

West Mercia Police and Crime Panel

Agenda

West Mercia Police and Crime Panel

Wednesday, 15 September 2021, 11.00 am

**The Council Chamber, Civic Centre,
Queen Elizabeth Drive, Pershore,
Worcestershire WR10 1PT**

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West Mercia Police and Crime Panel

**Wednesday, 15 September 2021, 11.00 am, Council Chamber,
Wychavon District Council, Civic Centre, Queen Elizabeth
Drive, Pershore WR10 1PT**

Membership:

Cllr Aled Luckman (Chairman)	Substantive Member - Worcestershire County Council
Cllr Barry Durkin (Vice Chair)	Co-opted Member - Herefordshire Council
Cllr Adam Kent	Substantive Member - Bromsgrove District Council
Cllr Sebastian Bowen	Substantive Member - Herefordshire Council
Cllr Tom Wells	Substantive Member - Malvern Hills District Council
Cllr Nyear Nazir	Substantive Member - Redditch Borough Council
Cllr Nigel Lumby	Substantive Member - Shropshire Council
Cllr Jeff Anderson	Co-opted Member - Shropshire Council
Cllr Roger Evans	Co-opted Member - Shropshire Council
Cllr Vivienne Parry	Co-opted Member - Shropshire Council
Cllr Jim Lavery	Substantive Member - Telford and Wrekin Council
Cllr Richard Overton	Co-opted Member - Telford and Wrekin Council
Cllr Rob Adams	Substantive Member - Wychavon District Council
Cllr James Stanley	Substantive Member - Worcester City Council
Cllr Graham Ballinger	Substantive Member - Wyre Forest District Council
Mrs C Clive	Co-opted Independent Lay Member

Agenda

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1	Welcome and Introductions	
2	Named Substitutes	
3	Apologies and Declarations of Interest	
4	Public Participation Members of the public wishing to take part (asking a question or making a statement) should notify the Assistant Director for Legal and Governance in writing or by email indicating both the nature and content of their proposed participation no later than 9.00am on the working day	

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To obtain further information or a copy of this agenda contact Samantha Morris, Scrutiny Officer on Worcester (01905) 844963 email: sjmorris@worcestershire.gov.uk

Reports and supporting information can be accessed via the Council's website at www.worcestershire.gov.uk

Date of Issue: Tuesday, 7 September 2021

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	before the meeting (in this case 14 September 2021). Enquiries can be made through the telephone number/email address listed below.	
5	Confirmation of the Minutes of the previous meeting To confirm the Minutes of the Panel meeting held on 31 August 2021.	To follow
6	Draft Police and Crime Plan 2021 - 2025	1 - 48
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NOTES

- **Webcasting**

Members of the Panel are reminded that meetings of the West Mercia Police and Crime Panel are Webcast on the Internet and will be stored electronically and accessible through the Council's Website. Members of the public are informed that if they attend this meeting their images and speech may be captured by the recording equipment used for the Webcast and may also be stored electronically and accessible through the Council's Website.



WEST MERCIA POLICE AND CRIME PANEL 15 SEPTEMBER 2021

DRAFT POLICE AND CRIME PLAN 2021 - 2025

Recommendation

1. Members of the Panel are asked to review and comment on the draft Safer West Mercia Plan (the Police and Crime Plan) in accordance with the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011.

Background

2. By virtue of Section 5 (1) of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 (the Act) a Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) must issue a Police and Crime Plan (the Plan) within the financial year in which their election is held. The Plan is the PCC's key document and sets out the overall strategic direction and long-term vision for policing in West Mercia.

3. Once prepared the Act requires the PCC to consult with the people of West Mercia and victims of crime on the draft plan. As part of the statutory process the Police and Crime Panel must be sent a copy of the draft plan. The Panel have a responsibility to review the Plan and make comments to the PCC on the plan. The PCC must have regard to the Panel's comments and respond to them prior to issuing the finished plan.

