

# Essex/Suffolk Branch Report 2025

2025 in stats:-

11570 Work orders(WO) dealt with by the team.

These WO's came from 3504 Incidents(actioned reports) (4th highest in country)

587 Intentional harm

708 Left unattended

1804 Neglect

38 Illegal Activity (Animal fighting / mutilation etc)

49 Request for assistance

248 Sick/injured (i.e rescues and collections)

65 trapped

5 other

These statistics show an overall increase in WO's from last year but a similar amount of incidents. Cruelty and neglect jobs increased as that became our core strategic focus and rescues and collections dropped. It is hypothesised that the increase in WO's is due to the time it takes to improve and rectify welfare issues in relation to rescues/collections where the animal is easier to remove and access.

80 Case Investigations officially started - 52 submitted for Review by prosecutions

17 proceeded to court (some still in process)

25 Adult Written Cautions Issued

5 No proceedings

(remainder carried forward -awaiting submission/outcomes from prosecution)

This is an increase in 33% on the previous year in formal investigations beginning and an increase in 30% on submissions to prosecutions. 2 more cases went to court and adult written cautions increased by 66% on the previous year. Over 90% of RSPCA cautions result in no further animal welfare offences being identified so they are effective preventative measures.

2025 was another tough year in the Inspectorate. The Scope of Service changes from the previous year meant we spent the majority of the year focusing on cruelty and neglect, deemed not having capacity for any discretionary work since 7th February until the end of the year. The statistics above show that we remained working at maximum capacity dealing with just as many jobs as ever but getting to those animals that are our real niche.

Even at the start of 2025 when we were able to take on some of the discretionary work our backlogs were still high having 200 jobs waiting for us to deal with come the start of February but we were still managing to get to them in a timely manner, managing an average of less than ten days until the end of February. Backlogs rose to over 400 jobs waiting for us through summer but we continued to tackle them as effectively as possible.

The space crisis continued to worsen throughout 2025, we struggled for space for all animals with dogs being the most challenging. We experienced a number of large scale jobs where

breeders/hoarders had built up large numbers and were unable to sell/offload them onto others. Essex dealt with 168 incidents involving more than 10 animals in 2025, this is up from 98 in 2024 and from 82 in 2021 so we have seen year on year growth with the number of large scale incidents we are dealing with.

We continued to deal with the usual large variety of animals but had to be mindful of space and offer what support we could to keep animals in situ with owners. This could be particularly challenging when so many people were desperate to hand over animals to us or animals we simply didn't want to leave but dealing with more than double the animals in boarding than we had 4 years ago meant we had to only take those we simply couldn't leave behind due to the risk. Our branches offered us fantastic support with both taking animals in for rehome and supporting owners financially and medically with keeping animals with them. The IVAV scheme was a valuable tool in assisting officers in improving animal welfare.

Some examples include, a dog which needed to see a vet as an emergency (collapsed state but still eating and drinking lifting head), the owners cared about their pet but were struggling financially and reached out for help. They took the dog and got medication and was able to bring him home (Colchester).

Another dog owner had mental health issues and multiple children, she was struggling to cope. A voucher was given to get the dog to vets for it's sore ears (had issues in past with ears), financially she was struggling and this assistance prevented the dog coming into our care.

CM Postcode elderly lady who was vulnerable and struggling on her own was given a voucher to help; her cat had become matted with fur around it's anus making toileting difficult by providing a voucher we enabled her to keep her long term companion.

We have also had a couple of examples where we have issued vouchers to those stating they were financially struggling but still didn't take the animal for help with a voucher and now we have had to remove the animal. The ability to offer a voucher is valuable in highlighting those that lack the ability/desire to care for their animal rather than just their financial difficulties. One was used for an elderly dog who ended up being kept in a shed due to change in circumstances. Not ideal or suitable, the owner needed to pts due to age related issues but couldn't afford it so prolonging the dogs suffering. The voucher helped the dog to be put to sleep much sooner.

It was a busy year for case investigations. Some successes include justice for Hope, a Mastiff cross that was subjected to beatings from the offender in 2024. Evidence showed she had a severely swollen face, especially on the right side with blood stained saliva dripping from her mouth. x-rays revealed she had several fractured teeth, a fractured skull and fracture of both cheek bones. The skull and cheek bone fractures were found to be recent injuries. As well as the recent injuries found around her face and head, a number of other skeletal injuries were noted including fractured ribs and dislocated tail vertebrae. Her open wounds were believed to have been inflicted with a machete. The court case concluded in March 2025 when her owner was convicted of causing unnecessary suffering and sentenced to 12 months in prison, a lifetime ban and victim surcharge of £154.



