



College of Policing analysis: Estimating demand on the police service

Summary

While reliable national data are limited, some indication of demand on police forces in England and Wales and how this might be changing is possible. There is some consistency across data sources to support the suggestion that while recorded crime has reduced, demand on the police has grown in other ways.

- Police recorded crime and incidents have been decreasing over the last 10 years although the trend is now slowing and some types of crime and incidents (eg, rape and 'public safety and welfare') now appear to be increasing.
- Police officer numbers have also been falling over the last 5 years. There were just under 128,000 full time equivalent officers at March 2014, a fall of 11% or around 16,000 officers since 2010. In 2014 there was one police officer for every 445 members of public an increase of over 50 people per officer since 2010.
- Changing crime mix means that over the last 10 years, costs of crime for the police have not fallen as much as overall numbers of crimes. These costs are based on 2008 activity data and it is possible time spent on more 'costly' crime has increased, particularly with relation to complex crimes such as Child Sexual Exploitation.
- Incidents involving people with mental health issues appear to be increasing.
- Demand on the police associated with protective statutory requirements such as Multi-Agency Public Protection Panels appears to be increasing.
- There are two indications of emerging pressure on police resilience – decreased levels of police visibility and increasing requests for mutual aid.

Background

While there have been a number of attempts to measure demand on the police service over the years, a lack of reliable national data has tended to result in a renewed focus on levels of recorded crime as the main measure of workload, which forces do not feel is adequate.

Police recorded crime, as reflected in the main performance statistics, can only represent part of the police workload. While it presents an indication of an aspect of reactive demand to which the police respond, there are many types of work, both reactive and proactive the police undertake, both as statutory duty and by common convention, which do not feature as reports of crime - and which therefore do not appear in assessments of demand using police recorded crime data. In addition, counts of crime do not show the varying levels of resource required to deal with different crimes. An experience of crime categorised within the same crime type for recording purposes can impact on individual victims very differently, and require very different responses. Some crime types consume far more resource than others. Understanding the overall level of demand and work required to deal with crime, necessitates an understanding of the different amount of work involved in dealing with different crimes.

Crime Survey England and Wales data shows that crime has been on a downward trend since 1995, with Police Recorded crime figures starting to decrease from 2003/04. Despite this reduction, there is a widespread perception across forces that officers and staff are at least as busy as ever. The College of Policing has drawn on national and force datasets and local demand analysis to present the best available evidence on the demands facing the service, whether these have changed over time, and where there are gaps in knowledge. A number of hypotheses around how demand might have changed were developed to help frame the analysis undertaken and are set out, along with an assessment as to the extent to which they are supported, at the end of this paper.

Demands on the police can be grouped in various ways but this report considers:

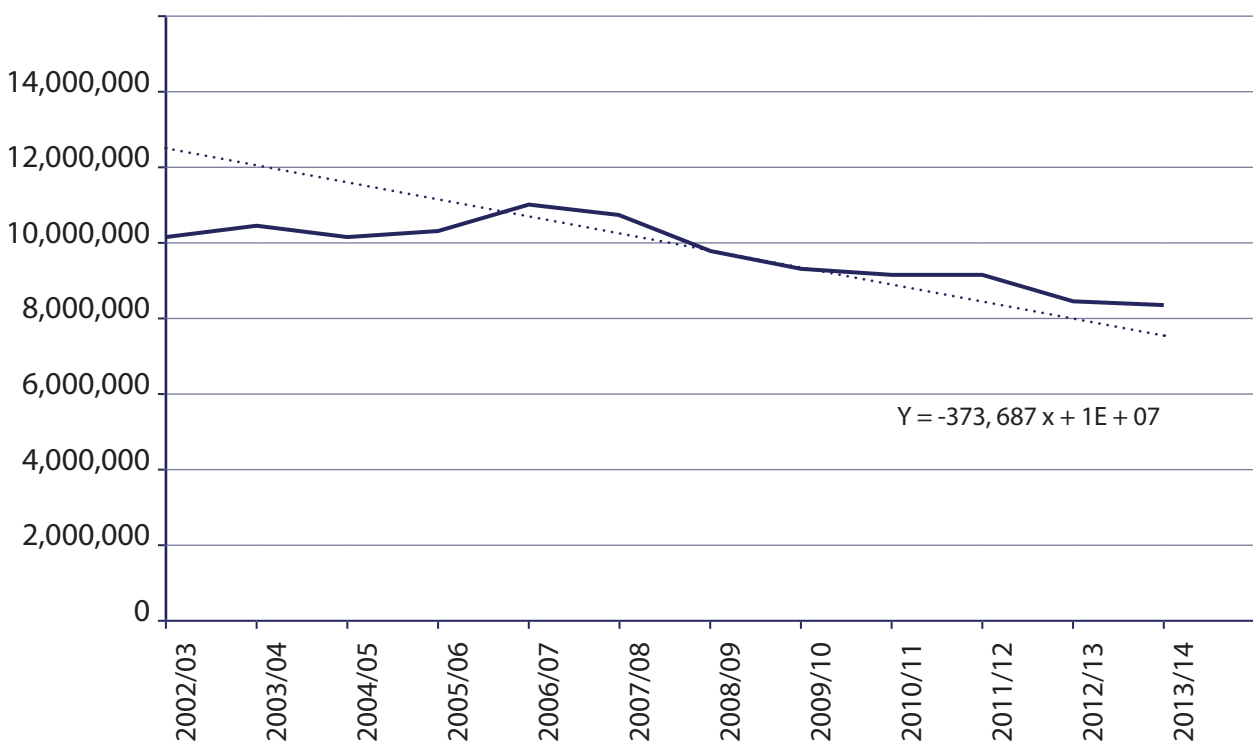
- Public demand – the traditional view of demand mainly covering calls for service or incidents to which the police respond.
- Protective demand – more proactive work which the police are required to undertake mainly connected to safeguarding the public.

