

PEEL 2021/22

Police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy

An inspection of North Yorkshire Police

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Overall summary

Our judgments

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

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

We also inspected how effective a service North Yorkshire Police gives to victims of crime. We don't make a graded judgment in this overall area.

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

Data in this report

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

Important changes to PEEL

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

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

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

HM Inspector's observations

I have concerns about the performance of North Yorkshire Police in keeping people safe and reducing crime. In particular, I have serious concerns about its strategic planning and organisational management. In view of these findings, I have been in regular contact with the chief constable, as I do not underestimate how much improvement is needed.

These are the findings I consider most important from our assessments of the force over the last year.

Senior leaders should ensure they have effective oversight of the force's enabling services and develop an effective workforce plan so they can provide policing services

Senior leaders in the force haven't had enough oversight of their enabling services, such as HR and IT, or of the impact that failures in these areas have had on policing services. Structures that control the support functions aren't effective. At the time of our inspection, the force was working to improve its performance management plans, but significant challenges in its enabling services were hampering service delivery. The lack of an effective workforce plan is creating workforce pressures. A lack of trained staff and a high number of vacancies are also hampering the service the force provides.

The force should review its operating model for investigations and protecting vulnerable people, and the resources required to meet those demands

My inspection team found that the force didn't have enough trained detectives and there was only a limited plan to address this. This is a challenge nationally, but in this force the pressures placed on individual investigators were apparent during the inspection.

The force should improve the speed with which it answers and responds to emergency and priority calls

The force is substantially below the national standard of answering 90 percent of 999 calls within 10 seconds, with only 41.9 percent being answered in this time frame. The time taken for officers to arrive at emergency and priority calls is another area where the force needs to improve.

The force works well with partner organisations and communities to keep people safe

The force works well with partner organisations to prioritise early intervention to safeguard vulnerable people. This includes Operation Ambience multi-agency visits to people identified as being vulnerable, designed to reduce vulnerability and make people safer.

The leadership team has accepted and responded quickly to address the issues we have identified

The leadership team have worked closely with my inspection staff and I am pleased that they haven't waited for this report to be published to respond to our findings. The force has developed a detailed plan to address the concerns and areas for improvement we have established.

My report now sets out the fuller findings of this inspection. While I congratulate the individual officers and [staff](#) of North Yorkshire Police for their efforts in keeping the public safe, I have concerns about corporate processes. I will monitor the progress towards addressing the [cause of concern](#) and areas for improvement I have established.



Roy Wilsher

HM Inspector of Constabulary

Reducing crime assessment

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

The force has comprehensive performance information, but it doesn't use this effectively to inform its problem-solving approach. The force has a focus on early intervention and prevention. We found good examples of the force working with other organisations to divert young people away from offending and to reduce the vulnerability of people who may become victims of crime.

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

- The force neighbourhood teams have positive engagement with local communities and work with them to solve problems.
- The force works with local organisations in community safety hubs to solve local problems and is effective in reducing vulnerability.

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

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

- The lack of an embedded performance framework and a strategic workforce plan is hampering the force's ability to meet the policing needs of the community.
- The force operating model for investigating crime and protecting vulnerable people doesn't have the capability or capacity required to meet the demands placed on it.
- There is a lack of effective strategic oversight of neighbourhood policing, which is reducing their ability to prevent crime.
- The force doesn't consistently record victim needs assessments as required by the [Code of Practice for Victims of Crime](#). The force also needs to ensure there is an auditable record of the reasons a victim has withdrawn their support for an investigation.

Until the force improves its strategic oversight and implements its performance framework, it will not be able to reduce crime effectively.

Providing a service to victims of crime

Victim service assessment

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

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

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

- A suspect was identified and the victim supported police action, but evidential difficulties prevented further action ([outcome 15](#)).
- A suspect was identified, but there were evidential difficulties and the victim didn't support or withdrew their support for police action ([outcome 16](#)).
- Police decided formal action wasn't in the public interest (outcome 10).

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

The force needs to improve the time it takes to answer emergency calls. Repeat and vulnerable victims aren't always identified

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

The force needs to improve the time it takes to answer emergency calls. When calls are answered, the victim's vulnerability isn't always assessed using a structured process. Repeat victims aren't always identified, which means this information isn't taken into account when considering the response the victim should have. Call handlers give victims advice on crime prevention and usually give advice on how to preserve evidence.

The force doesn't always respond to calls for service promptly

A force should aim to respond to calls for service within its published time frames, based on the prioritisation given to the call. It should change call priority only if the original prioritisation is deemed inappropriate, or if further information suggests a change is needed. The force's response should take into consideration risk and victim vulnerability, including any information obtained after the call.

The force isn't always responding to calls for service within appropriate timescales. The force hasn't set published targets for response times and occasionally there are long delays before officers respond. Victims weren't always informed of delays and therefore their expectations weren't always met. This may cause victims to lose confidence and disengage from the process.

The force makes sure that investigations are allocated to staff with suitable levels of experience

Police forces should have a policy to make sure investigations are allocated to suitably trained officers or staff for investigation or, if appropriate, not investigated further. The victim of the crime should be kept informed of who is dealing with their case and whether the crime is to be investigated further.

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

The force carries out effective and timely investigations with appropriate levels of supervision

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

In most cases, the force carried out investigations quickly and completed relevant and proportionate lines of inquiry. Most investigations were well supervised, but victims weren't always kept updated throughout. Victims are more likely to have confidence in a police investigation when they receive regular updates.

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

When victims withdrew support for an investigation, the force didn't always consider progressing the case without the victim's support. This can be an important method of safeguarding the victim and preventing further offences from being committed. On most occasions the force recorded whether it considered 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 didn't always carry out this assessment and record the request for additional support.

