rather than the annual [PEEL inspections](#) we used in previous years. Forces are assessed against the characteristics of good performance, set out in the [PEEL Assessment Framework 2023–2025](#), and we more clearly link our judgments to [causes of concern](#) and [areas for improvement](#).

It isn't possible to make direct comparisons between the grades awarded in this PEEL inspection and those from the previous cycle of PEEL inspections. This is because we have increased our focus on making sure forces are achieving appropriate outcomes for the public, and in some cases we have changed the aspects of policing we inspect.

Terminology in this report

Our reports contain references to, among other things, 'national' definitions, priorities, policies, systems, responsibilities and processes.

In some instances, 'national' means applying to England or Wales, or England and Wales. In others, it means applying to England, Wales and Scotland, or the whole of the United Kingdom.

HM Inspector's summary

I am pleased with some aspects of the performance of West Yorkshire Police in keeping people safe, reducing crime and providing victims with an effective service. I am satisfied with most other aspects of the force's performance, but there are areas in which it needs to improve.

West Yorkshire Police receives a similar level of funding to other forces in England and Wales, although the council tax local police precept is lower.

The force has more recorded incidents per 100,000 population and more emergency 999 calls per 1,000 population than the England and Wales average. The force now answers most 999 calls quickly and within the expected standard, although performance data shows that in the year ending 31 December 2023 it was below the expected standard for forces. We found that the force assesses the level of risk appropriately at the initial point of contact.

The force is committed to neighbourhood policing and is continuing to invest in its neighbourhood policing model. It has developed a wide range of initiatives designed to provide early intervention and to prevent and deter crime. But the force should make sure it carefully manages any diverting of officers from their role as a neighbourhood officer to other teams. It also needs to focus on improving the quality and consistency of its problem-solving plans.

We found the force to be outstanding in the way it records crime. But it needs to improve the way it investigates crime. Only low numbers of crimes are solved following investigation. The force needs to work hard to understand the reasons for this and to make improvements to achieve better outcomes for victims. It also needs to make sure it remains victim focused throughout investigations and regularly updates victims on the progress of investigations.

West Yorkshire Police should make sure it has the right resources and processes in place to effectively manage demand across the force. And it should make sure officers have enough training to investigate the crimes allocated to them.

We found high workloads were affecting officers' well-being and their ability and capacity to investigate crime and carry out their role. I recognise the efforts of individual officers and staff in West Yorkshire Police, who are working hard to manage these high workloads and to help victims. The force needs to make sure it has effective systems that are used consistently to monitor workloads and provide support to officers.

The force has introduced a variety of well-being initiatives to help and support its officers and staff, which have been well received. But I would like to see the force do more to support officers in high-risk roles, in particular those officers identified as in need of additional support.

The force has invested in IT systems and can access a wide range of data. But it isn't yet consistently making the best use of its available data to improve its performance.

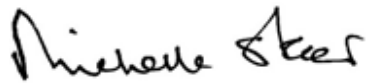
West Yorkshire Police records more domestic abuse crimes and more repeat domestic abuse crimes per 1,000 population than the England and Wales average. But it isn't consistently making good use of protective orders or disclosure schemes to better protect victims of domestic abuse.

In domestic abuse cases involving children, the force needs to make sure it shares all relevant information, including details of cumulative risk, with children's social care. Processes for sharing information differ in each district and the full picture of risk to the child isn't always shared. This is an issue we found during our 2021 PEEL inspection.

The force makes good use of stop and search. It also records reasonable grounds for the search in almost all cases. Internal scrutiny of stop and search is good but external scrutiny panels would benefit from further development.

The force has more work to do to improve officers' understanding of use of force and recording of its use. It also needs to improve internal and external scrutiny arrangements for use of force.

I hope that changes to the way the force operates will result in improvements that help West Yorkshire Police to provide a better service to the public. I will be monitoring its progress closely.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michelle Skeer". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Michelle Skeer

HM Inspector of Constabulary

Leadership

Using the [College of Policing leadership standards](#) as a framework, in this section we set out the most important findings relating to the force's leadership at all levels.

West Yorkshire Police is committed to developing leadership skills at all levels. [Police officers](#) and staff entering leadership roles for the first time and supervisors undertaking more strategic roles receive support and training. The force also provides training to all its leaders on personal bias and inclusion.

It has plans that set out force priorities. But the force needs to focus on how these plans translate into operational activity and good performance.

We found that although governance processes are in place, some areas of the force aren't being managed as effectively as they could be. The force is failing to adequately resource some areas of high demand. This is leading to high workloads and delays for [victims](#). Senior leaders should have clear oversight of workloads and make sure workloads are manageable.

West Yorkshire Police has access to a wide range of data. But it needs to use this data more effectively to improve performance. The force should examine more consistently the quality of performance as well as compliance.

The force has a strong focus on answering calls and responding to incidents in a timely manner. But it also needs to focus on improving the quality of its response and subsequent investigations. It should make sure investigations are supervised effectively, with supervisors making sure officers maximise all investigative opportunities to achieve better outcomes for victims.

Many officers feel disconnected from the leadership team and that they aren't listened to. Officers feel that senior officers don't fully understand their concerns or well-being needs. These views were expressed during our inspection as well as in the recent internal staff survey.

More detail on West Yorkshire Police's leadership is included in the main body of the report.

Reducing crime assessment

The reducing crime assessment sets out what West Yorkshire Police is doing to reduce crime and how effective this action is. This assessment doesn't include police recorded crime figures. This is because they can be affected by variations and changes in recording policy and practice, making it difficult to draw comparisons over time.

West Yorkshire Police has a range of partnership initiatives to support the long-term reduction and prevention of crime and [antisocial behaviour](#). These largely focus on early intervention and prevention to divert young people away from offending at the earliest opportunity.

Although the force encourages a problem-solving approach to help reduce crime, its problem-solving plans are inconsistent. It needs to improve its analysis, evaluation and supervisory oversight of these plans.

West Yorkshire Police has increased its use of stop and search. We found the use of stop and search was fair and in line with legislation. Effective use of stop and search helps to reduce crime.

The force has systems to monitor and pursue wanted persons and outstanding suspects. Operation Reset is reducing the number of outstanding wanted suspects. Proactively targeting and arresting suspects stops them committing further offences.

We found the force needs to improve the quality of its investigations and make sure investigators have enough capacity and experience to deal with complex and high-risk cases. Supervisors need to provide direction to investigations and make sure all lines of enquiry are pursued.

The force also needs to improve the quality of referrals to partner agencies to make sure the full picture of risk is shared so that appropriate action and [safeguarding](#) can take place. This will help to reduce crime.

The way the force manages [bail](#) to protect vulnerable victims and reduce further offending also needs to improve.

More detail on what West Yorkshire Police is doing to reduce crime is included in the main body of the report.

Providing a service to victims of crime

Victim service assessment

This section describes our assessment of the service West 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 100 case files.

When the police close a case of a reported crime, they assign it an '[outcome type](#)'. This describes the reason for closing it.

We selected 100 cases to review, including at least 20 that the force had closed with the following outcome type:

- when the police decided that further investigation against a named suspect wasn't in the public interest.

Although our victim service assessment isn't graded, it influences graded judgments in the other areas we have inspected.

The force needs to improve the time it takes to answer emergency/non-emergency calls

The force needs to improve the time it takes to answer emergency calls. It also needs to reduce the number of non-emergency calls where the caller hangs up before a call handler answers. Call handlers use a structured process that assesses threat, harm, risk and vulnerability. They identify repeat and vulnerable victims. This means they are fully aware of the victim's circumstances when considering what response the force should give. Call handlers are polite and mostly give victims advice on crime prevention and on how to preserve evidence.

On most occasions, the force responds promptly to calls for service

On most occasions, the force responds to calls for service appropriately. But sometimes it doesn't respond within set timescales. It does inform victims of delays, meaning that victims' expectations are managed.

The force has effective crime-recording processes

The force's crime-recording processes help it to make sure that all crimes reported to it are recorded correctly. But the force also needs to make sure that crimes are recorded promptly.

We set out more details about the force's crime recording in [the section on crime data integrity](#).

The force doesn't always carry out effective investigations

In most cases, the force investigates crimes in a timely way. But it doesn't always complete relevant and proportionate lines of enquiry and doesn't always supervise investigations well. The force could do more to keep victims regularly updated. 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 arrested, providing a positive result for the victim. In most cases, the force took victim personal statements, which give victims the opportunity to describe how that crime has affected their lives.

When victims withdraw support for an investigation, the force considers progressing the case without the victim's support. This can be an important way of safeguarding the victim and preventing further offences from being committed. In most cases, the force records whether it considers using orders designed to protect victims, such as a [Domestic Violence Protection Notice](#) or [Domestic Violence Protection Order](#).

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 usually carries out these assessments but doesn't always record all requests for additional support.

The force doesn't always assign the right outcome type to an investigation but considers victims' wishes and holds an auditable record of them

The force doesn't always close crimes with the appropriate outcome type. It does record a clear rationale for using a certain outcome, but this isn't always effectively supervised. It seeks victims' views when deciding which outcome type to assign to a closed investigation. When appropriate, the force can provide an auditable record of victims' wishes.

Crime data integrity

Outstanding

West Yorkshire Police is outstanding at recording crime.

The Home Office Counting Rules, which provide the standard for crime recording in England and Wales, have changed since the last time we inspected the force for crime data integrity.

This change mainly relates to the way forces record violent crime. This means we can no longer compare the findings from this audit to those from previous audits.

We estimate that West Yorkshire Police is recording 96.6 percent (with a confidence interval of +/- 1.9 percent) of all reported crime (excluding fraud).

We estimate that the force is recording 100.0 percent (with a confidence interval of +/- 2.8 percent) of sexual offences.

We estimate that the force is recording 95.7 percent (with a confidence interval of +/- 3.3 percent) of violent offences.

Area for improvement

West Yorkshire Police still needs to improve how it records equality data

West Yorkshire Police's data for victims of crime still shows that although age and gender are well recorded, ethnicity is less well recorded and other [protected characteristics](#) aren't well recorded.

The force should be collecting this information to understand the extent to which each protected group is affected by crime, how this differs from those without the protected characteristics and whether a different response is needed for these victims.

Promising practice

The chief officer team provide effective leadership and support to make sure crimes are recorded correctly

[Chief officers](#) in West Yorkshire Police constantly monitor and scrutinise standards of crime recording, encouraging the whole force to make sure that crimes are recorded correctly. The [force crime registrar](#) carries out extensive quality assurance checks. Chief officers scrutinise crime-recording audit results and hold departments to account. This continuous loop of clear leadership, monitoring of standards of crime recording and effective governance means that the force records a very high proportion of crime reported to it.

Main findings

In this section we set out our main findings that relate to crime data integrity.

The force records rape offences effectively

West Yorkshire Police records rape offences and reported incidents of rape (N100s) effectively. In our audit we found that 38 crimes of rape should have been recorded and all 38 crimes were correctly recorded. We also found ten reported incidents of rape (N100s), which were all recorded correctly. Rape is one of the most serious crimes a victim can experience. It is important that these crimes are recorded accurately to make sure victims receive the service and support they need.

The force records crimes when it identifies that personal antisocial behaviour has been committed against victims

The force records all crimes when victims experience antisocial behaviour. We examined 50 incidents. We found eight crimes should have been recorded and all eight were correctly recorded. Victims of antisocial behaviour are often subjected to abuse and torment for substantial periods of time. By effectively recording crimes, the force provides an effective service to tackle antisocial behaviour, reassuring victims and making sure people can live without fear.