Resources allocated to these types of demands will vary depending on local context and policies. Preventive work by local policing teams is unlikely to be captured by forces or national datasets, but can reduce crime and public initiated demand on the police.

Public demand

- Responding to calls for service is the traditional view of demand on the police service. The activity that relates to the call will depend on a number of factors including whether the call relates to a crime or not, whether the individuals involved are vulnerable and whether there is a risk to public safety.
- Calls come into the police via a number of routes. National data are available for those calls that come in through the emergency '999' number and data has been collected from 11 forces on calls coming in through the single non-emergency '101' number. The number of emergency '999' calls has decreased by 23% since their peak in 2006/7.

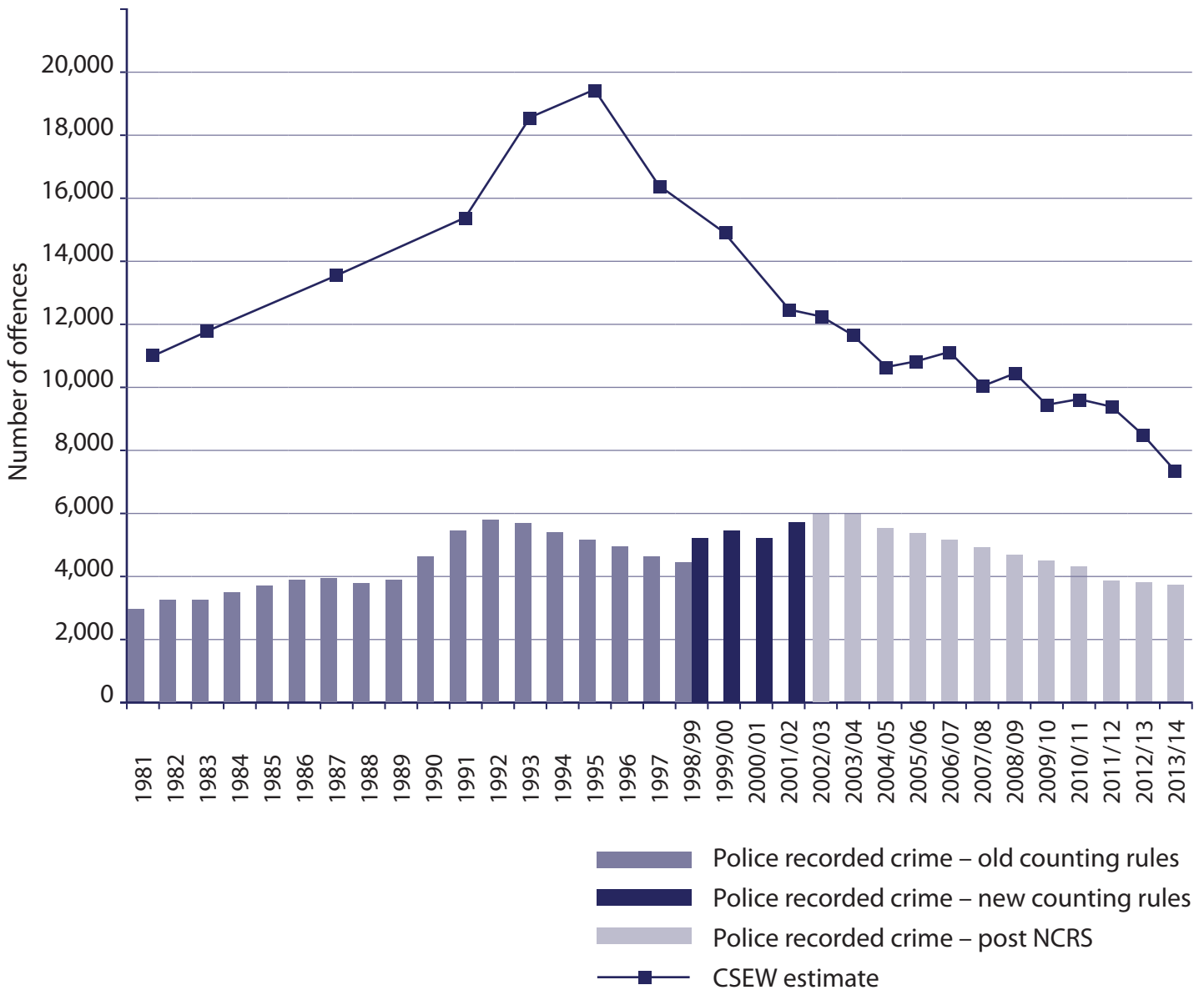
Figure 1: Total number of emergency '999' calls received (all forces in England and Wales 2002/03 to 2012/13)^a



^a For a small number of cases missing values have been interpolated or repeated from the previous year

- The single non-emergency 101 number had been introduced in all force areas by early 2012 and it may be that some of the continuing decrease in '999' calls could be accounted for by a shift to the use of the non-emergency number. Although national data is not available on '101' calls, the general trend across the 11 forces who provided data in average numbers of '101' calls has been downward over the last 3 years, although last year, numbers remained stable against the previous year.
- There were 3.7m crimes recorded by the police in 2013/14 – a 21% fall since 2008/09. This downward trend can also be seen in survey results. Over the last 3 years there has been a levelling out of the numbers of crimes recorded by the police and there was no change between 2012/13 and 2013/14.