Plan Development

4. The priorities, commitments and outcomes in the attached draft Plan have been developed from the PCC's pre-election principles and commitments, along with issues and concerns raised through consultation, engagement and correspondence, national policing priorities, local policing priorities, partner priorities and an analysis of inspections, audits and the performance of the police.

5. The priorities, commitments and outcomes in turn support the vision and strategic aims that were successfully established by the PCC in his first Safer West Mercia Plan and have been retained for the new plan. These are:

- a. Putting victims and survivors first
- b. Building a more secure West Mercia
- c. Reforming West Mercia
- d. Reassuring West Mercia's Communities

6. The current and future Chief Constable along with the Chief officer team were consulted on the draft document prior to its publication and changes made as a result of their feedback.

7. As part of the development of the new Police and Crime Plan, the PCC is working with the force to develop a performance framework which not only shows how the force is contributing to achieving the national priorities for policing but also the outcomes set out in the Police and Crime Plan. This framework will not be included in the final version of the plan, as it will need to be capable of evolving during the life of the plan but will instead be reported on the PCC's website. A review of the supporting delivery plan's function and format is also being undertaken.

8. A copy of the draft Safer West Mercia Plan is attached at appendix 1.

Plan consultation

9. The consultation for the Safer West Mercia Plan opened on 9th August and will close 12 weeks later on 1 November. Details of the consultation were published on the PCC's website along with an online survey to coincide with media releases to the press and notification to contacts on the PCC's email list. Recipients of this email included, MPs, partner organisations, stakeholder, victims' service providers, town and parish councils and the leaders of top tier local authorities. The survey has also been promoted internally.

10. Since opening, the survey link has been shared on all social media channels (Facebook, Twitter and Instagram), via a press release (which has been picked up by the local newspapers). The link has also been shared via the newsletter, on the PCC's website and in the coming weeks the PCC and DPCC will be attending late summer events to further promote the Plan and encourage conversations with West Mercia's communities.

11. As part of the PCC's Holding to Account Programme a Facebook Live event is being planned for October which will focus on the priorities in the draft plan and provide further opportunity for public questions and engagement.

12. The online survey asks a small number of free text questions seeking respondents' feedback on the plan. The questions are:

- a. Having read the draft version of the plan. Do you have any comments on 'Putting Victims and Survivors first'?
- b. Do you have any comments on 'Building a more secure West Mercia'?
- c. Do you have any comments on 'Reforming West Mercia'?
- d. Do you have any comments on 'Reassuring West Mercia's communities'?
- e. Recognising that this plan is a strategic document and it was never my intention to include every crime type or incident. Do you have any further comments to make on the draft plan?

A number of demographic questions are also asked.

13. An analysis of all consultation feedback received via the survey, social media, summer events etc will be undertaken once the consultation closes. The feedback from this consultation will be taken into consideration when preparing a final draft of the Plan which will be submitted to the Panel's November meeting.

Risk Management Implications

None.

Financial Implications

None.

Legal Implications

None

Equality Implications

None.

Supporting Information

Appendix 1 – Draft Safer West Mercia Plan 2021 - 2025

Contact Points for the Report

For the PCC's office: Andy Champness, Police and Crime Commissioner Chief Executive
andrewchampness@westmercia.pnn.police.uk

For Panel support: Sheena Jones, Democratic Governance and Scrutiny Manager
Tel: 01905 846011
Sjones19@worcestershire.gov.uk

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Draft Safer West Mercia Plan 2021-2025



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Foreword

The weight of the community's trust placed in me drives my determination to deliver a safer West Mercia for them. This plan sets out how I will make good on the promises I have made.

I have worked hard to deliver significant progress. Working with West Mercia's Police Chief Constable, partners and the community, we have made some tough decisions and backed the force with the resources it needs. Now is the time to make good that investment, and continue to raise our aspirations.