The force doesn't always assign the right outcome type. An auditable record of victims' wishes isn't always held

The force should make sure it follows national guidance and rules for deciding the outcome of each report of crime. In deciding the outcome, the force should consider the nature of the crime, the offender and the victim. And the force should show the necessary leadership and culture to make sure outcome types are used appropriately.

When a suspect has been identified and the victim supported police action, but evidential difficulties prevent further action, the victim should be informed of the decision to close the investigation. The force used this outcome correctly on most occasions and always updated the victim.

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

In some cases, when an offender has been identified, the police can decide that formal action isn't in the public interest. If this outcome type is to be correctly applied and recorded, it must be appropriate for the nature of the offence and can be applied only if certain criteria are met. In most cases we reviewed, the circumstances of the case didn't meet the national criteria for the use of this outcome type. The force didn't always inform suspects of the decision to take no further action and to close the investigation.

Engaging with and treating the public with fairness and respect

Good

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

Main findings

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

The neighbourhood teams engage with local communities to identify problems

The neighbourhood teams engage with local communities to identify local problems and then work with other organisations, such as the council, schools and housing providers, to resolve them. The inspection team found good examples of creative ways to engage with communities. One example is ‘cops v kids’, where officers join young people in online game competitions and discuss safety-related topics while playing. A further example is one officer’s initiative to engage with the Afghan community, culminating in him taking a night course, to better understand the communities he served. This resulted in improved engagement from the community and better relations with local officers and police community support officers.

The force doesn’t have a finalised county-wide engagement strategy, making it difficult for it to assess the impact of its engagement and how it influences the policing of North Yorkshire

There is evidence of good levels of engagement, in person and through social media, both in terms of broadcasting information and two-way discussion with communities. But there is no force-wide view of engagement or evaluation of the impact of its approach. Despite this, we found that neighbourhood teams are identifying and engaging well with their communities and there is good oversight locally of the work being done. The force is finalising an engagement strategy, which will include an engagement plan, with appropriate [senior officer](#) oversight and governance.

The workforce understands the importance of treating the public with fairness and respect

The force has provided [unconscious bias](#) training to all its staff. This allows individuals to identify and avoid allowing stereotypes and cultural influences to affect their behaviour and decisions. All police officers have received training in the use of [stop and search powers](#), effective communication and the use of force. The training emphasises the importance of explaining each stop and search and considering how the search is conducted. Where student officers were found not to meet the expected standards of behaviour, we found evidence that they were challenged and supported to improve their policing approach. This challenge was less clear with officers outside their initial training period. The force is aware of this and has started training supervisors to address this.

The force monitors the use of force and stop and search powers well

Officers are aware that they must use [body-worn video \(BWV\)](#) for all stop and search encounters and when they use force. The video is used as part of ongoing monitoring. The force has developed an automated system for monitoring use of stop and search. The officer submits a stop and search record, and the system then notifies a supervisor to prompt a review of the circumstances. This notification has a link to the record of search and the BWV footage; once reviewed, a feedback notification is sent to officers. Stop and search champions select random samples of the quality of the supervisory reviews. Any common themes that emerge are shared with a stop search working group and the new use of powers board.

The force has established area-based community review groups, which review stop search and use of force and then share cases with the force-wide strategic scrutiny group. The scrutiny and community review groups are independently chaired and attended by a good representation of the community. All attendees have received training in stop and search and have been offered the opportunity to go on patrol with officers. Both groups review documents connected to the incident, view the BWV footage and provide feedback to officers. The force responds to this feedback and has recently undertaken detailed reviews of all strip searches and all searches involving young people.

During our inspection, we conducted an audit of stop and search records. This assesses the grounds the searching officer recorded when completing the stop search form. 'Reasonable grounds for suspicion' is an objective test, in that it expects that a reasonable person given the same information would also suspect that the individual is carrying the item sought. We reviewed a sample of 205 stop and search records from 1 January to 31 December 2021. Based on this sample, we estimate that 86.8 percent (with a confidence interval of +/- 4.4 percent) of all stop and searches by the force during this period had reasonable grounds recorded. This is broadly unchanged compared with the findings from our previous review of records from 2019, where we found 83.0 percent (with a confidence interval of +/- 3.9 percent) of stop and

searches had reasonable grounds recorded. Of the records we reviewed for stop and searches on people from ethnic minorities, 12 of 15 had reasonable grounds recorded.

The force uses analytical reports to understand the effect of stop and search and use of force on communities, which is changing operational practice and training. The force is making progress in understanding disproportionality in these areas and improving the recording of the self-defined ethnicity of those involved.

Preventing crime and antisocial behaviour

Adequate

North Yorkshire Police is adequate at prevention and deterrence.

Areas for improvement

The force should review its approach to problem-solving to ensure consistency

The force benefits from positive partnership working for problem-solving within its communities. However, the force's approach to problem-solving and its recording of these plans, internally and externally with community safety partners, needs to be reviewed. There were strengths in its approaches, but there is a lack of consistency and analytical capability to ensure that the issues that most affect communities are addressed effectively.

The force should review its approach to neighbourhood policing and the resources required to provide these services

The force has a good understanding of the neighbourhood policing-related demands. It should use this understanding to review the number of staff required in neighbourhood policing, when they should be available and when they could undertake other duties. Our inspection found that neighbourhood officers and staff were undertaking other duties and the force had no oversight of this.

Innovative practice

The force has worked with other organisations to develop innovative approaches to tackling drug and alcohol misuse and knife crime among young people

The force works with schools and a range of organisations (such as social care and youth offending services) to identify young people who are vulnerable to the misuse of drugs and alcohol or may be likely to carry an offensive weapon. Even in the absence of evidence to prove criminality, the force and other organisations will develop a plan to work with a young person to prevent them engaging in criminal activity. These approaches are referred to as Operation Choice and Operation Divan.