Figure 2: Trends in Police Recorded crime and Crime Survey England & Wales

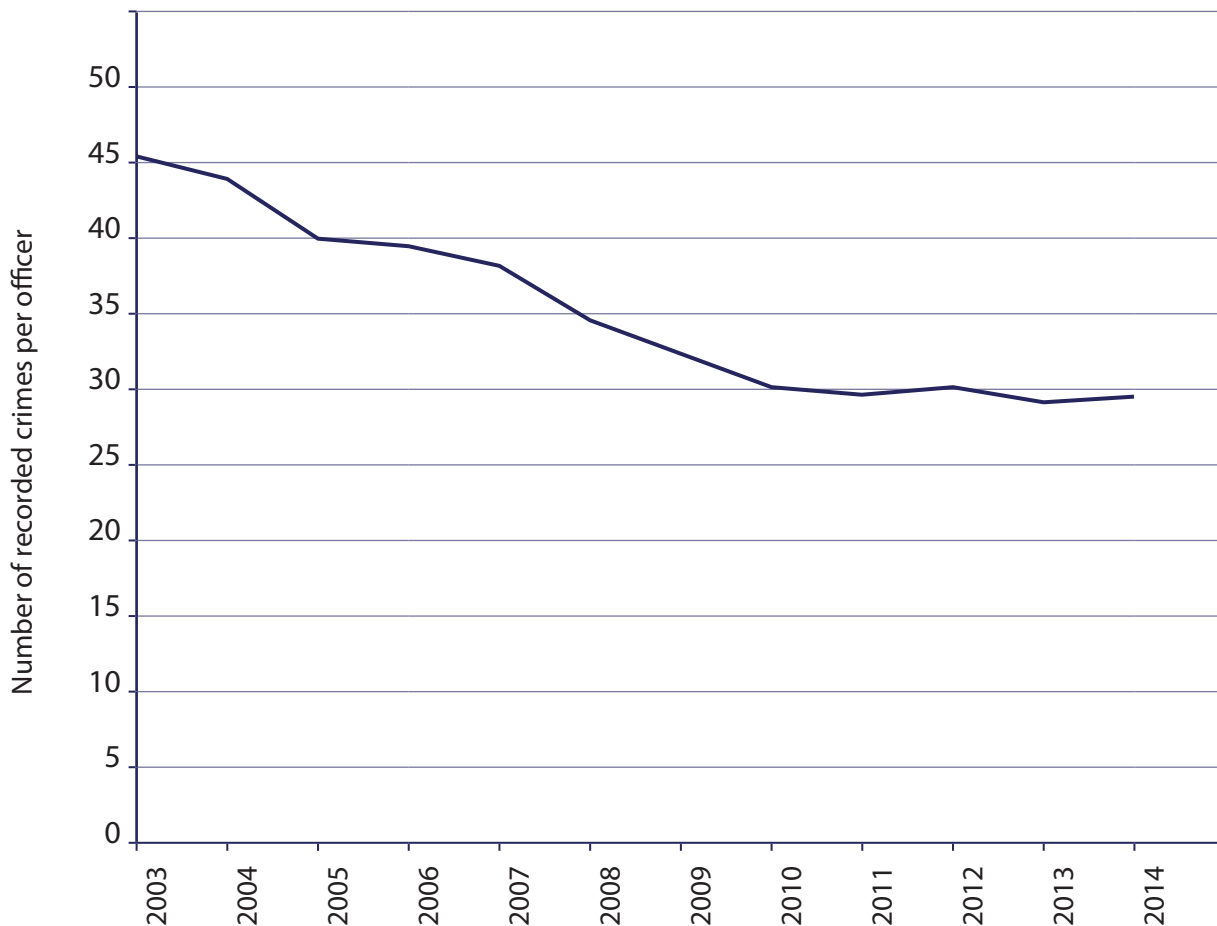


- Several crime types have increased since 2012/13, including violence against the person (up 6%), shoplifting (up 7%), sexual offences (up 20%), fraud (up 17%)¹ and public order (2%).
- In addition, to recorded crime, there were close to 1 million convicted non-notifiable crimes resulting from cases brought to magistrates' courts and 34,000 Penalty Notices for Disorder issued for non-notifiable offences in the year ending December 2013. These figures are not represented in the national recorded crime statistics.
- While crime has fallen, there are 35,000 fewer officers and staff in 2014 than 2010, a fall of 14%. In relation to officers, there were just under 128,000 full time equivalent officers at March 2014, a fall of 11% or just under 16,000 since 2010. This number equates to 1 police officer for every 445 members of public.

¹Trends in fraud should be interpreted with caution. It is unclear to what extent there has been a genuine increase in such crimes or whether the move to the centralised recording of such offences has led to improved counting of fraud offences. That said, an improved counting could still reflect an increase demand on the police.

- The fall in officer numbers means the number of crimes per officer per year over this period has remained relatively stable. The changing crime mix means that when broken down by crime type, the numbers of crimes per officer have increased for some of the more serious and more complex to investigate, crimes.