West Mercia now has almost 400 more police officers than when I was first elected in 2016. The journey of reform I have championed has seen a far greater proportion of police budgets focused on front-line service delivery. West Mercia Police is now a far more agile organisation, much more capable of meeting the changing needs of its communities.

We have seen significant reductions in key crime types such as burglaries. Engagement with local communities has increased, meaning the work of our police is much more informed by the needs of the public it serves. Victim services have been reformed to make them more accessible and easier to navigate for the people who need them most.

West Mercia now has almost 400 more police officers than when I was first elected in 2016.

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My pledge around crime and harm in our community is simple. I will ensure resources are focused on effective prevention, response, investigation and support for those affected by it. I will also ensure that the force has the ability to adapt to changes in crime or challenges they may face. I, like the community I serve, expect a strong response, not just from our police force but from a host of other agencies, to crime and those that cause harm in our community. Whether it is improving outcomes for victims of sexual violence or improving responses to mental health crises there are parts to play for people and organisations right across the criminal justice system, public and third sectors, and within the community.

The communities of West Mercia are not immune from wider societal problems such as domestic abuse, serious violence, or serious organised crime. I will therefore ensure the right resources and funding are in place to tackle these types of crimes.

However, our communities also have their own

unique challenges. For example, a disproportionate number of people are being killed or seriously injured on our roads every week and specific types of crime continue to impact our largely rural communities. By effective focus on enforcement, prevention and education we can break the cycle of crime to reduce harm.

West Mercia is a safe place, where crime is relatively low. However, too many people do not feel safe and that is something I remain committed to changing. We have heard loud and clear from our communities what they want, and that is a visible and accessible police force. They also want to know that their concerns are being listened to and acted on. I will therefore continue to focus West Mercia Police on ensuring they are visible and accessible in the communities they are policing, focused on fighting crime and addressing the priorities of that community.

I will also continue to make sure that the public

West Mercia is a safe place, where crime is relatively low. However, too many people do not feel safe and that is something I have remained committed to changing.



remain at the heart of policing, and that the public voice is heard if we are to provide a police service that they can have confidence in.

I will continue to back West Mercia Police with the resources they need whilst ensuring that investment is delivering real results for the communities of Shropshire, Herefordshire, Worcestershire and Telford and Wrekin. When agencies aren't delivering their responsibilities and what the public need I will challenge and support them; unrelenting in my belief we can deliver improvements for our community. Sometimes it is only through having the difficult conversations that we can deliver the improvements our communities need and expect. I will not accept that 'good enough' is the standard we should settle for.

As Commissioner I will always strive for the very best for the communities of West Mercia.

Safe communities are an essential element of prosperous, happy, healthy communities. I will play my part as Commissioner in making this happen.

Now is the time to build on the investment and tough decisions I have made and take it to the next level. Our communities rightly expect a service they can access and trust, and they expect to feel safe where they live and work. There is always more that can be done and I will continue to be relentless in my drive to see that happen.