The force needs to improve the time it takes to record crimes

Although the force records crime well, there is still some delay in recording crimes. About three out of four crimes and about half of rape crimes were recorded within 24 hours. Recording crime without delay helps make sure victims receive the support they need. It also helps to establish an effective investigation.

Police powers and treating the public fairly and respectfully

Adequate

West Yorkshire Police is adequate at using police powers and treating people fairly and respectfully.

Areas for improvement

West Yorkshire Police should improve its scrutiny of use of force and make sure officers understand when it is appropriate to use force and the need to always record and justify their use of the power

In the year ending 31 March 2023, West Yorkshire Police recorded 44,404 use of force incidents. This was a 12.6 percent increase compared with the previous year. Based on the number of arrests, we estimate that West Yorkshire Police under-recorded use of force by 4,996 incidents.

West Yorkshire Police had 18.7 use of force incidents per 1,000 population. This is relatively high compared with other forces across England and Wales. But this may be due to better recording practices than in some other forces. There has also been a shift from more intrusive tactics to less intrusive tactics in the type of force used.

In the year ending 31 March 2023, 27.5 percent of West Yorkshire Police's recorded use of force incidents were on people from ethnic minority backgrounds, compared to 24.6 percent of arrests. This could mean that West Yorkshire Police is using force slightly more frequently on people from ethnic minority backgrounds. The force should continue to scrutinise this.

The force's own internal audit process identified that use of force forms weren't always being completed (75–80 percent compliance).

We noted that use of force isn't subject to the same level of scrutiny internally as stop and search. The powers are discussed separately at different governance boards. But the force is considering introducing one board to discuss both powers. Supervisors are only required to [dip sample](#) five cases across a set of four shifts for use of force on Black members of the community, aged under 40 years on arrest. The force told us that supervisor compliance with this audit process had decreased.

The force's own internal audits identified issues around handcuffs being applied when this wasn't necessary. From our observations and speaking with officers, we found that there appears to be a culture of applying handcuffs unnecessarily for the purpose of arrest, stop and search, and speaking to members of the public, when people are fully compliant.

Use of handcuffs without apparent justification has been addressed through the latest public and personal safety training, which includes practical scenarios. But this training takes place on a rotating annual basis, so some officers may not have received this revised training.

The force said a mandatory ILearn package was in development. This wasn't available at the time of our inspection, but the force said that it will be introduced in May 2024.

Our review of West Yorkshire Police's website found that it lacked up-to-date data on use of force. The force could be more open with the public by making sure clear and recent information on its use of force and any disproportionality is available on its website.

In September 2023, HMICFRS and the Care Quality Commission inspected West Yorkshire Police's custody facilities. In that inspection, we found that the governance and oversight of use of force in custody weren't good enough. They hadn't improved since our last inspection. West Yorkshire Police could not show that when it uses force in custody that this is necessary, justified and proportionate. As a result, we issued a [cause of concern](#). We published our findings in the '[Report on an inspection visit to police custody suites in West Yorkshire Police](#)'.

West Yorkshire Police is trying to improve use of force recording. It is using custody sergeants to remind officers to submit the use of force form if they identify force has been used.

The force should improve the consistency and effectiveness of its scrutiny panels. Panel members would benefit from additional training to ensure appropriate challenge and scrutiny

West Yorkshire Police has independently chaired scrutiny panels in each of its five districts.

These scrutiny panels meet every two months and discuss around five cases, including two stop and search cases, two use of force cases and one [hate crime](#) case. Using this methodology, the public can only help provide feedback on a small number of cases, meaning this feedback will only have a limited effect on improving the force's service.

The force told us that it faced challenges in recruiting the right people for scrutiny panels.

From our observations, scrutiny panel members would benefit from additional training on their role and police powers. This would help them provide appropriate scrutiny and challenge to the cases they review.

West Yorkshire Police is examining how it can improve the consistency and effectiveness of its scrutiny panels.

Main findings

In this section we set out our main findings that relate to police powers and treating people fairly and respectfully.

The force makes sure its officers are trained to engage with the public respectfully

West Yorkshire Police provides a variety of mandatory training to its workforce, including effective communication skills, cultural awareness and [unconscious bias](#) training. This helps officers to better understand their personal biases and to improve their skills in communicating with members of the public. We found that officers valued this training and had a good understanding of the topics.

The force has a clear policy on the use of [body-worn video](#). The policy sets out how and when body-worn video can be used to gather evidence and how it increases transparency, helping to improve trust and confidence with the force's communities.

The force is committed to making sure officers receive stop and search training. This training is provided annually as part of public and personal safety training. The force told us that it reviews every stop and search record to make sure use of [stop and search powers](#) was appropriate and to check that officers are correctly recording reasonable grounds. The force also said it reviews the body-worn video footage for two out of every ten stop and search encounters to provide a more qualitative review. But the force told us that it would like to do more qualitative reviews in the future. Findings from these reviews are fed into the force-level governance meeting, and feedback is shared directly with officers.

The force uses stop and search powers fairly and respectfully

During our inspection, we reviewed a sample of 94 stop and search records from 1 January 2022 to 31 December 2022. Based on this sample, we estimate that 95.7 percent (with a confidence interval of +/- 4.07 percent) of all the force's stop and search encounters during this period had reasonable grounds recorded. This is broadly unchanged compared with the findings from our previous review in 2020, when we found 96.2 percent (with a confidence interval of +/- 3.0) had reasonable grounds recorded. Of the records we reviewed for use of stop and search on people from ethnic minority backgrounds, 36 of 37 had reasonable grounds recorded.

It is positive that 67 percent of the stop and search encounters we examined in our audit were proactive searches. Officers were using this power to prevent and detect crime, rather than only when they had been directed to attend an incident.

Our review of body-worn video of stop and search encounters showed officers to be always calm, courteous and respectful. But we noted that none of the officers gave the subjects a chance to explain the position from their side, which could have led to the search not needing to be carried out or may have added to the officers' suspicions.

In the year ending 31 March 2023, West Yorkshire Police carried out 17,564 stop and searches on people. This was an 11.9 percent increase in stop and searches compared with the year ending 31 March 2022. In the year ending 31 March 2023, based on population data from the 2021 Census, Black people were 3.0 times as likely as White people to be stopped and searched in West Yorkshire, compared to 4.1 times across England and Wales. Asian or Asian British people were 2.3 times as likely as White people to be stopped and searched by West Yorkshire Police, compared to the average disproportionality rate of 1.4 across England and Wales. The force continues to try to improve its understanding of disproportionality through its inequalities board, which is chaired by the assistant chief constable. The force has invested in a full-time chief inspector as the Race Action Plan lead, who is working to better understand disproportionality in policing across the workstreams.

In the year ending 31 March 2023, West Yorkshire Police found linked items in 24.7 percent of stop and search encounters. This is where the officers found a stolen or prohibited item that was linked to the reason for the search.

The force is keen to further improve its stop and search performance

In July 2023, the force introduced a process to obtain feedback directly from the community. It issues a QR code to every person after a stop and search, which that person can scan to provide feedback on their experience. Initially the force received little response to this initiative. But during the last quarter of 2023, it received 31 responses. This initiative is still in its early stages. The force hopes the response rate will improve and will lead to regular feedback to help inform future training and scrutiny.

Preventing and deterring crime and antisocial behaviour, and reducing vulnerability

Good

West Yorkshire Police is good at prevention and deterrence.

Area for improvement

West Yorkshire Police should improve the quality and consistency of its problem-solving plans

We spoke with neighbourhood officers and staff and reviewed a selection of problem-solving plans in each district. We found that the quality of problem solving plans varied across the force in terms of scanning, analysis and evaluation. We also found the supervision of problem-solving plans was inconsistent. In addition, staff in the police contact centre and response officers aren't always aware of problem-solving plans in their areas, meaning that some effectiveness around response could be lost.

The force told us that the central team dip samples problem-solving occurrences to monitor quality. A sergeant within a centrally based HQ team dip samples five to ten problem-solving occurrences every three months to check on overall quality, with the findings fed back to district chief inspectors.

We also viewed the What Works site on the force's intranet. We found the evaluation of whether problem-solving plans had worked was also inconsistent.

The force has designed a problem-solving Power BI application (app). This app provides details of all open problem-solving occurrences by neighbourhood and ward area, along with a grading of risk. The app also highlights where supervisory reviews are overdue. This could be an effective tool for managing problem-solving plans in line with national recommendations.

Promising practice

West Yorkshire Police has created Pol-Ed, an education programme that helps schools provide lessons designed to develop awareness of risks, citizenship and the law

The force supported one of its officers, a former teacher, who came up with the original idea for Pol-Ed after identifying a significant gap in the education of young people. Pol-Ed provides free and comprehensive personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education resources for schools across West Yorkshire. It has been funded by West Yorkshire Police through Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 funding. Three key topics are covered: relationships, keeping safe and understanding the law.

More than 50 different lesson plans have been designed for both primary and secondary schools in line with the school curriculum. They cover topics such as [domestic abuse](#), violence against women and girls, [stalking](#) and [harassment](#), cyber crime, [child sexual exploitation](#), child criminal exploitation, vaping, online safety, [hate crime](#), consent, stop and search, [grooming](#) and the misuse of drugs.

The resources are designed by teachers alongside subject matter experts for use in the classroom. They include detailed lesson plans, suggested discussion topics, videos and various presentations. Support and guidance on using the resources are also available.

As at January 2024, 88 percent of schools across West Yorkshire had signed up to the scheme and were using the resources.

During our inspection, we examined the resources and spoke with teachers and pupils who had used them. They were all overwhelmingly positive about the scheme and how it had generated sensible and thought-provoking discussions within the classroom.

Huddersfield University carried out an initial evaluation of Pol-Ed and the findings were very positive. It is now evaluating Pol-Ed further.

Main findings

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

The force has an established neighbourhood policing model that is focused on prevention of crime, antisocial behaviour and vulnerability

West Yorkshire Police is committed to neighbourhood policing. But neighbourhood officers told us a high volume of calls into the force in summer 2023 meant they were regularly taken away from their main duties to support response patrols. When this critical demand period ended in autumn 2023, neighbourhood officers returned to their main duties. During our inspection in January 2024, West Yorkshire Police told us that neighbourhood officers were being diverted from their main duties to cover response teams much less often.

The force told us it doesn't consistently record or monitor officers being diverted from neighbourhood patrol work. There is the facility for officers to record when they aren't carrying out neighbourhood work, but this isn't regularly updated. The force wants to better understand the numbers of officers being diverted from neighbourhood work by gathering live data. At the time of the inspection, the chief officer team expected any diversion from neighbourhood work to be authorised by a senior officer.

West Yorkshire Police is continuing to invest in its neighbourhood policing model. The force told us, as at January 2024, it had 33 vacancies across neighbourhood teams, but it had agreed to recruit 66 officers. The force had a 10 percent vacancy rate but still had a high number of police community support officers (552), which was planned as part of the budget-setting strategy for 2023/24. This took into consideration that there was to be a significant increase in neighbourhood officers. This was a temporary measure to address some of the funding pressures created by the energy crisis that was experienced nationally. As the force has been able to further address the cost for 2024/25, it has budgeted for a standard vacancy rate of 4 percent.

The force has provided 980 neighbourhood officers and staff with accredited neighbourhood training. Additionally, many of these, including some who don't carry out a neighbourhood role, have also completed mandatory problem-solving training. The force told us some neighbourhood officers have had enhanced problem-solving training to help them support others with this process. But some officers we spoke with were waiting for problem-solving training even though they had been in neighbourhood posts for some time.