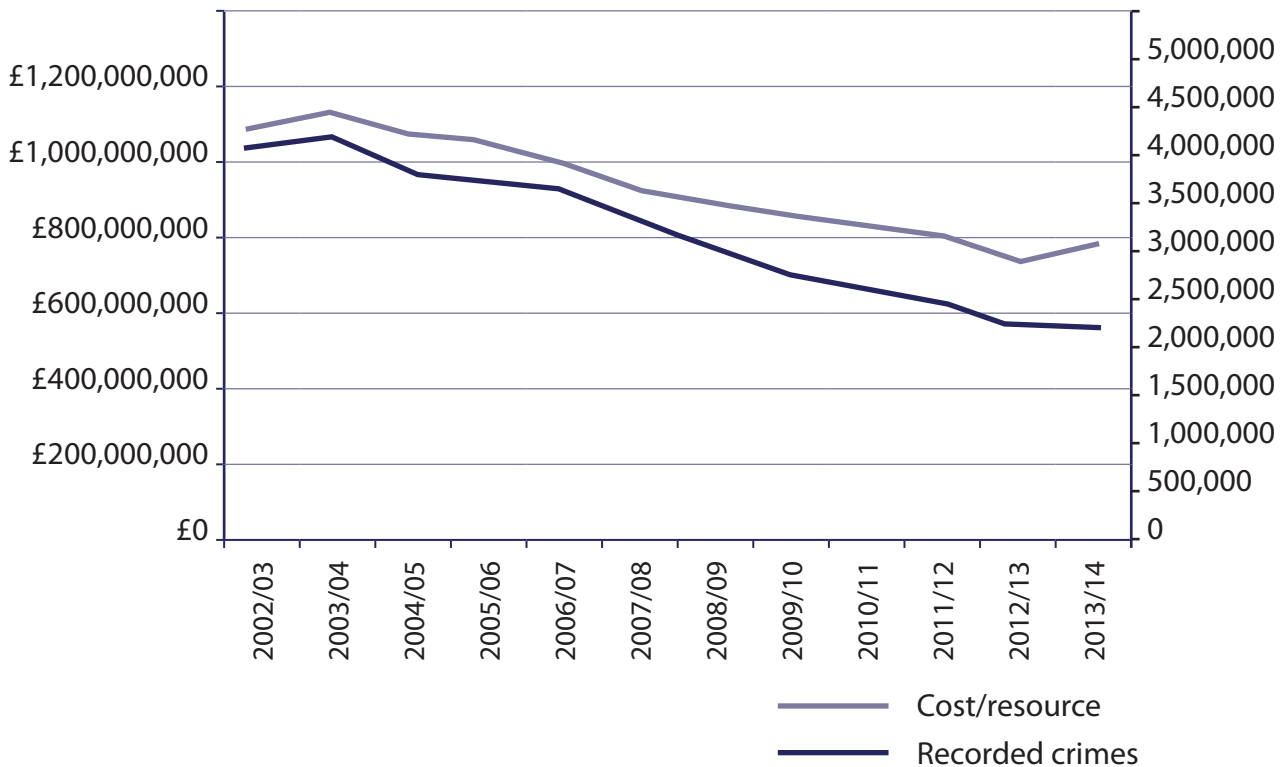
Figure 3: Number of recorded crimes per officer



- Costs of crime data can be used to get a better understanding of the implications of crime reduction on levels of police activity. Using estimates of police activity cost for specific crime categories as a proxy for resource usage, analysis shows that costs of crime for the police have not fallen as much as overall crime over the last 10 years. Crime types which are more complex to investigate, require more police time and are therefore more costly, are now a greater proportion of police recorded crime.
 - While crime reduced by 43% between 03/04 and 13/14, total police costs decreased by 29% - the average cost per crime increased by 25%.
 - Rape offences have increased by 36% over the last 10 years and their contribution to the total 'cost' of crime has gone up from 6% to 12%.²

²Home Office Costs of Crime do not cost rape separately. An estimate of cost of police activity associated with rape has been calculated using the ratio of serious violence to all violence costs.

Figure 4: Trends in the cost of crime and numbers of recorded crimes



- The estimated costs of police activity are based on data from 2008. Since then the time spent by police on more ‘costly’ crime may have increased, particularly with relation to complex crimes such as Child Sexual Exploitation. National estimates of the current average time spent on dealing with specific crime types are not available.

Crime complexity and ‘new’ crimes

- There is an indication of an increase in complexity of cases from Ministry of Justice data. The number of defendants tried at Crown Court is higher now than 10 years ago (despite a recent fall)³. In addition, there were 201,035 fraud offences in the year ending September 2013, which represents an increase of 34% compared with the previous year and an increase of 183% compared with 2007/08⁴.
- There is limited national data available on the nature of crimes recorded by the police or the context in which they took place, to provide robust estimates of emerging crime problems. There is some indication though, from national and local sources that there are new contexts in which crimes are committed that are increasingly coming to the attention of the police, albeit in low numbers compared with ‘conventional crime’. There is limited data available on the resource required to respond to these crimes but it is likely that, as many are associated with vulnerability, public protection and safeguarding, they will require more policing resources as they are generally more complex to investigate.

³https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/260303/criminal-justice-stats-june-2013.pdf

⁴ONS (2014) Crime in England and Wales, Year Ending September 2013. http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/dcp171778_349849.pdf. The move to centralised recording of fraud making comparisons over time is problematic.

- Home Office analysis suggests that public reporting of sexual offences to the police may have risen, at least in part due to the publicity that accompanied Operation Yewtree in October 2012. They report that the number of recorded child sexual offences was relatively stable in the eight years before Yewtree, averaging 16,500 offences (+/- 1,300) compared to 24,000 offences in 2013/14. In the last two years numbers of reported contact child sex offences by police forces have increased by 40 per cent.
- The Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP) reported a twofold rise in 2012 in the number of reports of indecent images of children being shared (8,000 reports featuring 70,000 still images and videos⁵). In addition, they received 1,145 reports of online child sexual exploitation.
- In 2012/13, CEOP made almost 3,000 intelligence disseminations to UK and international law enforcement agencies, the highest number since the Centre began in 2006. A survey of police forces by CEOP identified an average of 85 perpetrators of contact child sexual abuse per force (2,120 in the 25 police forces that responded) and 2 group or gang related offences per force (65 in the 31 police forces that responded).
- The NCA has estimated the scale of Human Trafficking (or Modern Slavery) in the UK in 2013⁶. Intelligence received from the NCA, National Referral Mechanism (NRM) data and law enforcement respondents to an intelligence requirement 2,744 potential victims of Human Trafficking were encountered in calendar year 2013; an increase of 22% compared with 2012. Forces refer Potential Victims of Trafficking (PVoT) to the UK Human Trafficking Referral Centre through the NRM. In 2013, the centre received referrals for 1,746 potential victims, an increase of 47% on 2012.
- Data reported by the NCA will only provide a partial picture of the scale of modern slavery cases due to under-reporting. Analysis undertaken by the Home Office has estimated that there may have been an estimated 10,000-13,000 potential victims in the UK in 2013. This figure demonstrates potential demand on the service if increased reporting of these cases can be encouraged⁷.
- The Serious and Organised Crime Strategy (2013) estimates that there are around 5,500 active organised crime groups operating against the UK, comprising 37,000 people. All regions have developed regional organised crime units and the National Policing Requirement requires forces to demonstrate they have a multi-agency intelligence capacity which feeds into the regional and national picture.