The force and other organisations identify people who are vulnerable and work together to make those people safer

Operation Ambience is an approach in North Yorkshire where organisations meet and identify people they are concerned about due to their vulnerability. They then agree which is the best organisation to work with that person to address their vulnerabilities.

Main findings

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

The force prioritises prevention and early intervention

The force has a prevention and early intervention strategy, underpinned by a delivery plan. A board chaired by an assistant chief constable oversees this. There is a focus on early intervention and working with other organisations to make people safer. The board has successfully implemented an improved briefing system and is working to improve local services for communities.

The force is professionalising neighbourhood policing

The force has developed an accredited level three qualification in neighbourhood policing to professionalise its approach, supplemented by additional continuous professional development events which share good practice. The [chief officer](#) team also formally recognises and celebrates innovative problem-solving activities at an annual event, which reaffirms the wider importance that neighbourhood policing brings to the force.

During our inspection, the positive impact of neighbourhood policing was evident in the results of a community-led process called Deep Democracy. Here, the police and other organisations help communities take responsibility for long-standing local problems and use local knowledge to develop sustainable solutions for dealing with them.

The governance and performance management for neighbourhood policing is unclear

Responsibility for the management of neighbourhood police officers and staff differs across the three force command areas. As a result, the partnership hub and local neighbourhood teams lack strategic direction, meaning co-ordinated efforts to prevent crime and [antisocial behaviour](#) may be lost. The force has now established a neighbourhood policing strategic meeting to address this.

The force would benefit from reviewing its approach to problem-solving

The three policing areas benefit from local problem-solving community hubs, which bring together operational teams and partner agencies to solve problems using a shared case management system called ORCUMA. The inspection team were impressed with this co-located approach to solve issues, reduce vulnerability and make people safer.

The force has developed IT data dashboards designed to help frontline neighbourhood staff quickly identify vulnerable victims, repeat callers and locations where there are increased levels of crime and antisocial behaviour. However, some officers and staff are yet to receive the required software training to effectively undertake this type of analysis, meaning some of their observations are based more on knowledge gained from interactions with the public and partner agencies. To better understand the root causes of problems and some repeat demand, the force would benefit from the provision of training to address this gap.

The police partnership hub retains oversight of problem-solving activity through an IT dashboard implemented in summer 2021. At the time of the inspection, the dashboard had a record of 8 of approximately 50 problem-solving plans the force believed they were managing. Significantly more problem-solving activities were being undertaken with partners using the ORCUMA system, which aren't reflected on the police dashboard. Neighbourhood staff described the process of creating a problem-solving plan as being complicated and time-consuming. Many indicated it was easier to work with partner agencies to problem-solve using the ORCUMA system.

The force needs to review its resources within neighbourhood policing using its understanding of likely future demand

The force has an understanding of neighbourhood policing demand and how this is likely to change in the future. However, this level of understanding isn't reflected in the number of staff allocated to neighbourhood policing roles required to service that demand. There is a reliance on officers from neighbourhood policing to undertake daily response duties, which takes them away from their core role of problem-solving, targeted activity and community engagement. The creation of the initial enquiry team was designed to reduce demand on response and neighbourhood staff, and has resulted in the removal of six police community support officers from neighbourhood police teams. Their new role is to deal with antisocial behaviour calls over the telephone, collect exhibits such as CCTV footage and to help investigators. This has effectively moved staff from a preventative role to a call handling position, and misses the opportunity to improve the contribution from local neighbourhood teams.

The [force management statement](#) indicates that in the 12 months to July 2021, the deployment of neighbourhood policing to incidents has reduced by 90 incidents a month. In contrast with the feedback to inspection staff, there is no monitoring to understand when neighbourhood officers are removed from their areas, or a policy to specify when this is allowed to happen.

Responding to the public

Requires
improvement

North Yorkshire Police requires improvement at responding to the public.

Areas for improvement

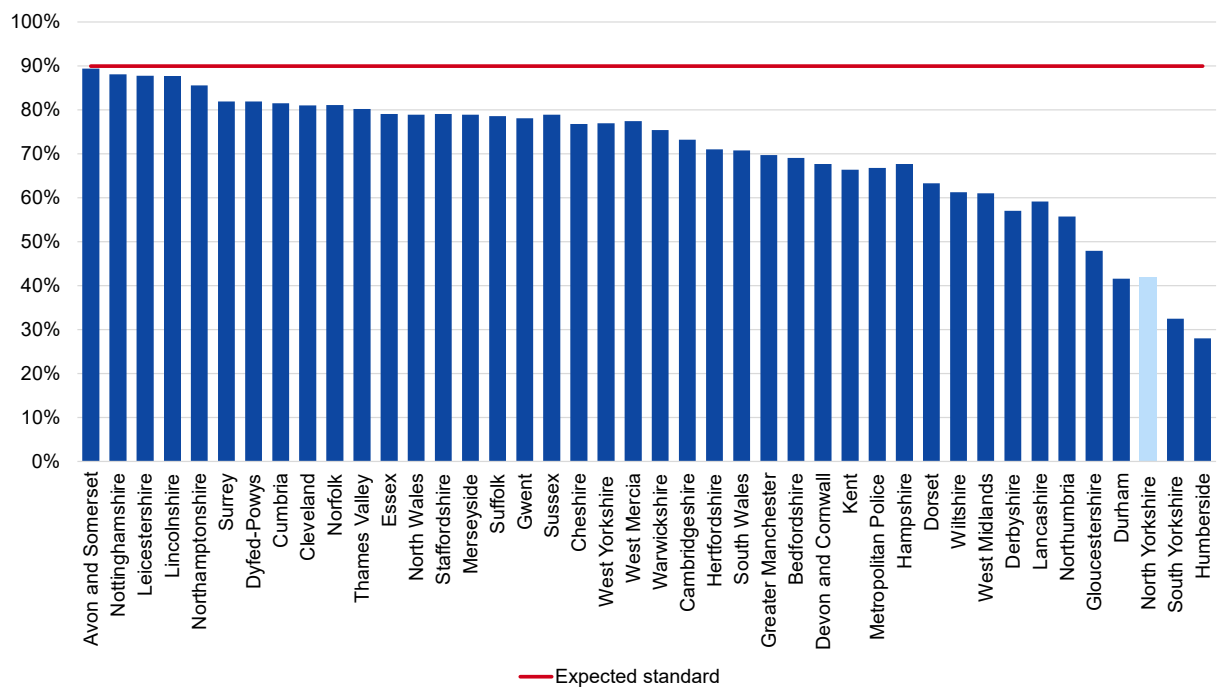
The force should improve the time it takes to answer calls for service