In the year ending 31 March 2023, West Yorkshire Police recorded 314,496 crimes, a 6.9 percent increase compared to the year ending 31 March 2022. But over the same period, the force has seen a 23.6 percent reduction in reports of antisocial behaviour. The force told us that, for the year ending 30 September 2023, there was a 1.4 percent reduction in crime. And for the year ending 30 June 2023, the force told us that there was a 10.6 percent reduction in reports of antisocial behaviour. The force believes that the reduction in antisocial behaviour incidents is a result of improvements in crime recording. The force has identified through audit activity that incidents previously recorded as antisocial behaviour should have been recorded as crimes such as criminal damage and harassment.

The force prioritises the prevention and deterrence of crime

Within West Yorkshire, there are a wide range of initiatives that are designed to provide early intervention to deter and reduce crime.

District early action teams intervene proactively with families when young people are at risk of becoming involved in criminal activity. The force also supports young people through the Home Office funded deterrent car in each district. This consists of a police officer and a youth worker patrolling in an unmarked vehicle. The deterrent car attends all serious violent incidents after the event to engage with young people. Evidence and research indicate that young people are likely to be most receptive to help, dialogue and signposting to support agencies at this time.

Operation Jemlock is a proactive operation aimed at tackling serious violence and knife crime across the force by managing crime hotspot areas. At the time of our inspection, the force had 52 managed serious violence and knife crime hotspots. It has achieved significant reductions in serious violent crime and knife crime.

Using a [Public Spaces Protection Order](#), Operation Soundwood focuses on targeting people harassing women and girls in and around the Bradford University campus. Several arrests have been made over the past 12 months for a variety of offences, including 24 breaches of the order.

The force has established a safe zone network in Huddersfield city centre through its work with the community safety partnership and Barnardo's. Huddersfield now has 120 recognised safe zones for people to go to if they feel unsafe or threatened.

Through funding from the Mayor's Office, the force has created a safer travel team. This consists of a sergeant and 15 police community support officers who provide a visible police presence and reassurance at some transport hubs and bus networks across the force area.

The force is using automatic number plate recognition (ANPR) cloned plate technology to prevent and proactively tackle criminality. The force collaborated with West Midlands Police and its ANPR supplier to develop a cloned plate functionality. Since its introduction in May 2023, it has helped identify 500 cloned vehicles across the region, with 228 of them stopped and recovered within the West Yorkshire Police force area.

The force has helped to set up a community initiative called Community Action to Create Hope that has helped to improve the lives of many children in Leeds

The West Yorkshire Police and community initiative Community Action to Create Hope (CATCH) was introduced in 2010. Its aim was to help clean up and improve an area of open land in Harehills, Leeds, that was subject to large-scale antisocial behaviour and criminal activity. One neighbourhood officer could see how that open space could be transformed. Since then, through much work with the community, CATCH has developed quickly and grown into an impressive vibrant space for children, where they can get involved in sport and activities, have fun, join social activities, take part in volunteering projects and learn basic life skills. CATCH also provides a safe space where young people can seek advice, support and guidance if needed.

CATCH is now a registered charity and has over 1,400 young people regularly attending the facility. It also has over 120 volunteers who are actively involved in the project.

CATCH has helped to change many children's lives for the better. It has helped to greatly improve pupil attainment and engagement at school. Twenty-two of its members have gone on to attend higher education. Twelve young people have become involved with West Yorkshire Police through voluntary work, including performing the role of a special constable. Two young people have gone on to become police officers. Over 1,000 children have developed their skills through volunteering projects. Many others have gone on to gain employment in various fields and return to CATCH as volunteers to help other young people as a thank you for the help that they once received.

This project has already received formal recognition and was awarded the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service in 2023.

We visited this impressive community initiative during our inspection. We talked with many children, who spoke openly about how they had previously been involved in criminal activity and how CATCH had transformed their lives. It has given them hope for a better future, belief in themselves and a sense of purpose.

The force has helped to set up Sunnyvale in Halifax, a fishery and outdoor activity centre designed and created to educate young people and deter them from criminal activity

In 2014, after the closure of local youth centres and provision, a neighbourhood officer in Halifax committed to helping to improve the lives of young people in Halifax and divert them from criminal activity and antisocial behaviour. The officer had initially sought to engage young people in activities such as fishing, and then approached the owners of Sunnyvale and secured a lease for its use. With the help of West Yorkshire Police, local businesses and the community, Sunnyvale was transformed into an activity area with a classroom.

Sunnyvale now provides opportunities for young people to become involved in activities such as archery, fishing, climbing, canoeing, camping, bushcraft, water activities and mountain biking. Alongside all these activities, Sunnyvale also provides young people with educational lessons around topics such as the dangers of knife crime, [county lines](#), child sexual exploitation and online safety.

In 2020, the neighbourhood officer together with young people who attend Sunnyvale and police cadets created a film on the dangers of carrying knives. This film is available on YouTube. At the time of our inspection, the officer and young people at Sunnyvale were working on a second film on the subject of county lines.

In 2021, the neighbourhood officer was awarded the Queen's Police Medal as formal recognition for his efforts at Sunnyvale to divert young people away from criminality.

We visited Sunnyvale and saw how young people engaged in various activities and lessons.

The force demonstrates good knowledge and use of antisocial behaviour legislation in some districts but not consistently across the force

During our inspection, we found examples of the effective use of specific antisocial behaviour legislation to tackle this type of demand. In particular, the antisocial behaviour team in Leeds showed us how they used data to better understand antisocial behaviour patterns and trends before deciding on the best intervention to use. Working with partner agencies, this team had used a wide range of antisocial behaviour warnings, notices, orders and injunctions to tackle gang-related violence, violence against women and girls, prolific shoplifters and off-road biking. But not all force districts could demonstrate a similar level of understanding or consistent use of antisocial behaviour legislation.

Additionally, West Yorkshire Police has developed an antisocial and vulnerability analytical tool (ASVAT) to help identify repeat victims and prevent escalation of risk. During our last inspection, we recognised this analytical tool as [innovative practice](#), and during our most recent inspection, we saw that it was still being used to good effect.

The force has developed a partnership intelligence portal to allow partner agencies to share intelligence and information to help local policing and problem-solving

The force's partnership [intelligence](#) portal is an online portal that allows various partner agencies to submit information directly to the force. The information submitted is reviewed by the force intelligence unit and then transferred onto force systems. This system provides a direct and more efficient route for partners to submit information to police, meaning that the force has a much wider and more informed intelligence picture.

This system was appropriately recognised during our previous PEEL inspection as innovative practice. But during our most recent inspection, we found that the system wasn't being used consistently across the force, with some officers not understanding its potential value. The force recognises that the system could be used more effectively and that schools and other agencies should be encouraged to use the portal more.

The force has a new community engagement strategy but needs to make sure local engagement plans are in place

At the time of our inspection in January 2024, the force introduced a new community engagement strategy. This also includes a community engagement template designed to help each district prioritise this work based on threat, harm, risk and inequalities.

At the time of our inspection, local engagement plans weren't in place in each district. While supervisors in one district were able to present their local engagement plan and talk through its details, others could not.

The force has recently developed a community engagement app to gather data about engagement activities, but the app isn't yet consistently used across the force. This could be an effective tool to help the force evaluate the effectiveness of its work with local communities across the force area.

The force is finding ways to work with seldom-heard communities

We found the force carries out a wide range of work to support seldom-heard communities. Some examples include working with groups that help to support and empower women, regular drop-in sessions for vulnerable street sex workers, and supporting those with dementia through an innovative café.

The force also has faith engagement officers, who have established extensive relationships across different faith communities in the force area. This is building trust and confidence, and consistent two-way conversations, to help raise concerns and the flow of information and intelligence.

The force has invested in West Yorkshire Community Alert, but it isn't being used consistently across the force, meaning community messaging varies

The force has been using West Yorkshire Community Alert since 2019. At the time of our inspection, the force told us this has 28,000 members. But the system isn't being used consistently or to its full potential. Different communication platforms are currently being used across the force in different districts, including Facebook and the community platform Nextdoor.co.uk, which was being trialled at Bradford. The force accepts that it has work to do to standardise its engagement platforms.

Responding to the public

Adequate

West Yorkshire Police is adequate at responding to the public.

Areas for improvement

The force needs to make sure that there is consistent and effective management of risk within its RE-THRIVE processes

West Yorkshire Police has improved the way it identifies vulnerability at the first point of contact. During our inspection, we found that call handlers acted politely, appropriately and ethically when answering calls. Calls were appropriately graded and a structured triage was completed and documented in 98 out of 100 cases. We found that effective checks were made to identify repeat and vulnerable victims on initial contact. This was identified as an area requiring improvement when we last inspected. Since that time, the force has invested in additional training for officers and staff.

Although the force has improved the quality of [threat, harm, risk, investigation, vulnerability and engagement \(THRIVE\) risk assessments](#) at the initial point of contact, we found that RE-THRIVE assessments weren't consistently applied. The quality of these assessments was sometimes poor, and officers and staff failed to recognise repeat victims and vulnerability. Some officers and staff we spoke with were unclear about when additional RE-THRIVE risk assessments should take place.

The force carries out its own internal quality assurance processes and audits. The quality of RE-THRIVE assessments is something that the force has identified as an area that requires additional improvement.

The force needs to make sure that the risk assessment process and decision-making on allocation of crime investigations to remote resolution teams is appropriate and in accordance with force policy

West Yorkshire Police's force policy dictates that [stalking](#) and any [domestic abuse](#) cases, other than low risk domestic abuse reports, shouldn't be dealt with by remote resolution teams over the telephone. Despite this policy, in one district we saw several stalking cases being dealt with over the telephone within the remote resolution team. We also saw reports of domestic abuse that could be considered medium- or high-risk cases. There didn't appear to be an appreciation within the cases we saw of cumulative risk in relation to domestic abuse reports. [Domestic Abuse, Stalking, Harassment and Honour-Based Violence \(DASH\) risk assessments](#) were completed over the telephone and GoodSAM technology wasn't being used to help with these calls or to physically see and check on the welfare of the victim. GoodSAM is an internet media platform that can be used alongside 999, [101](#) and other calls. Providing the caller gives their consent, police can send a one-time text message to a mobile phone, which when accessed activates the phone's camera and allows livestream video to be shared.

In addition, in some of the cases we examined, children had been present during the domestic abuse related incident. But the children weren't spoken with or visited to check on their welfare. The [voice of the child](#) wasn't explored or recorded.

The focus of the remote resolution teams appeared to be on managing demand.

Our findings indicate that the risk assessment process and decision-making around managing demand and what reports are allocated to remote resolution teams aren't consistent with force policy.

Main findings

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

The force has a good management structure, daily governance and performance management in place for its force contact centre

We found that West Yorkshire Police has robust daily management structures in place for the force contact centre along with chief officer oversight. Daily performance reports are produced that examine all aspects of demand going into the force contact centre. Demand and resources are tracked hour by hour to make sure enough staff are on duty to respond to calls. The force has also adopted a policy whereby it continuously recruits staff for the force contact centre so that it is always over-resourced and there are no gaps in service.

Attendance times are mostly met, and victims are updated on delays

Our victim service assessment found that attendance times at incidents were mostly met in 57 out of 64 cases and that where incidents were downgraded, these were reviewed and authorised by a supervisor. In addition, we found that victims were notified and updated regarding delays in 17 out of 18 relevant cases.

We found that overall, in 30 out of 30 cases reviewed, there was effective and appropriate supervision of how police resources were deployed and used to support victims.

Call handlers give appropriate advice on preservation of evidence and crime prevention.

This was an [area for improvement](#) for the force when last inspected. Since that time, call handlers have received training from crime scene investigators in preserving evidence and have guidance notes on their internal IT system to ensure consistency. Our victim service assessment found that call handlers gave appropriate advice regarding preservation of evidence in 27 out of 31 relevant cases and gave appropriate advice regarding crime prevention in 46 out of 50 relevant cases. We also found that GoodSAM technology was being used to good effect by operators within the force contact centre to better understand the situation at crime scenes and to help locate [vulnerable people](#).