⁵CEOP (2013) Threat Assessment of Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse.

⁶NCA (2014) National Strategic Assessment: The nature and scale of human trafficking in 2013.

⁷Silverman (2014) Modern Slavery: an application of Multiple Systems Estimation.

- Limited information was provided by forces on the scale of 'new' crimes. Twelve forces were asked to provide data on trends in cases of modern slavery and female genital mutilation but very few were able to return trend data, partly because they have only recently implemented systems to record such incidents more accurately.
- Some forces indicated that the demand arising from these areas tends to be driven by proactive work instigated by Operation Eagle⁸. Common activities include partnership development with other agencies and forces, awareness raising, internal and external training and intelligence gathering and analysis to understand better local problems.
- A number of forces provided data on Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) cases. The Metropolitan Police Service has seen the number of CSE referrals increase from 445, in the period 1st April 2013–30th September 2013, to 1,442 over the same period in 2014. Hertfordshire Police reported that the number of recorded Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) cases increased from 95 in 2012/13 to 127 in 2013/14. West Midlands Police received 1,027 reports of child sexual abuse in 2012/13, 400 were non-familial. Police specifically identified 245 victims of CSE, and 218 suspects⁹.
- The 12 forces were also asked to provide data on the trends in cyber-enabled crime. Forces reported that recording mechanisms to capture these data are relatively new. In particular a majority of forces indicated that they had introduced a qualifier flag in line with a Home Office requirement, to record whether an incident was cyber-enabled – 2014/15 will represent the first year's data.
- Despite the lack of data, a number of the 12 forces described an increased pressure on the resources of specialist units, such as High Tech Crime Units (HTCUs) due to the increased number of digital devices that need to be examined in investigations. Nine of the twelve forces were able to provide some data on demand on their HTCUs either in the form of the number of articles examined or the number of investigations they were involved in. Changes in processes for dealing with this type of evidence means that it is not possible to demonstrate a clear trend but there was a suggestion of an increase in the last year in at least four of the forces.

Non-crime incidents

- The police deal with a wide range of **non-crime incidents** not captured in police recorded crime. Although national data on incidents reported to the police are available, changes to the way these data are recorded only allow comparisons since 2011/12.
- In 2012/13, there were **19.6m** incidents recorded by the police – approx 150 per officer per year. Just under two-fifths (38%) of these incidents received an emergency or priority response whilst just over two-fifths (42%) were resolved over the phone. Remaining incidents received a scheduled visit.

⁸The Association of Chief Police Officers strategic plan for tackling organised immigration crime, human trafficking and exploitation.

⁹West Midlands Police (2013) Problem Profile of Child Sexual Exploitation.

- **2.3m** incidents recorded in 2012/13 were anti-social behaviour, 65% of which were for nuisance behaviour. Just over **1m** were for domestic abuse related incidents¹⁰.
- The total number of incidents has fallen by 3% since 2011/12. The rate of decline has been greater for crime (6.7%), with non-crime declining by 1.8%. **Non-crime related incidents account for 83% of all Command and Control (C&C) calls.**
- Analysis of local incident data received from three forces broadly supports the national data. Between 2009 and 2011, non-crime incidents fell by 7.2% (from 1.5m to 1.4m). This trend appears to have levelled off in 2012 and increased in 2013 although this is not universal across the 3 forces. There has been a modest increase in recent non-crime figures (+1.6% to Sept 2013); however these are still over 5% below the 2009 figures.
- As with crime, not all incidents require the same level of police resource. The sample of force incident data and force returns suggest that there is consistent evidence at force level that the demand generated by 'public safety & welfare' (PSW) incidents is increasing. Six forces sent in returns relating to their incident data and all six have experienced a large increase in the number of reported PSW incidents. In five of these forces, PSW now represents the largest category of reported incidents, larger than crime and anti-social behaviour incidents.
- The analysis of force incident data showed that in 2010, Lancashire West Yorkshire and South Yorkshire recorded a total of 616,081 PSW incidents; by 2013 this had increased to 686,953 (an 11.5% increase) or an additional 6 PSW incidents per officer (8 per constable). West Yorkshire has experienced the clearest growth in absolute number of PSW calls – an increase of 57,019 (closed as PSW) between 2009 and 2013 – while South Yorkshire and Lancashire have seen some variation but the same general upward trend. This trend goes against a decrease in the number of calls overall.
- The National Policing Requirement 2012 explains that the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 places a legal responsibility on the Police Service, as Category 1 responders, to provide an appropriate response to emergencies. At the national level, the Police Service should be prepared to deal with a major accident or natural hazard which requires a national response. Examples include severe coastal flooding affecting three or more regions of the UK, or an influenza pandemic. The National Risk Register of Civil Emergencies 2013 notes that the frequency of inland flooding is increasing evidenced by widespread events in summer 2007 which led to the flooding of 48,000 households and 7,300 businesses and flooding in Cumbria in 2009 which caused six bridges to collapse, severing the road network and cutting off communities. Since the Risk Register was published, the winter of 2013/14 was shown to be the wettest on record with over 7,800 homes and nearly 3,000 commercial properties flooded. Climate change is firmly recognised as a real and significant global development and will be an integral part of the environment against which future strategies are assessed and a potentially significant operational and financial risk for the Service.