On 31 May 2022, the Home Office published data on 999 call answering times. Call answering time is the time taken for a call to be transferred to a force, and the time taken by that force to answer it. In England and Wales, forces should aim to answer 90 percent of these calls within ten seconds.

We have used this data to assess how quickly forces answer 999 calls. We do acknowledge, however, that this data has only been published recently. As such, we recognise that forces may need time to consider any differences between the data published by the Home Office and their own.

The speed of answering 999 calls and the number of abandoned calls on the [101](#) system is poor compared to other forces. The force has told us that between February and December 2022, an average of 33 percent of all 101 calls were abandoned by the caller. Between 1 November 2021 and 31 July 2022, North Yorkshire Police answered 41.9 percent of 999 calls within ten seconds. This was substantially below the standard of answering 90 percent within ten seconds and was the third lowest proportion across all forces in England and Wales.

Figure 1: Proportion of 999 calls answered within ten seconds by forces in England and Wales between 1 November 2021 and 31 July 2022



The force should ensure that call handlers use and correctly record structured initial triage and risk assessments to improve their identification of vulnerable and repeat callers. Risk assessments should be repeated where attendance is delayed or circumstances change

The force completed structured initial risk assessments in 56 of 63 cases we reviewed, but on 13 of 55 relevant occasions the incident record didn't accurately reflect the information obtained. Checks to identify if the caller was vulnerable or a repeat victim weren't completed in, respectively, 5 of 67 and 15 of 68 relevant cases we reviewed. We also found that where attendance to an incident was delayed, or further information was received by the force, the risk assessment wasn't refreshed. This will help vulnerable and repeat callers to be identified, and inform the prioritisation given to the call and the most appropriate response.

The force should review the effectiveness of its response to emergency and priority calls. It should consider whether its current approach provides an efficient and effective service which manages risk well for victims of crime

The force doesn't have targets for response times for emergency or priority calls, but notionally it aims to arrive at an emergency in an urban area within 15 minutes and for a rural setting within 20 minutes. For a priority call the force aims to arrive within one hour. The force told us that officers arrived at 62 percent of emergency calls and 59 percent of priority calls within the notional time frames. While the force understands its call demand, it needs to review how it uses its resources to meet this demand.

Main findings

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

The force understands its daily demand and the associated risk and vulnerability

The force has a daily management morning meeting in each of its operational areas to understand any risks to services. The leads for each of these areas then attend an online force-wide meeting to ensure that resources are allocated to the emerging issues of the day. This meeting was chaired by the duty superintendent who could, where required, move resources across the force. Since our inspection, arrangements have been reviewed and the governance of this meeting has been reinforced. The duty chief officer chairs this meeting to provide strategic oversight of the risks being managed by the force. The force would benefit from taking a longer-term view of how it allocates resources to meet current and predicted future levels of demand.

The force does benefit from mental health services working within its control room during busier times, and a 24-hour contact number to mental health specialists to provide advice to responding officers. This results in timely information from specialists being shared with officers to help them to reach better-informed decisions for people whose mental health conditions make them vulnerable.

Methods of online contact are limited

The public can contact the force on its webpage, but other online methods of contact are limited. The use of online reporting is an opportunity for the force to reduce the number of telephone calls it receives and to allow a member of staff to potentially speak with more than one person at a time. We found that staff were looking at the online reports on an ad hoc basis, which delays both the assessment of risk and the response to the member of the public. This represents a missed opportunity to increase the efficiency of handling contact from the public.

The force is attempting to improve its service to the public by resolving calls at first contact over the telephone

The force has recently invested a considerable number of experienced officers into an initial enquiry team, which is designed to improve service to victims and free officer time by increasing the number of incidents resolved without the need for officers to attend in person. The team undertakes an initial investigation to a point where there is enough evidence to either question a suspect or close the investigation. A team of police community support officers is available to deal with calls relating to antisocial behaviour and to attend locations to collect evidence such as CCTV. The police officers for this team have been taken from other areas of policing and are a mixture of officers who are undertaking restricted duties and those who are unrestricted. The force would benefit from considering the efficiency and effectiveness of its whole approach to resolving calls raised by the public.

The force has a large number of vacancies both in its control room and on response teams, which adversely affects services and staff welfare

The occupational health unit's offer to support contact staff and response officers is positive, but inspection staff found that officers and staff don't feel that well-being is a force priority. The force told us that the control room loses 25 percent of its staff each year mainly because people don't wish to stay in the role. Its attempts to fill these vacancies hasn't been effective, placing more pressure on staff and encouraging further staff to leave. The force has recently changed its approach to recruitment in this area. Early indications are that this has had a positive impact on the number of applications for roles.