Members of the public can contact the force through appropriate, accessible and monitored channels.

Members of the public can contact West Yorkshire Police through various channels that are monitored. In addition to 999 and 101 calls, contact can be made through the force's Live Chat service, which operates daily between 7am and 11pm. Outside these hours, callers accessing Live Chat are redirected to alternative contact channels. But Live Chat is also monitored within the force contact centre overnight in case any online chat messages are sent through. In addition, members of the public can make contact and report crimes through the force's public enquiry counters or using a web report.

The force has also introduced, within its contact centre, a partnership portal where partner agencies, other police forces and organisations can contact West Yorkshire Police directly to make an enquiry or report. This reduces the demand from 101 calls to the force and is a more efficient way of dealing with enquiries from partners. During our inspection, we assessed all the various channels of contact and there were no backlogs.

The force provides a more timely service to members of the public who contact it using the 999 system

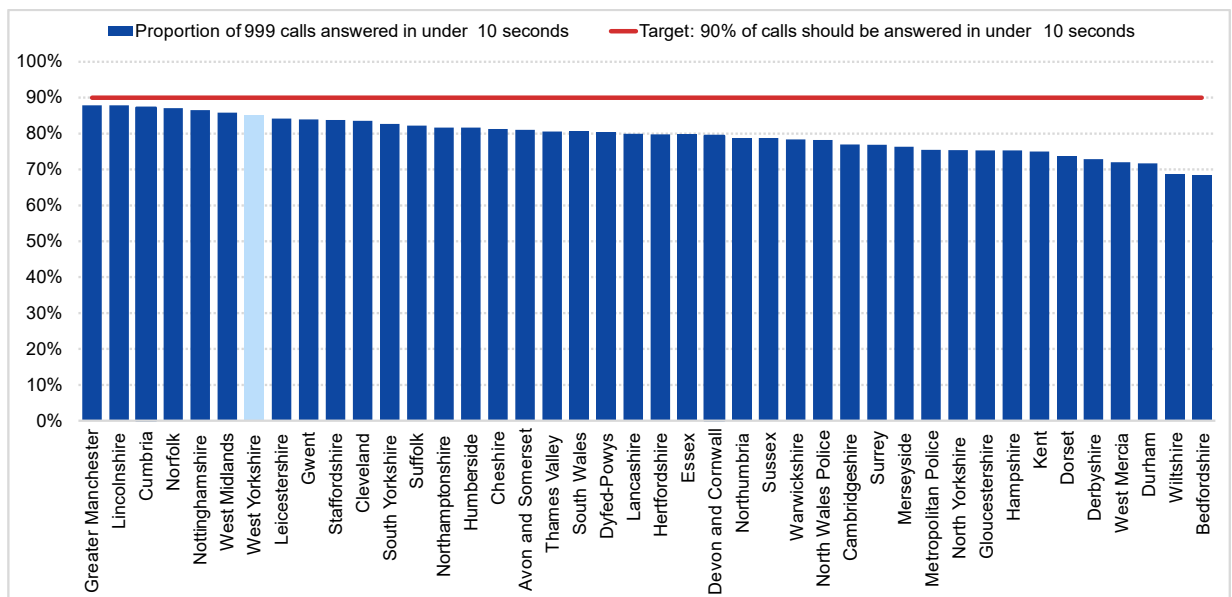
In the year ending 31 December 2023, West Yorkshire Police received 215 calls to 999 per 1,000 population. This was higher than expected compared to the average for forces in England and Wales.

In the year ending 31 December 2023, West Yorkshire Police answered 85.2 percent of its 999 calls within 10 seconds. This was below the expected standard for forces in England and Wales of 90 percent of 999 calls answered within 10 seconds.

During spring and summer 2023, West Yorkshire Police experienced unprecedented demand from 999 and 101 calls, which affected its call answering times. As this demand stabilised, the force improved its call answer times each month. More recent BT data for the months of November and December 2023 shows over 90 percent of 999 calls were answered in under 10 seconds in those months.

The force should continue in its efforts to improve its call handling performance.

Figure 1: Proportion of 999 calls answered within 10 seconds by forces in England and Wales in the year ending 31 December 2023



Source: [999 performance data](#) from BT

Note: Call answering time is the time taken for a call to be transferred from BT to a force and then answered by that force.

The force needs to improve the number of non-emergency calls that are abandoned before they are answered

The force told us that in the year ending November 2023, 24.3 percent of calls to its non-emergency 101 number were abandoned.

The force isn't able to provide any information that explains why calls were abandoned or the level of risk within these calls. The force has installed a new IT system. It hopes this will allow it to scrutinise 101 abandoned calls more closely and gain a better understanding of any calls that are redirected because of the interactive voice response (IVR) message. IVR provides an automated response to calls and can direct calls to different departments, if appropriate. Any abandonment of 101 calls presents a risk, so the force needs to consider how this can be reduced.

Investigating crime

Requires
improvement

West Yorkshire Police requires improvement at investigating crime.

Areas for improvement

West Yorkshire Police doesn't consistently achieve appropriate outcomes for victims

The force isn't always achieving acceptable outcomes for victims of crime. It has low numbers of crimes that are solved following investigations. It needs to understand the reasons for this and work to achieve better outcomes for victims.

In the year ending 30 September 2023, West Yorkshire Police recorded 251,036 victim-based crimes. Of these recorded offences, 6.6 percent were assigned an offence brought to justice outcome. This is within the normal range compared to other forces in England and Wales. More specifically, 4.8 percent were assigned a charge or summons outcome. This is within the normal range compared to other forces in England and Wales, but a decrease from 12.6 percent in the year ending 31 March 2015.

Figure 2: Percentage of victim-based crime recorded by West Yorkshire Police and all forces in England and Wales by selected outcome types in the year ending 30 September 2023

Outcome types	West Yorkshire outcome rate	England and Wales outcome rate
1 – Charged/summonsed	4.8%	5.0%
2 and 3 – Caution – youths and adults	0.4%	0.7%
8 – Community resolutions	0.9%	1.5%
9 – Prosecution not in the public interest (Crown Prosecution Service decision)	0.0%	0.0%
10 and 21 – Prosecution not in the public interest (police decision)	0.5%	0.7%
14 – Evidential difficulties (suspect not identified; victim does not support further action)	0.6%	5.7%
15 – Evidential difficulties (suspect identified; victim supports further action)	18.6%	12.3%
16 – Evidential difficulties (suspect identified; victim does not support or withdraws support)	21.3%	20.9%
17 – Prosecution time limit expired	0.1%	0.2%
18 – Investigation complete – no suspect identified	41.5%	43.0%
20 – Action undertaken by another body/agency	1.5%	1.4%
22 – Diversionary, educational or intervention activity	0.4%	0.3%

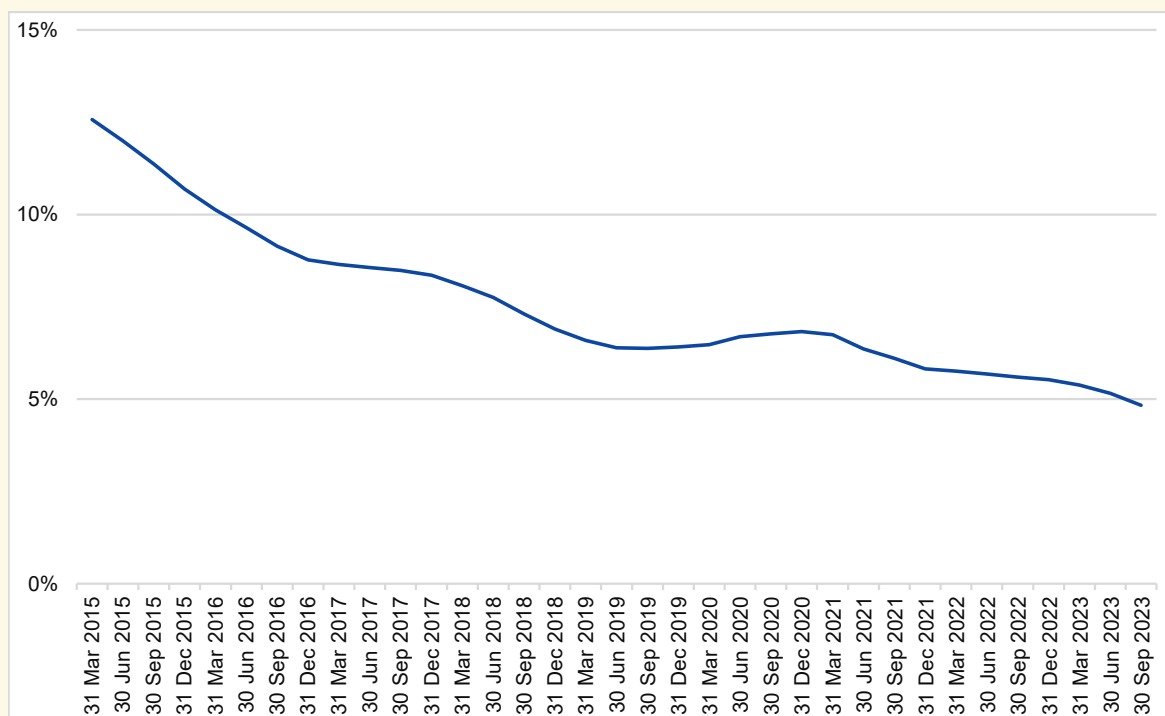
Source: [Police recorded crime and outcomes open data tables](#) from the Home Office

Note: Presented data comes from the latest release at the time of writing this report and may have been revised since then. Total police recorded crime includes all crime (except fraud). For a full commentary and explanation of crime and outcome types, please see the Home Office statistics.

Between the year ending 30 September 2022 and the year ending 30 September 2023, the proportion of victim-based crimes assigned Outcome 14: Evidential difficulties (suspect not identified; victim does not support further action) by West Yorkshire Police remained constant at approximately 0.6 percent. This value is lower than expected compared to other forces in England and Wales.

In the year ending 30 September 2023, the proportion of victim-based crimes assigned [Outcome 15](#): Evidential difficulties (suspect identified; victim supports further action) by West Yorkshire Police was 18.6 percent. This was higher than expected compared to other forces in England and Wales.

Figure 3: Proportion of victim-based crimes assigned a ‘charged/summonsed’ outcome (Outcome 1) by West Yorkshire Police between the year ending 31 March 2015 and the year ending 30 September 2023



Source: [Police recorded crime and outcomes open data tables](#) from the Home Office

Note: Presented data comes from the latest release at the time of writing this report and may have been revised since then. Victim-based crimes are defined as all police-recorded crimes where there is a direct victim, such as an individual, an organisation or corporate body.

Our audit found that investigations weren't always effective: 82 out of 100 cases were found to be effective. We also found that appropriate investigative opportunities weren't always taken. Appropriate investigative opportunities had been taken in 64 out of 83 cases.

The force needs to do more to understand the reasons for some outcomes and what improvements might be needed to give victims the justice they deserve. It also needs to make sure it is using outcomes correctly, in accordance with force and national policies, leading to satisfactory results for victims.

Our victim service assessment found that the force isn't always finalising crimes with the correct outcome. We found that 69 out of 90 crimes were finalised with the correct outcome. In 7 of the 21 incorrect outcomes, they shouldn't have been finalised by supervisors. The 14 other incorrect outcomes don't appear to follow a particular pattern, which may indicate a lack of understanding of how to apply correct crime outcome codes.