¹⁰HMIC (2014) Everyone's Business: Improving the Police Response to Domestic Abuse.

Incidents involving people with mental health issues

- Another area where forces are reporting increased levels of demand is responding to people with **mental health** problems. National data are not available but forces can use mental health qualifiers on their systems to flag incidents that may be linked to mental health. A review of mental health related calls in London undertaken for the Independent Commission for Mental Health and Policing found that mental health was an increasing demand on the MPS, with calls rising by 2% between year ending August 2011 and year ending August 2012¹¹. Analysis of incident data from West Yorkshire supports this finding showing a 14% increase in the use of the mental health qualifier between 2010 and 2013.
- There are consistent estimates from forces that provided data on the proportion of incidents linked to mental health. The MPS, West Yorkshire, Dorset and Avon and Somerset all estimated that approx 2% of incidents reported to the police in a year were linked to mental health. If this proportion is applied to the national data it would suggest that an estimated **390,000 incidents** in 2012/13 were linked to mental health.
- It is likely that this figure is an underestimate due to inconsistent use of the qualifier. Further work undertaken by the MPS for the Independent Commission for Mental Health and Policing estimated that 15%-20% of incidents are linked to mental health. Following work to improve the use of its mental health qualifier, Staffordshire police saw an increase in the number of incidents from 79 in Jan-Feb 2012 to 1,030 in Jan-Feb 2013.
- Using the MPS estimate of 20% provides a national estimate of almost **4m** mental health related incidents. The estimated range of 2% - 20% of incidents having a mental health link suggests that further work is required to establish this source of demand. MPS officers have also estimated that mental health issues account for at least 20% of police time¹².
- National data are available on the use of short-term detention orders for individuals experiencing a mental health crisis to be taken to a 'place of safety' (Sections 135¹³ and 136¹⁴). The **numbers of section 135 and 136 orders have risen** over the last 5 years in England¹⁵.
- S.136 detentions where a hospital was the place of safety have risen from around 12,000 detentions in 2009/10 to around 17,000 in 2013/14. National data is now being collected on the number of S.136 detentions in police cells (where constant supervision is required) – there were 6,028 in 2013/14, approximately a quarter of all S.136 detentions. North Yorkshire Police has estimated that the average length of time in custody for a person detained under S.136 is 10 hours. This estimate would mean that S.136 detention in police cells alone require 60,000 officer/staff hours per year.

¹¹Independent Commission on Mental Health and Policing (2013)

¹²Independent Commission on Mental Health and Policing Report (2013)

¹³Section 135 allows a warrant to be granted by a magistrate to search for and remove a mentally disordered person to a place of safety which is normally a hospital. A police officer attends to gain access and must be accompanied by an approved mental health professional.

¹⁴Section 136 is used by the Police to remove a person (who appears to be suffering from a mental disorder), from a place to which the public have access, to a place of safety for assessment.

¹⁵Health and Social Care Information Centre (2014) Inpatients formally detained in hospitals under the Mental Health Act 1983, and patients subject to supervised community treatment, Annual figures England 2013/14.

- In addition, data available from 22 forces showed that for 74% of S.136 orders where a health based place of safety was used, the police provided transport to the hospital. A recent HMIC Inspection¹⁶ found that waits of 6 to 8 hours for police officers in these cases are not uncommon – which equates to an additional 62,000 hours a year.

Suicides

- The police are frequently required to attend suicide incidents. Although data are not available on the number of these incidents attended by the police, national data show that in 2012, a total of 5,981 suicides in people aged 15 and over were registered in the UK¹⁷. Suicide rates for 2012 were significantly higher than five years before.

Missing persons

- National data on the number of missing persons incidents reported to the police are collated by the Missing Persons Bureau. Due to improvements in data collection the figures are not strictly comparable; however there does appear to have been a small reduction in the number of incidents reported between 2010/11 and 2011/12. In 2011/12 there were 280,357 incidents, approximately 185,035 (66%) of which were classified as medium risk (12% were high risk and 23% were low risk). This equates to 506 medium risk missing person incidents every day (768 in total).
- Estimates of the time associated with 'automatically generated tasks' (as indicated by COMPACT system) suggest that approximately 18 hours of police time is needed for a medium risk missing persons investigation. For the 185,035 medium risk incidents in 2011/12, this equates to over 3 million 'investigation hours' (3,330,630)¹⁸.

Protective demand

As well as responding to calls for assistance, the police are required by law to undertake proactive work to safeguard the public. The demand created by some of these requirements is estimated below.

Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements

- The Criminal Justice Act 2003 ("CJA 2003") provides for the establishment of Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements ("MAPPA") in each of the 42 criminal justice areas in England and Wales. These arrangements require local criminal justice agencies and other bodies to work in partnership to protect the public from serious harm by sexual and violent offenders.

¹⁶HMIC (2013) A criminal use of police cells? The use of police custody as a place of safety for people with mental health needs.

¹⁷ONS (2014) Suicides in the United Kingdom, 2012 Registrations.

¹⁸Greene, K. and Pakes, F. (2013) Absent: An exploration of common police procedures for safeguarding practices in cases of missing children and adults.

- There were just over 65,000 MAPPA eligible offenders in England and Wales as at March 2014. The **number of offenders has increased by over a third** over the last 5 years with the greatest increase being in category 1 registered sex offenders, the group that the police are responsible for managing¹⁹.
- MAPPA eligible offenders are managed by officers within Public Protection Units, where the resourcing ratio of officer to offender ranges across forces from 40 to 80 offenders per officer. The National Policing lead is commissioning work to understand better the resources required to manage these offenders effectively.