We also saw the conclusion of an equine case where a mare had not received treatment for her injured leg.



She was unable to bear weight on her leg with a large wound with blood and pus visible. She was lean and had patches of fur loss on her sides and back with patches of missing skin, and her hips and ribs were protruding. The vet concluded the mare had a swollen fetlock, tendon sheath, and a granulated wound that was discharging serum and pus, as well as multiple old and fresh superficial abrasions over her body. The wound would likely have been painful from the moment it occurred. She was of body condition score 0/5 and was varying between 8/10 and 10/10 lame on the injured leg. The vet opined she was severely suffering due to the wound on her leg and should have

received treatment immediately following injury. Sadly this mare was euthanased on veterinary advice.

The poor body condition of the horse also indicated the suffering of the mare was likely such that she was not able to receive sufficient nutrition on her own.

The offender in this case was fined £429 and ordered to pay costs of £300 and a £172 victim surcharge. Disqualified from owning all animals for 10 years, which he cannot appeal for five years.

We also worked alongside Essex police to get a 12 month restorative justice order for a young boy that threw a cat and broke it's leg. Sadly the owner gave up the cat to us as she didn't feel she could it keep it safe from youths in the local park.

Also in 2025 we won another court case in Suffolk after a male kept 5 cats in very poor conditions. The cats were toileting everywhere including on top of the toaster. Marlesham Animal Home managed to rehome the 5 cats and Norfolk branch took 3 cats as sign overs for rehome prior to the case escalating and trying to work with the owner.

## The Team

We headed into 2025 with Rebecca Yarrow newly completing her inspector training and hitting the ground running bringing her depth of experience to the role. ARO Joe White also entered 2025 for his first full year as a fully fledged ARO. ARO Tanya Straight joined the ranks and ventured into the field for the first time in May 2025. Bringing lots of experience from her previous role in the police.

All officers brought much needed depth to the team and excelled brilliantly which is exactly what we needed with such a busy group and high demand. We retained our ARV Megan who helped us out with moving animals and assisting us to keep officers door knocking as much as possible. Examples of her help include transporting snakes to Brighton for boarding and assisting with transporting a donated large parrot cage to help a struggling family improve the welfare of their African Grey. Megan received further training at the end of 2025 to allow her to deal with a variety of tasks more independently. Later in the year we were also joined by Jess, our newest ARV when she moved to Suffolk.

We ran further recruitment in November 2025 where we recruited Ben, our latest ARO who will complete his training in 2026, we look forward to him joining our team.

Inspector Jason Finch was seconded to Learning and Development team in 2024 to assist with training of new recruits and support training being delivered to Network Rail for dealing with animals that go onto the line. This was a move that become permanent in 2025 after a successful application. It was a big loss for the team but he is still close to the team and I'm really pleased he is loving the new post.

At the end of 2025, excluding our trainee the team consisted of 14 members, comprising of 5 inspectors(3.7 FTE) and 9 ARO's(7.7 FTE)

Our full team - end of 2025:-

Chief Inspector Adam Jones 16179

DCI Emma Beynon 15972 (90%)

Insp Natalie Bartle 837

Insp Jen Wildman 16994 (50%)

Insp Nicky Thorne 881 (50%)

Insp Rebecca Yarrow 10322 (80%)

ARO Sian Ridley 14606 (60%)

ARO Amy Marjoram 13704 (60%)

ARO Natalie Read 11613

ARO Nick Jonas

ARO Joe White

ARO Emma Baker

ARO Enola Evans

ARO Jo Thorpe (60%)

ARO Tanya Straight

ARO Ben Hart (Trainee)

## **Conclusion**

Each year animal welfare doesn't seem to be improving and the numbers keep climbing but we recognise that we are still making a huge difference to the animals that we get to, whether that from rescues and removals or improving their lives through advice, guidance and support. Working in collaboration together and with other agencies means we can have a wider reach and make as big an impact as possible on the endless demand for our services. So as we reflect on 2025, thank you for all your support.