We also found that the victim was consulted before the outcome was finalised in 33 out of 35 cases. The victim's views were taken into account in 49 out of 51 cases. A rationale was recorded for the outcome in 85 out of 87 cases. The offender was considered suitable for interview in 20 out of 20 cases.

West Yorkshire Police should make sure there is supervisory oversight of investigations, ensuring that all investigative opportunities are taken

The force doesn't make sure there is always supervisory oversight of crimes.

The victim service assessment audit found that 64 out of 80 crimes had effective supervision.

Investigation plans were set for 69 out of 77 crimes, and 75 out of 90 crimes had finalisation of the crime by supervision.

The victim service assessment audit found a general lack of supervisory oversight, meaning that some investigative opportunities were lost at the outset of the investigation. Some supervisory reviews could have contained more information and rationale, and on a few occasions supervisory oversight was delayed. If direction had been given earlier, the investigation could have been quicker and the officer provided with guidance.

During our inspection, the supervisory oversight, quality and timeliness of investigations were found to be inconsistent.

Many supervisors on various investigative teams told us that they were unable to complete investigative plans and carry out monthly reviews of their officers' crime investigations due to lack of capacity. They said that they were affected by high workloads, dealing with daily prisoner demand and supporting inexperienced officers.

West Yorkshire Police needs to make sure that the requirements of the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime are complied with

The force has improved how it completes and records victim needs assessments and victim contracts, but further work is required.

The victim service assessment audit found that victim needs assessments were completed and recorded in 82 out of 86 relevant cases. A victim personal statement was considered in 26 out of 31 cases. It also found that an agreed victim contract was adhered to in 67 out of 71 cases.

Although the force has made improvements, it still needs to do more. During our inspection, several officers described how they made decisions about victim contracts and that their decisions were based on managing demand rather than being victim focused. In addition, we found that while the force was closely monitoring compliance with the victims' code in terms of victim contact, due to high workloads, officers said that they weren't providing victim updates as they should. Data provided by the force for 22 January 2024 showed that in 6,900 cases, victims hadn't received an update for more than 42 days.

The victim service assessment audit also found that referrals, where required, were made to partner agencies in 34 out of 46 cases. The force should make sure that referrals are made to relevant partner organisations when appropriate.

Innovative practice

West Yorkshire Police has designed and introduced three bespoke apps to improve the standard and quality of investigations

The force has introduced an investigators application (app), an interview app and a file build app. These provide officers with easily accessible sources of guidance on their hand-held devices or on desktop machines.

During our inspection, we had the opportunity to examine each of these apps and found that they were easy to use and contained useful and relevant information in a concise way. The information contained was comprehensive and covered the potential questions an officer may have.

Since the apps' introduction in May 2023, 2,185 members of staff have downloaded the investigators app onto their device, 1,551 members of staff have downloaded the file build app and 792 members of staff have downloaded the interview app (introduced in August 2023).

The force wants to encourage more officers and staff to download the apps and to use them. Some officers we spoke with either didn't know about the apps or hadn't used them.

These three apps, along with the recently added practical file build element of the sergeant's process, could help to improve standards of investigations, interviews and file quality for the force.

Main findings

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

The force has a management structure that provides governance and oversight to investigations

West Yorkshire Police has focused on strengthening its governance structures at a strategic, tactical and operational level. Force-level governance is through the crime board and investigations governance group. In addition, at a district level, crime accountability meetings have been put in place. A full review of the criminal justice governance structures has been carried out with partner agencies, including the Crown Prosecution Service, to make sure they are effective.

The force has introduced a police decision maker (PDM) unit that checks the quality of files before they are submitted to the Crown Prosecution Service. Through the work of this unit, 87.7 percent of files are now accepted at first triage by the Crown Prosecution Service. The challenge for the force with the PDM unit is in the quantity of files awaiting review and the number of files being returned to officers for additional work. At the time of the inspection in January 2024, there were 514 files awaiting review, the oldest being dated 6 weeks previously.

The force recognises the importance of frontline supervisors, in particular sergeants, in the supervision of investigations and quality of files. It has invested heavily in the training of sergeants on these topics to improve the overall quality of investigations and file submission.

Through its governance structures, the force has recognised that its response to forensic identifications was inconsistent across its districts. It had a high rate of no further action being taken, and detections from forensic identifications were low. The force is considering how to improve consistency and its performance in this area.

The force's current quality assurance system involves supervisors dip sampling several investigations. The force would like to introduce a more robust and transparent system so it is trialling the quality assurance thematic testing (QATT) process, which has proved successful in other forces.

The force potentially misses investigative opportunities when crimes are screened out within the force crime management unit

At the time of the inspection, the force told us that 52 percent of all recorded crime is being screened out. The force [crime management unit](#) reviews all new recorded crimes. After an initial risk assessment using THRIVE, consideration of public interest and proportionality, the unit decides whether to allocate or finalise crimes.

The force crime management unit records approximately 100–150 crimes per day over the telephone. The force told us 76 percent of crimes recorded that way are screened out. These types of crimes include theft, damage, burglary at business premises, theft of motor vehicle, theft from motor vehicle, shoplifting and some fraud offences. We found that on some occasions lines of enquiry weren't pursued and crimes were finalised inappropriately. This included crimes where witnesses were mentioned and CCTV was said to be available at premises. We saw that members of the public were asked to go and look for CCTV themselves. We also found that potential opportunities for the recovery of forensic evidence were overlooked and discounted.

The force told us that it didn't carry out any quality assurance or audit work on crimes finalised without investigation.

The force achieves good results for victims by pursuing evidence-led prosecutions where appropriate

In our audit, we found that the force considered evidence-led prosecutions where appropriate in seven out of eight cases.

Investigators we spoke with were positive about their experience of evidence-led prosecutions. They received support from their supervisors and the force to pursue such prosecutions and, where appropriate, to challenge the Crown Prosecution Service if it was reluctant to pursue a case.

The force provided details of several cases that had resulted in successful evidence-led prosecutions at court.

The force has reduced its backlogs within digital forensics, but further work is required

The force has introduced a hub-and-spoke model, with a central [digital forensic](#) hub and separate digital forensic units being located in each district to better support officers with investigations. During our inspection, officers in the districts said this model was working well and described its many benefits. We found the digital forensic unit was operating as best it could with 26 vacancies across the force.

At the time of the inspection, we saw there were backlogs of cases within the digital forensic unit. There were 205 cases waiting to be assessed for acceptance and authorised for examination by the unit. The oldest case in this backlog was three months old. A further 512 cases were awaiting allocation, having been accepted into the digital forensic unit for examination. The oldest case had been awaiting allocation for three months. And 739 cases had been allocated and examinations were ongoing. This means that when officers submit a device for examination to the digital forensic unit, it could be six months before the device will be examined, resulting in delays for victims who have reported crimes.

The force has made sure it has the capacity and capability to examine devices in high-priority investigations on the day of them being submitted to the unit if necessary.

The force needs to support officers to achieve accreditation for specialist roles

It is positive that the force has a dedicated meeting to discuss accreditation of officers for various roles across the force. But during our inspection we identified concerns around [specialist child abuse investigation development programme \(SCAIDP\)](#) training accreditation.

After submitting their portfolio to the training school, officers may have to wait between 6 and 12 months for their portfolio to be reviewed and to receive a response. In almost all cases, extensive additional work is then required for the portfolio to be signed off. Some of the portfolios we saw were over 180 pages long. At the time of the inspection, the force told us 11 portfolios were waiting for review and sign off. The oldest portfolio had been received at the training school in May 2023, some eight months before. This process for SCAIDP accreditation is causing additional work, stress and upset among officers, which is having a negative effect on morale and well-being. It means some officers no longer want to work within child protection.

Protecting vulnerable people

Adequate

West Yorkshire Police is adequate at protecting vulnerable people.

Areas for improvement

West Yorkshire Police needs to make sure that it has sufficient staffing, processes and governance for the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme and the Child Sex Offence Disclosure Scheme to ensure compliance with legislative process and required timescales

The [Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme](#) (DVDS), also known as Clare's Law, gives a victim the 'right to ask'. This means a victim can ask the police if their partner might pose a risk to them based on their partner's previous history of [domestic abuse](#) or violence. The police have 'a right to know' option in specific circumstances, which allows them to proactively share information with individuals about their partner's previous history of abuse or violence. The person can then consider what risk a partner may pose.

The force told us it has increased publicity around the DVDS, which has generated more applications in 2023 than in the previous 12 months. It is also positive that the force proactively identifies cases where [disclosure](#) under DVDS 'right to know' is appropriate. But the force doesn't appear to have enough trained officers and staff in place to meet the 28-day disclosure timescale of the DVDS.

The management of DVDS applications varies across the districts. Officers and staff in different roles have responsibility for DVDS in addition to their other responsibilities. At the time of our inspection, officers and supervisors in the districts told us that there were no officers or staff dedicated to performing this role.

The [child sex offender disclosure scheme \(CSODS\)](#), also known as Sarah's Law, gives parents, carers and guardians the 'right to ask'. This means that parents, carers or guardians can ask police if someone who is in contact with their child has a record for child sexual offences. The police also have a 'right to know' option in specific circumstances, which allows them to proactively share information with parents, carers or guardians about a person's history of child sexual offences. This allows the parent, carer or guardian to properly consider what risk an individual may pose to a child.

CSODS applications in West Yorkshire are allocated to officers within child safeguarding teams to deal with alongside all their other work. Applications that relate to registered sex offenders are allocated to public protection officers. Supervisors in some districts are managing demand by asking the applicant to go back to their social worker for disclosure of information. They are then closing the application, meaning that the applicant may not be informed of any potential risk. Some officers we spoke with were unaware of the 'right to know' option for police under this scheme.

The force doesn't have enough governance and performance data on the DVDS and CSODS. It was unable to provide us with data on how many applications are open and ongoing, how long they have been open or whether they are within statutory timescales.

Officers told us that disclosure processes were often exceeding the statutory timescales.

Some districts said that they had used overtime to try to manage the backlogs before our inspection began. During our inspection, we found that one district had 10 DVDS applications that exceeded 28 days, the oldest being 4 months old. Another district had 67 DVDS applications that exceeded 28 days, the oldest being 3 months old.

In addition, officers in some districts told us that if there was no reply when they contacted someone to make a DVDS disclosure, they would attempt to contact the person a total of three times by phone. If there was no response, the application would be closed and finalised without disclosure having been given. This decision was being made at constable level and had no supervisory oversight. No efforts were made to visit the person's address or speak with partner agencies to try to contact them. The force was unable to provide any data on how many cases had been finalised in this way.

The force should make sure it provides appropriate information to potential victims of domestic abuse or [sexual abuse](#) promptly. Without this, appropriate decisions around safety cannot be made, and potential victims may remain at risk.

West Yorkshire Police should apply consistent secondary risk assessment processes for domestic abuse across all districts, and provide a full information picture including cumulative risk when sharing information about vulnerable children with children's social care

During our last PEEL inspection, we told the force that when it is sharing information with children's social care, a full picture of information should be shared.

After the [multi-agency safeguarding hub](#) (MASH) review, the force recently introduced a joint triage process in three of its five districts. Children's social care staff and officers within the MASH jointly discuss child [public protection notices](#) and share details of the wider history. In one of the districts undertaking the joint triage, we found a backlog of approximately 169 cases that were waiting to be jointly discussed. The oldest of these cases was 18 days old.

The force has a daily risk assessment meeting in place in every district. These are multi-agency meetings to share information. The criteria for what is discussed at each meeting vary across the force. Some districts have additional processes in place to assess and share information regarding domestic abuse cases that don't fit the criteria for discussion at the meeting. But not all districts have such processes in place. The processes need to be standardised to make sure all information on vulnerable children in [domestic abuse](#) cases is shared appropriately along with details of the full history and cumulative risk picture to ensure consistency in the police management of risk.