Child Protection

- One local safeguarding unit provided case study information on the increased demand they are seeing from child protection. The number of children subject of a Child Protection Plan (CPP) increased from 374 to 685 from March 2013 to July 2014. Children are becoming subject of CPPs at a higher rate than children with CPPs are ending.
- In addition, during the year ending June 2014, this policing district recorded 1,859 S.47 referrals requiring police to conduct strategies. On average each S.47 referral strategy takes 90 minutes to conduct and upload as an appropriate record onto the system. The Initial Case Conference lasts a minimum of 2-2.5 hours and requires attendance and the production of a report for the meeting.
- Data on the annual volume of child protection case conferences was also received from 2 of the 12 forces. Although both forces showed an increase in the number of conferences this ranged from 4% to 66% and cannot be assumed to be representative of all forces.

Non-statutory proactive work

- There are a range of proactive activities the police undertake to reduce crime or protect the public that are not formal statutory requirements. There is limited information on the amount of time the police spend undertaking these problem-solving approaches but observations of officers undertaken in two forces in 2010 found that around a third of neighbourhood officers' time was spent on activities including preventative patrolling community meetings and intelligence gathering²⁰. This type of activity which helps the police to understand what is causing high volume offending or problems in hotspots and come up with specific solutions – often in partnership with others – allows the police to drive down crime²¹.

¹⁹Ministry of Justice (2014) Multi-agency public protection arrangements (MAPPA) annual report 2013-14.

²⁰Mcclean, F. and Hillier, J (2010) An observational study of response and neighbourhood officers.

²¹'What works' in policing to reduce crime: A summary of the research evidence; College of Policing 2013.

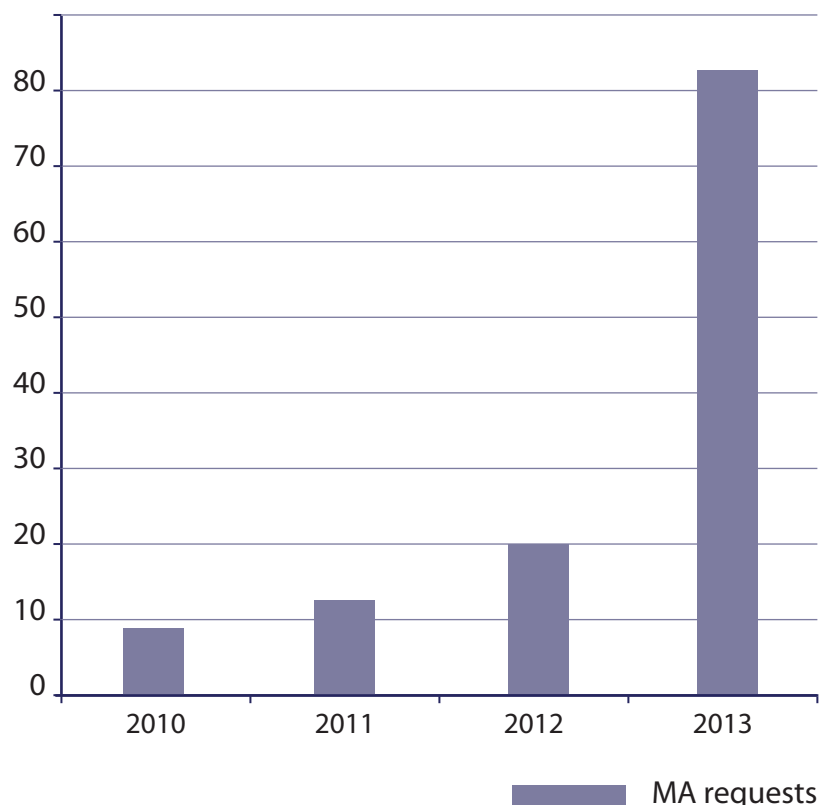
- Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARACs) are multi-agency meetings where statutory and voluntary agency representatives share information about high risk victims of domestic abuse in order to produce a coordinated action plan to increase victim safety. Data on the number of cases seen at MARACs is collated by CAADA²². There were 68,373 cases seen at MARACs in 2012/13, a 17% increase on the previous year. Data from 6 of 12 forces that were asked to provide information on MARACs suggests that the median number of MARACs held in a year has increased by almost two-thirds since 2009/10.
- The 12 forces were also asked to provide data on vulnerable adult, vulnerable children and domestic abuse referrals to Public Protection Units. 10 forces provided some data over varying time frames. All forces had seen an increase in vulnerable child referrals over the last 3 to 5 years, although the scale of the increase varied, ranging from 1% to 91%. Across the 10 forces there was an average of around 10,000 vulnerable child referrals a year²³.
- Vulnerable adult referral data received indicated that all but 2 of the 10 forces that provided data had seen an increase in referrals. The scale of some of the increases seen were very large (over 1000%) and may reflect changes in recording / reporting systems as well as changes in demand.
- Domestic abuse referral data received indicated that 9 out of the 10 forces that provided data saw an increase in referrals over the last 3 to 5 years which equated to an average increase of 7%. Across the 9 forces there was an average of just under 25,000 referrals received in 2013/14.
- As of March 2014 there were 118,082 families enrolled in the government's troubled families programme. Estimates from Greater Manchester Police (GMP) suggest that every troubled family not in a programme creates approximately 2.5 hours of demand on the police per quarter (10hrs per year per family). They also estimate that police intervention - based on GMP's service delivery model - reduces demand by 0.5hrs per quarter (a saving of 8hrs per year per family).
- Specialist officers and staff are required to manage much of the demand described above and the 12 forces were asked for an indication of how the resourcing of public protection has changed. Force structures vary, with some having large dedicated centralised units to manage public protection and others have smaller central units with a number of decentralised specialist officers and staff so it was not possible for all forces to return the data. For those 10 forces that were able to return the data, all but two forces had increases both officers and staff posts within PPUs over the last 5 years.