The uniform response teams have a large proportion of student officers and, as is the case in many forces, the increased training away from the work is reducing the numbers of officers available to respond to calls for service. Following the inspection, the force has reviewed its approach to training and placed additional student officers on the response teams.

Investigating crime

Requires
improvement

North Yorkshire Police requires improvement at investigating crime.

Areas for improvement

The force needs to review its operating model for investigations and the resources required to meet the demand placed on it

The force operating model for investigations, and the resources allocated to it, needs to be reviewed to assure the force that it has enough trained detectives to meet the demands placed on it. As of 31 March 2022, 79 percent of the force's 202 PIP2 roles were filled with accredited detectives. (A PIP2 detective investigates more serious and complex criminal investigations.) This represented a shortfall of 42 accredited detectives. With a limited plan to address this, there is a need to review the investigative operating model and associated governance.

The force needs to make sure that the requirements of the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime are complied with, particularly the completion of victim needs assessments

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 inspection team couldn't find a record that a victim needs assessment had been completed in 20 of 56 cases we reviewed.

The force should make sure that there is an auditable record of the decision of the victim and their reasons for withdrawal of support. The force should make sure it documents whether evidence-led prosecutions have been considered in all such cases

When victims withdrew support for an investigation, the force didn't consider progressing the case without the victim's support in 8 of 14 cases we reviewed. This can be an important method of safeguarding the victim and preventing further offences from being committed.

Main findings

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

The force is undertaking effective investigations, but there are areas to improve

Our victim service assessment found that in 86 of 90 cases we reviewed, effective investigations were carried out. In 73 of 78 relevant cases reviewed, appropriate investigative opportunities were taken from the outset and throughout investigations. However, during our two recent inspections we have found examples of more serious investigations being undertaken by officers who aren't sufficiently trained to undertake them. This is mainly because the force doesn't have enough trained staff. The force is trying to resolve this by providing increased supervision from trained detective sergeants for specific crimes. This is placing significant pressure on all staff.

The governance and oversight of investigations needs further development

The force has a good understanding of crime demand and an allocation policy which is based on threat, harm and risk. However, the force isn't using its understanding of crime demand to improve services, and its strategic oversight of investigations requires improvement.

In 2018, the force reviewed the resource required for investigations and increased the number of detectives accordingly. However, since then, the force has never been fully resourced, nor has it further reviewed the number of resources required in this area. The approach across the three area commands is inconsistent, resulting in different levels of service being provided to victims across the county. Managers and staff criticised the practice of investigators working across all types of crime rather than in specialist areas.

Inspection staff found that the investigation hubs were a good approach that created a positive learning environment, where detectives worked with uniformed officers who were seeking to become detectives. But this approach wasn't consistent across the force. There was a frustration from staff that senior officers weren't addressing the challenges experienced by investigators and this was making their role more difficult. Despite this, the officers and staff are working hard to mitigate the impact of this ineffective governance. The occupational health unit was working closely with investigation staff who clearly needed support, but many staff didn't engage as they described being too busy to do so.

The force has adopted a new performance approach, which is led by the deputy chief constable and results in senior officers reviewing how they provide services to then make improvements. One performance meeting was focused on the response to serious sexual offences. This identified that a previous decision to stop training had resulted in insufficient trained officers to deal with the initial reports of these crimes. The training has now restarted to improve the initial response.

The force needs to reduce the backlog within its digital forensic unit

The force has invested to increase the staffing within its digital forensic unit and to update the technology it uses to examine the content of mobile phones and computers linked to investigations. The inspection team identified that the force had a 12-month backlog in these digital lines of inquiry, resulting in delayed investigations that adversely affected victims. In April 2022, the increased staffing for the digital forensic unit was approved, but in October 2022 it was still not fully resourced due to delays in recruitment and further staff resigning. The force has a plan to address these vacancies and to work with existing staff to discourage them from leaving for jobs in the private sector.

Protecting vulnerable people

Requires
improvement

North Yorkshire Police requires improvement at protecting vulnerable people.

Areas for improvement

The force should review its operating model for protecting vulnerable people and the resources required to meet the demands placed on it

The force approach to investigations relating to the protection of vulnerable people needs to be reviewed. The force has adopted a generalist approach to investigations as opposed to smaller specialist teams. The force should review this area to provide assurance that its approach is resilient and has the required capability and capacity to meet the demands placed on it.

The force needs to improve its strategic oversight of how it protects vulnerable people

The force has an established vulnerability board, but at the time of our inspection this hadn't met in over six months. This board is responsible for the oversight and strategic direction of the force approach to protecting vulnerable people, ensuring resources are aligned to meet the demands placed on it. The absence of this board for this prolonged period reduces the force's ability to assure itself that its services are efficient and effective in this area.

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 good understanding of the nature and scale of vulnerability, but it fails to use this insight to ensure that resources are allocated to meet this demand

Protecting vulnerable people is strategic priority for the force and is in the [police and crime plan](#). The force has a good understanding of the nature and scale of vulnerability, which is informed by partner information and included in its force management statement. However, the force fails to use this insight, and resources aren't aligned in a way that meets the demand, which reduces the resilience of the force's approach. The inspection team saw the negative personal impact on staff at all levels caused by inefficient working practices and large numbers of vacancies. The absence of an effective vulnerability board has allowed this position to worsen, without senior officers being fully aware of the risks and impact on their ability to protect vulnerable people.

The force does provide ongoing safeguarding support to victims, but there is no strategic oversight of these services

The force provides ongoing safeguarding support to vulnerable victims and recognises where there is a risk of harm. Staff have been given training to speak with children when they attend incidents, to ensure their voice is captured and the impact of the incident on them is understood. The force is introducing more detailed child protection training to officers in response to the [National Child Protection Inspection \(NCPI\)](#).