The different processes mean there are inconsistencies in the way the force assesses repeat incidents of domestic abuse. Referrals to children's social care by police vary in each district area. A full picture of risk around children in domestic abuse settings isn't always shared with children's social care. This means that there is a risk that single agency decision-making by relevant agencies isn't based on all available information on the potential cumulative risk to that child. This was a previous area for improvement and hasn't been completely addressed.

West Yorkshire Police should standardise the police approach to sharing information with children's social care to make sure that all relevant information is shared.

Main findings

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

The force has a strategy, performance framework and governance structure in place for vulnerability

West Yorkshire Police has a vulnerability strategy that is aligned with the College of Policing vulnerability strands. A designated person is responsible for each strand. This strategy is progressed through the force's protecting vulnerable people board, chaired by an assistant chief constable, and the performance framework, which is linked to the [National Vulnerability Action Plan](#).

A safeguarding central governance unit sets policy and standards. This provides quality assurance for the work of the district MASH and vulnerability investigation teams, which are managed locally.

The force has a violence against women and girls strategy and is an adopter force for Operation Soteria. The protecting vulnerability board and other force governance meetings are working to improve the police response across the force.

The force responds to feedback and learning to improve services to protect vulnerable people

During our inspection, we saw that learning from both internal audits and external reviews was discussed during force governance meetings and then shared more widely across the force. This included learning from domestic homicide reviews, safeguarding adult reviews and child safeguarding practice reviews.

During 2023, the force gave [Domestic Abuse Matters training](#) to 3,250 officers and has also started to provide domestic abuse homicide training to improve officers' understanding of domestic abuse and perpetrator offending behaviour.

The force should make sure that orders protecting victims of domestic abuse are considered in all appropriate cases

In the year ending 30 September 2022, West Yorkshire Police applied for 657 Domestic Violence Protection Orders (DVPOs) at court. But in the year ending 30 September 2023, the force applied for 417 DVPOs at court, which is a decrease of 37 percent. The force recognises that there has been a decrease in applications for DVPOs and has been working to understand the reasons for this.

The force has a central DVPO team that reviews and presents DVPO applications at court. It is positive that this team also has the support of an [independent domestic violence adviser](#) who can provide victims with additional support in the medium and long term.

In our inspection activity, we found the force may benefit from some refresher training on DVPO processes to address potential misunderstandings of the process.

During our inspection, officers told us that the central team rejects some applications. This has made some district officers reluctant to submit applications. And some district officers don't always re-submit applications after making corrections.

We were also told about examples where the central team had rejected DVPO applications, but then district officers had made the same application to the court and the order had been granted.

The force has a strong focus on pursuing charges for domestic abuse investigations. When superintendents are approached to authorise a Domestic Violence Protection Notice (DVPN) application, they ask officers to try to bring charges against the suspect. In cases where charges aren't authorised, some officers don't then pursue a DVPO application.

In the year ending 30 September 2023, West Yorkshire Police recorded the highest number of domestic abuse related crimes across forces in England and Wales, recording 60,137 crimes, which equates to 25.3 domestic abuse related crimes per 1,000 population. This was higher than the average rate across all forces in England and Wales of 15.0 domestic abuse related crimes per 1,000 population.

During this same period, the force recorded one of the highest numbers of repeat domestic abuse related crimes across forces in England and Wales, recording 30,397 repeat domestic abuse related crimes, which equated to 12.8 such crimes per 1,000 population. This was higher than the average rate across all forces in England and Wales of 4.9 repeat domestic abuse related crimes per 1,000 population.

Despite this, in the year ending 30 September 2023, a DVPO was only applied for by West Yorkshire Police in 0.7 percent of recorded domestic abuse related crimes.

The force supplied its own data showing that in the 12 months to 1 January 2024, 63 percent of their DVPNs resulted in DVPOs authorised at court. The force told us that many cases are discontinued before they go to court.

Protective measures are a powerful tool to help keep vulnerable victims safe. Failure to apply for protective measures where appropriate denies victims this opportunity and could place them at risk of harm.

Multi-agency risk assessment conference meetings are well established across the force, and risk is managed through partnership working

[Multi-agency risk assessment conference](#) (MARAC) meetings are well established, and risk is managed through partnership working. In the year ending 31 March 2023, West Yorkshire Police discussed 4,767 cases at the MARAC meetings, which was above the number (3,760) recommended by [SafeLives](#) based on the size of the local population.

Each district has its own MARAC meeting and its own MARAC co-ordinator. Most MARAC cases are heard within two weeks. But in two districts we found delays, with one district having a delay of around seven weeks for cases to be heard. These cases had been discussed with partner agencies at the daily risk assessment meeting.

The MARAC chairs were mostly detective inspectors, although sometimes sergeants performed this role. Some MARAC chairs had received training, but others hadn't.

We found MARAC meetings were well attended by various partners, who all engaged in discussing the cases, although the focus tended to be on the victim and the mental health of the victim. There was less attention on the perpetrator and managing risk around the perpetrator. During our inspection, we saw examples where no effective measures had been put in place around the perpetrator and the abuse had started up again quite quickly.

Different MASHs have different criteria for what incidents are considered a repeat incident for the purpose of further review at MARAC. There doesn't appear to be any guidance on this.

The force assesses cumulative risk differently in different areas for the purpose of MARAC and daily risk assessment meetings, which means risk could be missed in some districts.

Attending officers aren't consistently exploring or recording children's perspectives in households where an incident of domestic abuse has occurred

During our inspection, we received feedback from specialist officers and from partner agencies that the quality of DASH risk assessment forms varied. In the cases we examined, we found the voice of the child was often missing. Comments were recorded about the cleanliness of the house or food in the fridge. But it was difficult to determine if the child had been spoken with, or to understand the thoughts and feelings of the child.

We found remote resolution teams based in districts deal with reports of domestic abuse and record DASH risk assessments over the telephone. In cases where children had been present during domestic abuse related incidents, we found that these children weren't always seen or spoken with, so the voice of the child was missing.

Managing offenders and suspects

Adequate

West Yorkshire Police is adequate at managing offenders and suspects.

Areas for improvement

West Yorkshire Police should make sure its approach to managing bail is consistent

During our inspection, officers demonstrated that they understood the requirements of the new bail legislation introduced by the [Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022](#). They had a clear appreciation of the importance of using bail conditions to safeguard vulnerable people and to manage the risk posed by some suspects. But the approach to how bail was managed across the districts was inconsistent.

Some team supervisors maintained a bail diary, some of which were electronic and some on paper. In other teams, it was down to individuals to maintain their own diary. But some teams said they had nothing in place to manage suspects on bail.

Officers and supervisors in the districts told us that sometimes the relevant officers didn't attend appointments with people returning to the police station as part of their bail conditions and no other arrangements had been put in place. This meant suspects either had to be re-bailed to a later date or dealt with by officers who didn't have knowledge of the case.

Custody sergeants send out reminders to officers about people returning on bail. But two of the five districts, Bradford and Leeds, have dedicated bail management sergeants to oversee bail in order to meet the demand in these two districts.

There also appears to be a lack of supervisory oversight of bail at inspector level. For [domestic abuse](#) investigations, the force has imposed a maximum 28-day bail period to make sure these cases are progressed in a timely way. Some domestic abuse investigations aren't being progressed within 28 days, for a variety of reasons. Inspectors are struggling to complete the 28-day bail reviews due to the volume of investigations so sergeants are said to be completing the reviews in some cases.

West Yorkshire Police should make sure that intelligence information for investigations by online child abuse investigation teams is updated and reviewed before and after enforcement action

In our case file review and discussions with officers, we didn't find any evidence that intelligence information was updated and reviewed to understand the level of risk or threat posed either before or after enforcement action. This is a particular risk after enforcement action, when suspects are often on bail for extensive periods of time while devices are being examined. A review of the intelligence picture is important to establish if there has been an increase or decrease in the risk to the suspect, or to the victim or others.

Main findings

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

The force is focused on pursuing offenders and managing outstanding suspects to protect the public from harm

West Yorkshire Police has established governance processes for managing wanted suspects through its force daily management meetings, force accountability meetings and local accountability meetings.

Each district has dedicated resources assigned each day to locating and arresting outstanding suspects. This includes catch and convict teams, 'be on the look-out for' (BOLO) cars and neighbourhood impact teams.

In addition to this, the force has introduced Operation Reset, a proactive operation to reduce the number of outstanding wanted suspects after the critical demand period in summer 2023. The force told us that it had reduced its outstanding wanted suspects from 12,000 in August 2023 to 7,936 in January 2024.

The force is focused on changing the culture and attitudes of officers so that they are more proactive. This will help make sure investigations and arresting suspects are seen as everyone's responsibility, not just that of the dedicated arrest teams. During our inspection, we did find that officers on some teams believe it isn't their responsibility to go out and make arrests. They wait for suspects to be found or arrested by the district teams.

The force effectively manages the risk posed to the public by registered sex offenders in line with authorised professional practice guidelines

The safeguarding central governance unit writes policy and sets standards in relation to registered sex offender management. The force has district-based [public protection units](#) that are responsible for the local management of registered sex offenders.

During our inspection, we found that [active risk management system \(ARMS\) assessments](#) and risk management plans were completed to a good standard and complied with College of Policing [authorised professional practice](#) guidance. The management of registered sex offenders in [reactive management](#) also complied with authorised professional practice guidance and was reviewed annually.

All visits to registered sex offenders are now completed with two officers present and are unannounced. We found that any backlogs of visits were less than a month old, except for one district where they had a backlog of three months.

We identified some inconsistency in recording actions to manage registered sex offenders. This lack of consistency could mean that details about the actions taken are missed out.

Several officers told us that the force is regularly moving officers from public protection unit teams in some districts to support CID and deal with prisoners during the evenings and at weekends. Officers told us this was affecting the ability of public protection unit officers to investigate crime and manage their workload. Officers in these districts said that they don't feel their role is fully understood or valued. On other districts, public protection unit resources were said to be protected from being diverted from their role.

The force's online child abuse investigation teams effectively investigate online child abuse and protect victims

The safeguarding central governance unit writes policy and sets standards in relation to how the force manages online child abuse investigations. The force has a central abusive images assessment hub that assesses all information received and tries to identify perpetrators. The hub also uses specialist software to proactively identify the sharing of indecent images of children. It is positive that the force investigates all cases identified, regardless of the level of risk they are assessed to be.

Once a suspect is identified by the abusive images assessment hub, the investigation is passed to the locally based online child abuse investigation team to take enforcement action. In the cases we examined, there were no delays in action being taken. The force is managing online child abuse investigations in line with nationally recognised risk assessment timescales. In addition, we found that children's social care was notified within 24 hours of a child being linked to a suspect.

The force also makes sure that timely and appropriate safeguarding is in place for victims and suspects.

Several officers also told us that the force regularly diverts officers from the online child abuse investigation teams on some districts to support CID and deal with prisoners, during the evenings and at weekends. Officers said this was affecting the progress of investigations. Officers in these districts said that they don't feel their role is properly understood or valued. In other districts, resources in online child abuse investigation teams were said to be protected from being diverted from their role.

Neighbourhood teams aren't always aware of registered sex offenders in their area

During our inspection, we spoke with several neighbourhood officers. Knowledge of registered sex offenders residing in their local area was inconsistent. Levels of knowledge varied, from some officers having no knowledge at all to others in different districts having received bespoke briefings on individual offenders.

The force routinely considers the use of preventative and ancillary orders to protect the public from the most dangerous offenders

West Yorkshire Police applies for [sexual harm prevention orders \(SHPOs\)](#) at every opportunity as it recognises that they help in the management of registered sex offenders. Two dedicated civil order caseworkers support officers in the districts to obtain orders, and the force's legal services team also provide support.