²²Co-ordinated Action Against Domestic Abuse (CAADA) is a national charity supporting a multi-agency and risk-led response to domestic abuse.

²³The average number of referrals needs to be treated with caution as forces collected the data in different ways which is likely to affect the accuracy of the data. Some forces used qualifying flags on the force management system while others used bespoke case management systems.

Indicators of resilience

- As police officer and staff numbers decline there is a concern about whether forces can maintain levels of service delivery. Data for 2012/13 on public confidence and visibility suggest that there may be some emerging pressure on levels of resilience.
- The proportion of adults who reported that the police in their local area do a good or excellent job has increased year-on-year over the past decade. The latest data from the 2012/13 Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) indicate the trend is levelling off with the proportion of adults giving positive ratings of the local police showing a small decrease when compared with the 2011/12 survey (down one percentage point to 61%).
- In addition, the proportion of adults who reported seeing a police officer on foot patrol in their local area at least once a week fell four percentage points from 38% in 2011/12 to 34% in 2012/13. Prior to this fall, the trend had increased up to 2009/10, after which it had remained broadly steady.
- Visibility, alongside engagement and problem-solving, is causally linked to public confidence as a feature of Neighbourhood Policing (NP). The changing trend may support HMIC's concern in 'Valuing the Police 3' that NP may be being diluted in forces.
- Another indicator of possible pressures on resilience comes from the National Policing Co-ordination Centre. Their data shows that requests from forces for mutual aid increased substantially over the past year.



- Some of the increase might be due to changes in administrative requirements for mutual aid notifications and previous years may not include mutual aid requests that were resolved locally between adjoining forces without NPoCC intervention. More information would need to be collected to identify whether this is a real trend.

Discussion

The Finance and Resources National Policing Business Area are interested in understanding why if levels of recorded crime have been decreasing over the last 10 years, there is a perception across forces that officers and staff are as busy as ever. The data presented in this paper starts to provide some indication of the demand on police forces in England and Wales and how this might be changing, although reliable national data are limited.

A number of hypotheses have been generated in relation to the changing nature of demand on the police service and these will be discussed below:

Crime, as reflected in the main performance statistics, represents only part of the police workload.

- Police recorded crime presents an indication of an aspect of demand that the police respond to, but there are many types of work that the police undertake, both as statutory duty and by common convention, which do not feature as reports of crime and which therefore do not appear in assessments of demand and performance using police recorded crime data. In particular, there are a range of proactive activities that the police undertake to reduce crime or protect the public. There is limited information on the amount of time the police spend undertaking these problem-solving approaches, but understanding what is causing repeat offending or victimization, or problems in hotspots, and coming up with specific solutions – often in partnership with others – allows the police to drive down crime and protect the public²⁴.
- In addition, counts of crime do not show the varying levels of resource required to deal with different crimes. The same crime type can impact on individual victims very differently, and require very different responses. Some crime types consume far more resource than other types.

There are new types of crime emerging and these are increasing in volume.

- There are a number of new and emerging crime types that are generally not captured effectively by the current data returns to the Home Office, mainly because they relate to the context in which the crime takes place rather than a specific offence code eg, cyber-enabled crime, child sexual exploitation, modern slavery and female genital mutilation. The data that are available provide some support to this hypothesis and suggest that these 'new' crimes may be increasingly coming to the attention of the police, albeit in low numbers compared with 'conventional crime'. There is limited data available on the resource required to respond with new categories of crime but it is likely that, as many are

²⁴'What works' in policing to reduce crime: A summary of the research evidence; College of Policing 2013.

associated with vulnerability, public protection and safeguarding, they will require more policing resources as they are generally more complex to investigate.

Non-crime demand on the police has increased (or not fallen at the same rate as crime) and now represents a greater share of what the police do. Much of this relates to issues of vulnerability public protection and safeguarding.

- The number of non-crime incidents are falling but the rate of decline has been greater for crime. Non-crime incidents account for 84% of all command and control calls. Local police data suggests in some forces, 'public safety and concern for welfare' incidents now represent the largest category of recorded incidents. As with crimes that related to vulnerability, public protection and safeguarding, these incidents are likely to consume more resource effort as they can be more complex, many involving combined agency responses eg, mental health.

Statutory and strategic responsibilities and demands have not decreased and in some cases, have increased.

- Demand on the police associated with protective statutory requirements such as the management of MAPPA eligible offenders appears to be increasing and this growth is likely to continue. The data gathered for this report suggests that, for example, offenders are being added to the sex offender register at a faster rate than they are being removed and there is some indication from local data that this is also the case for protected children. Alongside this increasing demand, there is a continued requirement to meet national obligations and standards in relation to specialist areas of policing eg, counter terrorism, organised crime and public order, which the mutual aid requests may indicate is becoming increasingly challenging.
- In addition to these statutory responsibilities the police are becoming increasingly involved in other protective activities to prevent re-victimisation of vulnerable people including MARACs and troubled family interventions.

The capacity for 'discretionary' activity has reduced.

- Preventive, problem-solving activity is not captured in traditional performance management data but can reduce crime and public initiated demand on the police. As resource levels fall, there is a risk, as indicated by the HMIC, that the remaining resource time is taken up dealing with reactive demand and less resource remains for preventive work and discretionary activity. The changing trends in CSEW measures of police visibility and confidence may indicate that this risk is already being realised. If the balance of preventive activity is not maintained, there is a risk that the downward trend in some crime types which is likely to be a result of problem-solving, will not continue.