The force is proactive in its use of ancillary powers, such as domestic violence protection orders and the [domestic violence disclosure scheme](#). Trained safeguarding staff review incidents to see where these powers can be proactively used. The inspection found good use of these powers and [positive action](#) where there were breaches.

The force has piloted Project Shield, which the inspection team has identified as good practice. This scheme enters all [non-molestation orders](#) onto the [Police National Database](#), so if a victim who is usually resident in North Yorkshire is elsewhere in the country, the local police force can directly access details of the non-molestation order.

The NCPI identified ten separate areas where the force needs to make urgent improvement to the services it provides. A [gold group](#) chaired by the deputy chief constable has been created to manage the force response to the recommendations made after the NCPI report. There remain areas that require further development following this inspection, which is reflected in the force action plan. These areas include the force response when children are reported [missing](#). While the approach has been reviewed and training has been given, there is still more to do to consistently

improve the response. The force should work to raise awareness of criminal exploitation – this will help officers and staff to understand why people should be supported as victims and not pursued as offenders. This will challenge perceptions that mean staff fail to understand exploitation and instead describe people as engaging in dangerous lifestyles. If staff don't understand exploitation, they will miss the vulnerability of those who are being criminally exploited, and options to make people safer won't be fully explored.

The force benefits from good partnership working

Protecting vulnerable people is the core theme of the force tasking meetings, which are attended by local partners including local authorities in the force area. The inspection team found significant evidence of meaningful partnership working, including established [multi-agency safeguarding hubs](#).

[Multi-agency risk assessment conferences](#) are established, with positive engagement from partner organisations. These conferences follow the nationally recognised [SafeLives](#) guidance when considering [domestic abuse](#) cases.

Managing offenders and suspects

Adequate

North Yorkshire Police is adequate at managing offenders and suspects.

Areas for improvement

The force should improve its performance monitoring and supervisory oversight of the management of registered sex offenders. Supervisory reviews should be tailored to each particular case and set clear direction and actions to manage risk

The force needs to improve its performance monitoring of the management of registered sex offenders to help supervisors to understand where visits to or assessments of these offenders haven't been completed in the required time frames. The inspection team found that each offender manager self-regulates their own workloads and schedules their visits and assessments, resulting in an inconsistent approach. The risk caused by this inconsistent approach is increased as there is no clear way for supervisors to identify what visits or assessments are due or indeed overdue.

The force should improve the way it records its visits and associated actions around the management of registered sex offenders to ensure it can demonstrate that it complies with authorised professional practice

The inspection team found that officers who manage registered sex offenders were visiting the offenders alone and on an announced basis. This isn't in line with [authorised professional practice](#). The guidance suggests that two staff should undertake these visits, which should be unannounced wherever possible in line with best practice. This ensures officer safety, supports the quality of home visits and reduces the risk of manipulation by the offender.

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 effective in apprehending and managing suspects and offenders to protect the public from harm

The force takes a risk-based approach to arresting outstanding suspects. The three areas hold daily management meetings each morning, which review the previous day's activities and plan for the day ahead. They discuss the management of suspects and wanted offenders, who are prioritised based on the risk they pose to the public. Suspects considered a higher risk, or who have been difficult to arrest, can be escalated to the force's daily management meeting so force-wide resources can be deployed to arrest them.

The force uses [bail](#) and the alternative of [released under investigation](#) effectively for suspects, with a focus on the threat, risk and harm from the circumstances of the investigation.

The force has an established programme for integrated offender management

The force's approach to [integrated offender management](#) follows the guidance from the [College of Policing](#). It benefits from a good working relationship with the probation service to identify offenders to be managed to reduce their offending. Offenders are selected using a scoring system that considers how recent, frequent and serious the offending was and how many victims were affected. The force has identified a 19 percent reduction in offending by those on the programme. The force has now appointed a dedicated sergeant to lead the approach to integrated offender management, which will be beneficial.

The force effectively risk assesses registered sex offenders, but would benefit from clearly recording police activities to reduce risk

The force uses a nationally recognised risk assessment tool for the management of registered sex offenders. The risk assessments are completed by trained staff, and were found to be detailed and identified potential risk areas to monitor. The risk management plans were found to be generally clear in structure, but some changes should be made to improve quality and consistency. The police activities to reduce risk weren't always clearly documented. The absence of effective supervisory oversight and performance management, with the need to improve recording and consistency, does make this an area that the force should focus on.

All breaches of registered sex offender [notification requirements](#) or breaches of order are recorded. The force uses polygraph technology and benefits from two dedicated digital media investigators to support the examination of devices belonging to offenders, enabling early identification of further offending. The force would benefit from reviewing the equipment (including vehicles) provided to staff to support the management of registered sex offenders to improve the efficiency of their approach.

The force has a dedicated team dealing with all online child abuse. The force would benefit from reviewing how this team shares information with multi-agency safeguarding hubs

The force has a dedicated team dealing with all online child abuse. When dealing with these investigations, its preferred approach is to promptly arrest the suspect and not to wait for them to attend a police station voluntarily. The team is able to undertake research and develop [intelligence](#) about suspects. The caseloads within the team are manageable. The force monitors these investigations, so that the level of risk and the speed of enforcement action can be managed.

The team told the NCPI that it had agreed with social care services that it wouldn't share information until enforcement action had been taken. The force should review this approach because any delay in sharing information potentially delays opportunities to safeguard vulnerable people.

The online abuse team relies on the digital forensic unit to download data from mobile phones and computers to be used as evidence. The digital forensic unit has delays of approximately 12 months, and these delays are slowing down investigations. This is compounded by the fact that the equipment used to assess the information obtained from computers is old and slow, which hampers investigations further.

Disrupting serious organised crime

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

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

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

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

Building, supporting and protecting the workforce

Requires improvement

North Yorkshire Police requires improvement at building and developing its workforce.