The force also monitors breaches of SHPOs very closely. It makes sure relevant crimes are recorded where appropriate and deals with breaches of SHPOs robustly. This usually results in registered sex offenders being charged and dealt with at court.

In the year ending 31 March 2023, West Yorkshire Police issued 378 SHPOs. In the same period, 122 SHPOs were breached.

There is a lack of governance of voluntary attendance interviews

During our inspection, officers and supervisors told us that there was a lack of governance and supervisory oversight of [voluntary attendance](#) interviews. Supervisors told us that they often didn't know voluntary interviews had taken place.

Both officers and their supervisors told us that voluntary interviews were seen as an easier option and at times were being used inappropriately. Supervisors provided examples of cases where officers hadn't fully understood their powers and had allowed family members to be present during voluntary interviews. Suspects had also walked out during questioning. Officers told us that they presumed that after a period of time there would be little evidential value in making an arrest or searching premises, so they would invite suspects into the police station for voluntary interview. Supervisors also confirmed to us that officers were making these incorrect presumptions. This could result in missed opportunities to recover evidence of an offence.

Building, supporting and protecting the workforce

Requires improvement

West Yorkshire Police requires improvement at building, supporting and protecting the workforce.

Areas for improvement

West Yorkshire Police needs to make sure that effective systems are in place to monitor workloads and provide support to officers

The force positively encourages its workforce to complete the National Wellbeing Survey. In the 2023 survey, West Yorkshire Police achieved the highest completion rate nationally with 64 percent. After the National Wellbeing Survey takes place, the force uses pulse surveys to gather more specific information on the issues identified as affecting its workforce the most.

The themes identified in the 2023 surveys are very similar to those identified in previous surveys, including excessive workloads and their effect on well-being, staffing levels, shift patterns, use of resources and the workforce not feeling valued. This suggests that the previous issues haven't been fully resolved, despite the action plans and the 'you said we did' work that the force carried out after the 2021/22 surveys.

These themes are consistent with our inspection findings. Many officers we spoke with across the various investigation teams said they felt unable to cope with their high workloads and as a result the quality of safeguarding and investigations had been affected. Several officers also disclosed that they had been experiencing stress and anxiety. Supervisors on some teams told us how they had delayed allocating investigations to officers as they already had high workloads and they were concerned that allocating additional investigations would cause officers to become unwell and go off sick.

Officers from various teams described how they were regularly taken away from their main duties to deal with prisoners for other teams. As a result, they were unable to progress their own workload. This caused further stress and worry to officers who wanted to do their best for victims.

Overtime is also used to help cope with demand and workloads. Some officers said there was an expectation on officers to work overtime and that it was affecting their work-life balance. Several officers we spoke with said they didn't feel valued by the force.

Some supervisors told us that they were unable to complete investigative plans, crime reviews and personal development reviews with their officers due to their own high workloads. Other supervisors told us that they regularly took work home with them just to help manage their workload. Many didn't claim overtime for this.

The [National Policing Vulnerability Knowledge and Practice Programme \(VKPP\)](#) completed a [peer review](#) of West Yorkshire Police in 2023. This review highlighted concerns about well-being in safeguarding teams and how the shift pattern was affecting workloads and well-being.

The force is moving to a new shift pattern from March 2024 for all safeguarding teams, which is positive. It is hoped that this new shift pattern will provide a better work-life balance for officers, as well as scheduled training days and protected days for officers to progress their workload.

The force should improve its understanding of demand pressures on officers and staff so that it can provide better support to those in high-demand roles.

West Yorkshire Police should review the processes and procedures in place in relation to officers in high-risk roles who are identified as requiring additional support to make sure that appropriate action and support are in place

The force provides an annual psychological assessment questionnaire to all officers working in high-risk roles. The force told us this involves around 3,000 officers and staff. Completing the questionnaire isn't mandatory and there is no monitoring to check whether it has been completed. The force told us that in the last 12 months the response rate was about 50 percent, which is a marked increase on previous years.

The force provided data showing that 485 of the officers who responded to the questionnaire were sent an email by occupational health and signposted to contact its employee assistance programme, and 35 officers had an appointment with a psychologist. The force was unable to say how many of the 485 officers went on to obtain support from the employee assistance programme. It was also unable to provide any reassurance about how those officers were currently feeling, even though something of concern had been identified from their questionnaires.

Several officers we spoke with during our inspection had no confidence in the process. They felt that it had little value because despite disclosing on the questionnaire how stressed and bad they were feeling, nothing came out of it as a result.

The force should improve its understanding of the welfare needs of its officers and staff in high-risk roles. It needs to make sure enough measures are put in place for those who are identified as requiring additional support, both to look after their welfare and to make sure they are well enough to carry out their role.

West Yorkshire Police needs to improve its systems and processes for personal development reviews and make sure that development review meetings are consistently applied across the force

Personal development reviews should be an effective tool for officers and staff to record and discuss their objectives, achievements, professional development needs and career goals. The reviews are essential for supervisors to understand the development needs of their workforce.

The force introduced a new personal development review system in December 2022 that uses a nine-box grid method to help better identify talent across the force. This new system was described as ineffective by almost every person we spoke with during our inspection. Officers said the training on the new system was poor and didn't explain the practicalities of how the new personal development review was to be completed. Officers said they were finding the system extremely difficult to use, which was causing additional stress. As a result, personal development reviews are often not being completed and one-to-one personal development meetings directed by the force to take place monthly aren't consistently taking place.

The force accepts that there are issues with the system. It has set up a working group to address this but expects this may take some time to resolve.

During our inspection, some of the officers we spoke with hadn't recently had personal development reviews. Several supervisors also told us that although they appreciated the importance of personal development reviews and one-to-one development meetings, they found it difficult to complete them due to the pressures of high workloads.

For the year ending 31 March 2023, 74 percent of West Yorkshire Police's workforce had completed an annual performance assessment.

Innovative practice

West Yorkshire Police's creation of a trauma tracker demonstrates the force's awareness of the effects of trauma and cumulative trauma

The force has recently created and introduced a trauma tracker, which is being piloted at three sites: the contact centre, operational support and Wakefield. The tracker involves proactively recording and tracking all officers who are exposed to multiple incidents of trauma. This will help the force to easily identify these officers and to make sure the right welfare support is put in place for them.

Main findings

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

The force provides its workforce with a good range of measures to improve their physical and mental well-being

West Yorkshire Police has a chief officer who leads the people board overseeing workforce and well-being developments. The force has completed the [Blue Light Wellbeing Framework](#) self-assessment and has updated its health and well-being strategy. It has a delivery plan containing various actions to improve its well-being measures.

The workforce is aware of and is accessing some of the improved well-being services the force now offers. These include well-being champions, well-being dogs, force chaplains, a suicide prevention video and links to support organisations on the force intranet.

The force has also introduced a new campaign called Wellbeing Matters, which allows officers and staff to submit concerns directly 24 hours a day by scanning a QR code.

The force has introduced an employee assistance programme, which provides access to telephone counselling, information services and face-to-face counselling if required.

Through its [trauma risk management \(TRiM\)](#) process, the force offers support to officers and staff who have listened to, viewed or witnessed a traumatic incident. It has increased the number of TRiM practitioners across the force to 150. Officers we spoke with during our inspection were broadly positive about the TRiM process. But there were some inconsistencies, for example where supervisors had failed to recognise the effects of traumatic incidents or the cumulative effects of officers attending several incidents. In addition, some officers said that some supervisors hadn't supported officers to attend TRiM sessions or hadn't submitted referrals where appropriate.

The force has also introduced peer supporters to provide additional support to officers across the force. Officers spoke positively about this.

The force has improved its occupational health service

The force's [occupational health unit](#) has met the foundation standards set by the College of Policing and has good contact with the College.

As at 31 March 2023, the average time from referral to appointment with the occupational health unit was 38.9 days. The staff vacancies that had existed within the occupational health unit were filled in December 2023, which reduced the time officers and staff had to wait for an appointment. At the time of our inspection in January 2024, the force told us that timescales for occupational health unit appointments were back within the service level agreement of five days. The force needs to continue its efforts to sustain this.

Officers and staff we spoke with during our inspection were generally happy with the service received once they had an appointment. But many officers did say that they would prefer the appointments to be in person rather than by phone.

The force develops and supports its first-line leaders to effectively support teams and individuals

Frontline sergeants are given leadership and management training to support effective leadership of their teams.

The Core Leadership Programme is a two-week course for sergeants that is in line with the College of Policing's first-line leadership outcomes. It was piloted in Leeds and was planned to be rolled out fully in March 2024 to all sergeants.

The force has also introduced a programme to tackle sexism and misogyny within the workplace.

All supervisors we spoke with reported feeling confident in providing support to their teams. Most had attended training, such as the first-line leaders training course, supervising investigations course, managing performance and conduct course, and mental health training course.

In addition, officers and staff were complimentary about the support they received from their immediate supervisors.

Our workforce survey for West Yorkshire Police identified that 80.9 percent (610 of 754 respondents) of those who had line manager responsibilities agreed that West Yorkshire Police equipped them with sufficient training to carry out their line manager role.

The force effectively supports Policing Education Qualifications Framework new recruits, but this isn't replicated for all recruits, and additional action is required to support direct-entry detectives

The force told us it had recruited 852 student officers as part of the [Police Uplift Programme](#). It has put various supportive measures in place for student officers, including the initial police education teams, which offer support to all new student officers such as peer support, welfare support, TRiM practices and Let's Talk facilitators.

Student officers are offered support for their development by their assessors and line managers. Student officers on uniform response patrol duties have regular supervisor reviews, their workloads are maintained at manageable levels, and they are allocated a tutor.

On the whole, student officers we spoke with during our inspection felt well supported. But this wasn't the case with direct-entry detectives, who told us that they didn't feel supported by the force.

During our inspection, we found that the pathways available to direct-entry detectives were inconsistent across the force. Direct-entry detectives were placed straight into various investigative teams, including some high-risk roles, to fill vacancies. These teams included CID, district investigation teams, adult safeguarding teams, child safeguarding teams and domestic abuse teams. The direct-entry detectives said they weren't given any time to learn basic skills on uniform response patrol duties and very quickly were given a workload that often involved complex investigations. Direct-entry detectives also told us they didn't have mentors. In our West Yorkshire PEEL workforce survey for 2023, 76.4 percent of new recruits said they didn't have a mentor or buddy.

Placing direct-entry detectives straight into high-risk, high-demand roles also has an effect on the supervisor and other officers within the team. They have to try to support the new direct-entry detective to learn while carrying a high workload themselves.

During our inspection, the force told us that the attrition rate of direct-entry detectives leaving the force after between 6 and 12 months' service was 12.7 percent, which is higher than the national average of 9.9 percent. The most common reasons for these officers leaving were workload pressures and the roles that they had been placed in, although some had left because the role wasn't for them.

The force recognises the issues around direct-entry detectives and is aiming to introduce a more structured training pathway. This will include a period on uniform response patrol for officers to learn basic skills, the provision of mentors and ensuring that students have manageable workloads. The force is also planning to introduce well-being passports for direct-entry detectives, which should help officers as they progress between different teams during their training.

[Stay interviews](#) are also used to support officers who may be considering leaving the force. The force told us that the support put in place through the Stay interviews has been successful in retaining officers.

The force makes new recruits feel welcome and included and helps supervisors to create an ethical and inclusive working environment

The force promotes diversity and inclusion through raising awareness of cultures locally, providing managers with the skills to understand issues and support officers. The force has also given mandatory cultural awareness training to all officers and staff, as well as unconscious bias training.