Areas for improvement

The force should develop an effective workforce plan, with strategic oversight that aligns resources with the right skills to meet the demand likely to be placed on policing services

The force has a basic understanding of the numbers of people it needs to recruit, but its approach to recruitment isn't effective. The force needs to develop its understanding of what resources and skills are required to meet the future demands on policing services. It should then develop a plan to achieve this. The current recruitment approach is failing to fill vacancies, which is placing increased pressure on existing staff and resulting in fewer officers and staff providing policing services.

The force should improve its understanding of staff well-being to develop a detailed well-being plan

To develop a more detailed well-being plan and better support the workforce, the force needs to better understand the well-being of its workforce using a range of engagement methods. The force hasn't undertaken a staff survey in the last two years, which is limiting its understanding of staff well-being. The force should consider undertaking a staff survey. The occupational health unit has a new patient record system that will identify what causes people to seek help from this service. This information should be used to inform the well-being plan that the occupational health unit is developing for the newly formed well-being board.

The force should improve its preventative focus on the well-being of staff to better support staff

The inspection found officers and staff who were struggling with their workloads and the demands placed on them. We found people working excessive hours, regularly not taking rest days and carrying high or complex workloads. The force doesn't have enough measures in place to help prevent stress and poor well-being. For example, it isn't effectively monitoring workloads and working hours or identifying where staff are at risk of burnout. The force relies on supervisors identifying this risk, but it has large numbers of staff acting up in the next rank and a high turnover of supervisors, making this approach unlikely to be effective.

Main findings

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

Officers and staff are proud to serve the communities of North Yorkshire

We found that staff were proud to serve the communities of North Yorkshire and that there was a sense of belonging within the force, particularly when they spoke about their teams. But there was a consistent theme of frustration from staff at all levels about raising issues with senior leaders and nothing ever changing as a result. Staff raised communication within the force as an issue. We found many examples of force-wide communications to staff, but it was clear that staff didn't pay attention to them as they were focused on their tasks that day and disengaged from this type of communication. The force should consider how it communicates information to the workforce to ensure reasons for changes are fully understood and enable greater involvement.

The force has restarted its work to make its workforce more representative of the communities it serves

The force previously had a dedicated team working to increase the diversity of the workforce, promote equality in the workplace and to make the force more inclusive. However, with the changes to their people services, this work was paused for over 18 months. The deputy chief constable has recognised the gap and has overseen a new strategic approach, developed an effective operational plan and provided enough resources to lead this work. The force has stated that it has seen an increase in the diversity of people applying for the most recent round of recruitment for police officers. The increase in applications for roles is positive, particularly following previous recruitment campaigns that have been unable to identify suitable candidates to fill the vacant roles. However, this is yet to translate to a more diverse cohort of new police officers joining the force. In the year ending 31 March 2022, 1.7 percent of police

officer joiners to North Yorkshire Police were from an ethnic minority background. This was less diverse than the 2.4 percent of officers in the force from an ethnic minority background (as of 31 March 2022).

The force has promoted the code of ethics and an ethical culture

The deputy chief constable chairs the ethics board made up of representatives from throughout the organisation, supported by the ethics strategy and delivery plan. Each of the departments and divisional areas has a vision group, which considers local issues affecting local staff. These will be discussed by the group and escalated, where appropriate, to local senior officers and to the force-wide board for discussion. One example of the discussion related to how staff were coping with the cost-of-living crisis and what the force could do to offer support.

The force is providing training to supervisors to improve their leadership skills and to help them have difficult conversations with staff, focused on improving standards and performance. We also saw the [professional standards department](#) using reflective practice to improve how officers and staff discharged their duties.

The force has invested in the policing education qualifications framework

The force was an early adopter of the [policing education qualifications framework](#) and has developed its approach with the Open University. The courses have been developed for the Police Constable Degree Apprenticeship and more recently the Degree Holders Entry Programme. The transition to the policing education qualifications framework was completed within the College of Policing time frames. The force has methods in place to monitor the progress of officers from the start of the programme. It can demonstrate its understanding of the supportive interventions required to ensure students improve and maximise attainment in scored assessments.

The force has described considerable pressure on response due to the increased proportion of training abstractions for officers on the programme. Since the inspection, the force has reviewed the secondments for student officers and removed the non-essential elements, resulting in an increase in officers available for response duties. This change in approach has also enabled the movement of experienced officers from the response teams to their investigation teams.

Vetting and counter corruption

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

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

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

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

Strategic planning, organisational management and value for money

Inadequate

North Yorkshire Police is inadequate at operating efficiently.

Cause of concern

North Yorkshire Police does not have adequate governance in place.

Recommendations

Within three months, North Yorkshire Police should:

- make sure that senior leaders have effective oversight of the force's enabling services and the current challenges associated with capability;
- develop an effective workforce plan so it can provide a service that meets the policing needs of the community, now and in the future; and
- develop and align departmental operational and strategic plans that are informed by accurate information and a detailed performance framework.

Senior leaders in the force haven't had enough oversight of the impact that failures in this area are having on performance and management. The structures currently in place for control of the function aren't effective. At the time of our inspection, the force was still working on producing its performance plans and there were significant challenges in its enabling function. These problems were hampering service delivery.

We were told that the force had focused on implementing its command and control changes, but we found that senior leaders in the force hadn't had enough oversight of how it provides enabling functions. It had also failed to make sure that good governance and planning arrangements were in place to drive efficiency and effectiveness in relation to policing priorities. For example, the police fleet hadn't been supported by an effective replacement strategy, which necessitated vehicles being taken off the road for safety reasons. The force put no interim plans in place to support its workforce in providing everyday policing services.

The lack of an effective workforce plan is reflected in several areas where demand challenges are creating workforce pressures and a lack of resource is hampering service delivery. This includes the control room and investigations. It has created uncertainty and hindered effective decision-making in relation to where the force needs to invest to support current and future demand.

The inspection found that the workforce lacked confidence in senior leaders to address the concerns that have been raised about specialist areas. At the same time the workforce lacked effective back office support, such as IT and analysis. This is creating a disconnect with the wider workforce leading to a lack of confidence and support across the force. The force shares enabling functions such as HR, IT, vehicle fleet management, estate management and business insight with North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service and the office of the police, fire and crime commissioner. At the time of the inspection, it wasn't operating as effectively as it could and this was having a marked effect on the force's operational performance. Senior leaders haven't been carrying out effective oversight and governance of systems which are essential to providing effective police services.

In addition, it wasn't clear whether the force had made enough progress on its policing priorities or the police, fire and crime commissioner's operational and strategic priorities contained in the police and crime plan. It isn't clear how the force can effectively provide these requirements while it faces capacity challenges in areas such as response policing, neighbourhood policing and investigations.

The failure to provide enough oversight and governance of its enabling functions and performance means the force is failing to provide the standard of service that the community, including its most vulnerable people, expects and deserves.

Areas for improvement

The force should use its available data to develop a detailed understanding of demand and use this to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of its allocation of resources

The lack of a comprehensive understanding of demand is affecting how the force uses its resources. This is creating demand and pressures elsewhere, which the force is failing to address. For example, the force doesn't have enough trained staff to deal with more complex and serious investigations which is affecting the communities it serves. The force has substantial data about people who are vulnerable to crime and the demand this is likely to create, which it could use to direct resources effectively. But it makes only limited use of this information, resulting in resources being allocated ineffectively.

Officers are working excessive hours, the force is overspending on overtime and there are no clear plans in place to understand and manage current demand.

The force must make sure it has the capability and capacity it needs to manage demand

North Yorkshire Police is focused on managing current demand and doesn't demonstrate a wider awareness of the impact that moving resources is having on other areas.

The unintended consequence of the transfer of the workforce from one area to another results in the movement of workloads rather than a solution. For example, the movement of neighbourhood officers to support response teams means neighbourhood and prevention activity doesn't take place. The force doesn't effectively measure the abstraction rate, it has no information regarding skills and capabilities and is unable to track specialist skills effectively. We found staff working excessive hours with high demand. The force doesn't understand how often this is happening and the true impact.

There is a lack of investment in developing capability to meet demand. For example, the force told us it currently has 217 people in temporary promotion positions. There is insufficient supervisory and leadership training, which is worsening the force's core services.

The force should review its IT to make sure it can provide what is required to improve services to the community and improve efficiency for staff

During the inspection we found that force systems hadn't been updated, which presented risk to the organisation and victims. The introduction of its information management system ([NICHE Universal](#)) left staff critical of the training and support programme, which resulted in simple tasks taking longer to complete. The command and control system has been prioritised to answer the challenges the force has in response, but other areas of IT have been delayed, such as body-worn video replacement, and these are significantly affecting wider demand in areas such as investigations.

The force has many ongoing IT projects which haven't been prioritised effectively and it lacks the staff to deliver what is required. This means it is unable to deliver what the public and workforce need.

The force doesn't always check that IT systems or equipment it buys are being used and adding value, nor was the force making it clear who is responsible for its management and use. This means productivity wasn't effectively managed.

Main findings

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

The force lacks an understanding of future demand and lacks effective plans to make sure it has the right resources in place to meet future needs

The force has an understanding of future demand based on previous and current data. It doesn't have plans in place to ensure it has the capability and capacity to meet the changing nature of future demand, such as cyber-enabled crime. The force doesn't have an effective understanding of the current skills of the workforce, nor the learning and development needs of its staff.

Overall analysis should be improved, and a comprehensive workforce plan is required to make sure that the force has the capacity and capability to meet future demand, specifically in areas such as investigations.

The number of detectives in the force is insufficient to meet demand and this has been a problem for the force since 2018. There are vacancies in investigation teams that manage more serious and complex investigations. This is in addition to response teams being under-resourced. The force has been aware of these gaps and has a plan to increase the number of staff, but it doesn't have enough tutors to support their development.

The lack of investment or supporting plans has placed additional pressure on the existing workforce. Detectives are required to support inexperienced staff working towards their accreditation on top of their own workload and this isn't sustainable.

The force financial plan is balanced but lacks detail on how the force will meet its future demands

There is a good level of fiscal management in the force; the force is well funded and has reported year-on-year underspends. The force acknowledges that this needs to be addressed. Despite the available funds, the force isn't making sufficient progress on its priorities due to the challenges it has. This means that the communities in North Yorkshire receive less policing than they have paid for. The failure in service delivery presents a risk to future funding through precept (income from local council tax). The force confirms that in 2021/22 it will deliver a balanced budget, that there is sufficient capital financing to deliver its plans for the year, that it holds sufficient reserves and that the council tax precept rise is in line with Government thresholds.

The force is a high precept force, receiving 44 percent of its total funding for 2021/22 through local precept, and isn't as challenged as others in relation to its finances. The force states it needs to save £825,000 for the period 2022/23 and has identified savings of £500,000 for that period. Based on these figures provided by the force, it needs to make further savings of £325,000. The identified potential savings of £500,000 are made through budget adjustments and include areas such as staff vacancy management. We found little evidence that a detailed efficiency plan was in place.

Without detailed planning it isn't clear how the force can assure itself that its finances are being used in the best interest of the communities of North Yorkshire. The force will need to continue to balance an underspend while seeking increases in precept, so will need to produce a more detailed public report on future demand and investment.

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