The Learning and Organisational Development Inclusion Plan 2023/24 outlines the force's plans and governance to support officers, predominantly during the recruitment process.

A positive action mentor is assigned to each recruit who is from an ethnic minority background.

The force produces a regular diversity, equality and inclusivity newsletter, which highlights relevant work and initiatives that are taking place across the force.

As part of our PEEL inspection, we carried out a workforce survey for West Yorkshire Police. This had a completion rate of 22.9 percent. The survey provided an insight into the thoughts and feelings of the workforce.

The results around diversity, equality and inclusion showed that, of those who completed the survey:

- 91.6 percent (2,243 of 2,450 respondents) agreed that their line manager challenges discriminatory behaviour;
- 90.6 percent (2,219 of 2,450 respondents) agreed that their line manager creates an ethical working environment;
- 89.1 percent (2,183 of 2,450 respondents) agreed that their line manager creates an inclusive working environment; and
- 82.9 percent (2,033 of 2,450 respondents) agreed that their line manager encourages reflective thinking.

The force is making good efforts to retain new recruits, with specific consideration given to understanding and overcoming the challenges faced by those from diverse backgrounds.

The force creates opportunities for officers and staff from under-represented groups to develop and progress

A dedicated positive action team seeks to help members of the workforce from under-represented groups to develop and progress. A variety of different supportive measures and programmes are in place, including the Evolve programme, which helps with lateral development and progression for officers from ethnic minority backgrounds. There are crammer courses to help with promotion exams, support groups and networks, and coaching and mentoring by the positive action team. The British Association for Women in Policing also offers promotion support for female officers.

Leadership and force management

Adequate

West Yorkshire Police's leadership and management is adequate.

Areas for improvement

West Yorkshire Police should make sure it is effective at managing demand and can demonstrate it has the right resources, processes and plans in place to meet current demand

The force should make sure it is effective at managing demand and can show that it has the right resources, processes and plans in place to meet current demand across the force. Our inspection has shown that the force is understaffed in some key areas, which is affecting its ability to provide an effective service. Effective oversight of workloads that officers are carrying is inconsistent across the different districts and teams.

The current operating model and the different teams the force has created to deal with crime demand are under-resourced in some areas. There is also a mix of capability and capacity within these teams, creating an imbalance. The force is using inexperienced officers to investigate complex crimes, for which they haven't had enough training. Senior officers told us that the force's IT function is also understaffed. As a result, it is unable to carry out some of its planned improvements, which were being regularly re-prioritised and delayed.

After we last inspected the force, it invested additional officers into safeguarding, patrol and the digital forensic unit. But the force has since recognised further officers are required within safeguarding and neighbourhoods.

The force needs to review its current operating model to make sure it has the right number of people with the right skills in the right places to provide its services.

West Yorkshire Police needs to consistently make the best use of its available data to improve performance and productivity

The force has access to a wide range of data. It has good systems in place to supply detailed information through data systems such as its Power BI applications (apps). But during our fieldwork we found the force doesn't consistently make the best use of its available data to understand productivity or areas where it can improve performance. The force needs to improve its processes for recording, checking and understanding its data to make sure this has a positive effect on productivity.

During our inspection, despite the various Power BI apps, we found the force was also still using spreadsheets and other manual processes to gather and record information. Many of the apps aren't being used by officers. Officers we spoke with, including inspectors, sergeants and constables, told us that they don't look at Power BI apps. The workforce appears to prefer old ways of working, so despite the availability of the Power BI apps, the force is still producing hundreds of spreadsheets.

The force could make better use of its data to manage backlogs, workloads and delays in crime allocation.

Main findings

In this section we set out our main findings that relate to leadership and management.

The force has a clear governance structure and is engaging with the Mayor's Office and its community to provide a better service

West Yorkshire Police is working closely with the Mayor's Office. An example of this is the joint initiative to increase road safety, called Vision Zero. The force has been using community engagement platforms such as community outcome meetings and YouTube videos to engage with its community. The force has created community safety manager posts in all districts to manage partnership resources more effectively. It is clear that there is a strong working relationship with the Mayor's Office.

The force's governance structure is designed to better monitor the priorities of the Mayor's Office and the chief constable. Similar information is shared at each level of governance to help improve consistency around performance, well-being, resourcing and programmes of work.

The force actively encourages its workforce to complete both national and force-level staff surveys so that it can identify areas where it needs to improve. Areas for improvement identified through these surveys include workloads, inefficient working practices and its workforce feeling they aren't appreciated and listened to.

The force is using overtime across various teams to clear some of its backlogs. While less expensive than employing more officers and staff, the force needs to do more to understand this demand.

At the time of our inspection, the force told us that it was operating with 8 percent vacancies in [police staff](#) posts. Vacancies in the IT department mean that some programmes of work have been re-prioritised and delayed. The force is aware of this issue and has highlighted it as a risk in its [force management statement](#).

The force is providing bespoke leadership training for its supervisors

West Yorkshire Police is supporting its leaders and has introduced bespoke leadership training for frontline leaders and senior leaders.

This includes a senior leadership development programme, which is a Hydra course based on everyday challenging police scenarios. The course covers [critical incidents](#), managing the media, community tensions, a major incident and some professional standards and personal issues. The force has provided the training to 127 senior leaders of chief inspector rank and above, and 9 are still to complete it. Senior leaders we spoke with all agreed that this was a very informative and challenging training course that helped to further develop their leadership skills.

Frontline sergeants also receive leadership training to help them better support their teams. They take part in the core leadership programme, which is a two-week course.

The force has the leadership development of its officers and staff mapped out in its strategic workforce plan, which forms part of the leadership strategy. This is overseen by the people board, which monitors its progress.

Senior leaders need to be more visible and engaged with the workforce

The chief officer team felt that they encourage challenge and debate from each other, which is healthy. Senior managers and heads of department felt listened to, and they said that chief officers generally engaged with them well. They understand their roles and force priorities. But some officers we spoke with said they felt there was a disconnect with their leadership team and that they weren't being listened to when they raised issues of concern. These views were expressed both during our inspection and in the results of the recent internal staff survey.

The force needs a force-wide operating structure to help the workforce work in a cohesive and consistent way, and effective systems to make sure crimes are allocated to appropriately skilled officers and units

The force has five separate districts, which all have different processes for the management and allocation of work. This has created inconsistencies in the approach to aspects such as managing suspects on bail, supervising problem-solving plans, updating victims, supervising investigations, investigation quality, partnership referrals and workloads. There is also a disconnect between [neighbourhood policing teams](#) and response teams. The force has five different approaches to how it allocates crime investigations to officers. We saw evidence of officers without enough training and experience dealing with complex crimes such as rape and stalking. The force was also working against its own policy by giving domestic abuse and stalking crimes to its remote resolution team.

The force has invested in digital improvements to support the work of operational officers and staff

The force has made some progress with automation to reduce manual administration by officers and staff.

During fieldwork, the force told us about the bots (automated computer programs) designed to check file submissions 24 hours a day to make sure key documents containing information are present. The force has also introduced the automation of crime finalisation letters that are sent to victims, which provide crime reference numbers and contact numbers for victim support.

The force is part of well-established local and national collaborations

The force collaborates well with its neighbouring forces. It provides accommodation for national collaborations, such as the [National Video Identification Parades Electronic Recording \(VIPER\) Bureau](#), [National Police Air Service](#), and Regional Scientific Support Services.

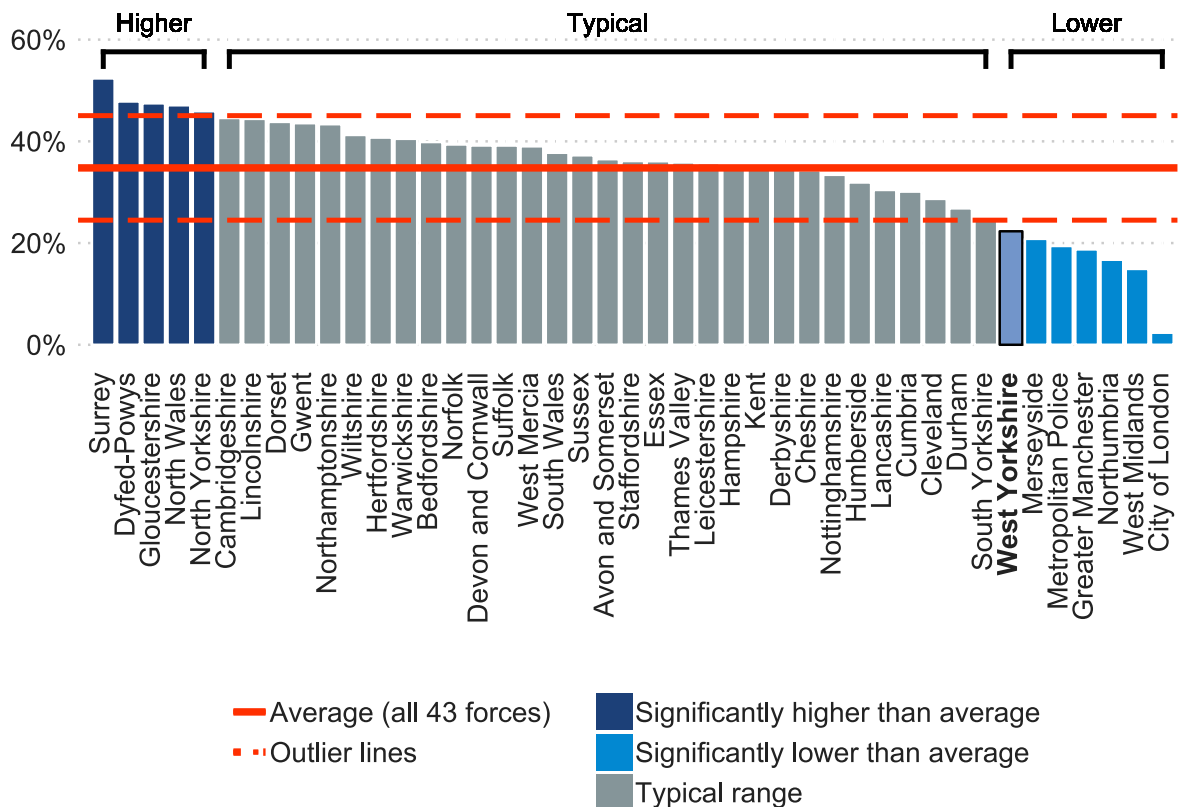
The force adequately understands its finances and is using priority-based budgeting to make efficiency savings

In the year ending 31 March 2023, the force received a total of £663m in funding, which was £278,629 per 1,000 population. The council tax local [police precept](#) provided £148m, which was 22.3 percent of the force's total funding.

The force is funded at a below average rate compared to all forces in England and Wales.

The force’s business cases and workforce planning have been improved with use of the force management statement at a strategic level. All business cases are closely scrutinised by the chief officer team and are aligned closely to financial planning and the force management statement. The force management statement is very detailed and considered to be one of the best produced nationally.

Figure 4: Council tax local police precept funding as a proportion of total funding by forces in England and Wales in the 2022/23 financial year



Source: Data collection and analysis from HMICFRS

In terms of West Yorkshire’s financial health, as at January 2024, the general (contingency) reserve stands at £14.55m for 2023/24. This represents 2.6 percent of the net revenue budget, in line with the reserves strategy and sound financial management.

The force’s medium-term financial plan and reserves strategy are appropriate. There is a plan to use reserves to ease funding pressures, with £7.34m of reserves being used to balance the 2024/25 budget. The force has been using [priority-based budgeting](#) to plan efficiency savings and is confident that this will inform the budget process for any level of funding.

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