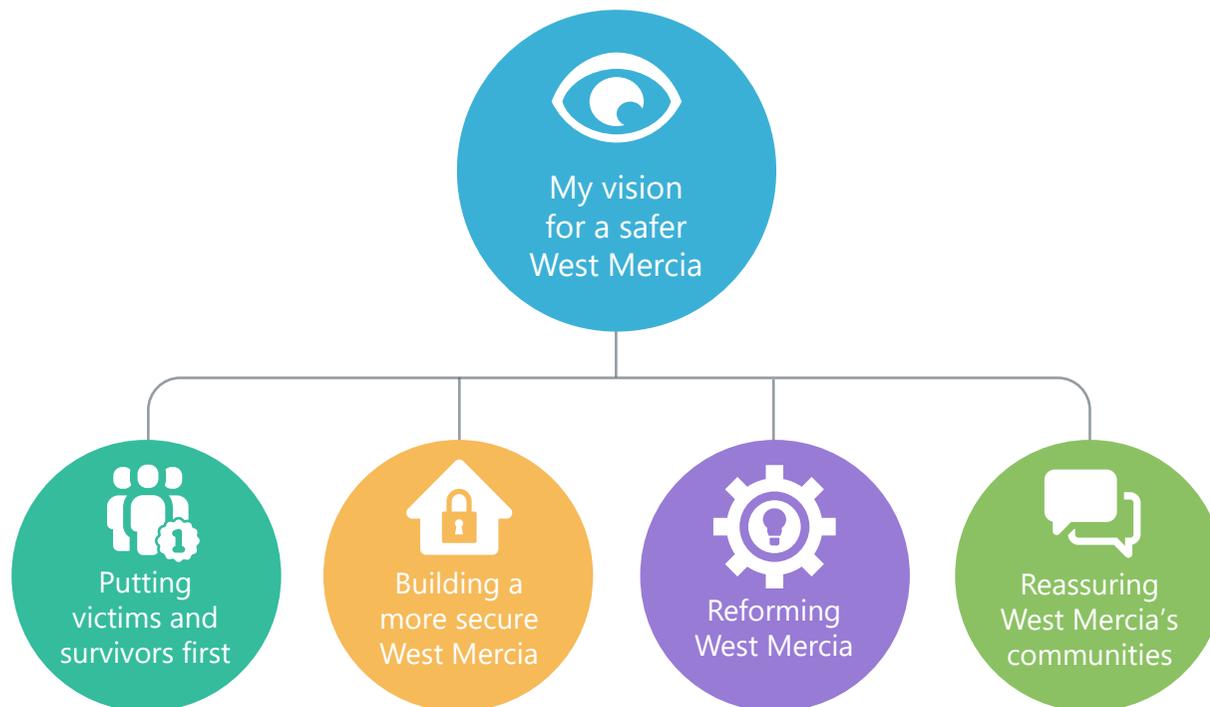
- ✓ **We can provide a better service to victims of crime.**
- ✓ **We can deliver more effective, efficient policing and be stronger in tackling crime.**
- ✓ **We can give the public better value for their hard-earned money.**
- ✓ **We can make sure people feel safe, as well as being safe.**
- ✓ **We can build a safer West Mercia.**

As Commissioner I will always strive for the very best for the communities of West Mercia.



An introduction - The Safer West Mercia Plan

Through the life of this plan I intend to build on the clear vision I set out in my first Safer West Mercia Plan in 2016. The public have reaffirmed their support for this vision in the election and it is the vision I will continue to work hard to deliver.



The priorities and outcomes I have developed in support of my vision and strategic objectives have been influenced by a range of factors, from the local through to the national, including analysis of inspections audits and police performance in West Mercia.

This has included:

- Feedback and post bag issues raised by the public since taking office in 2016.
- Results from the West Mercia confidence and perceptions survey.
- Results from my other online surveys and consultations with the public and workforce of West Mercia Police.
- West Mercia Police's Strategic Assessment and Control Strategy.
- Community Safety Partnership strategic plans and priorities.

- The strategic objectives and priorities of other partner organisations.
- The Strategic Policing Requirement.
- National Crime and Policing Measures.
- National strategies and plans.
- Proposals set out in forthcoming bills and legislation.
- Inspection reports from Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) and other inspectorates.



Summary of priorities and outcomes



Priorities

1. Put victims and their voice at the heart of the criminal justice system.
2. Ensure an appropriate range of support services for every victim.
3. Deliver effective, early intervention and prevention for vulnerable people.
4. Ensure victim support services are sustainable in the medium and long term.

Outcomes

Victims and Survivors recover from the harm suffered.

Victims are kept informed and supported resulting in a positive experience of the criminal justice system.

Victims have more confidence to report crime that may previously have gone under-reported





Priorities

1. Make West Mercia a safer place by reducing crime and reoffending.
2. Ensure a robust response to serious and organised crime to reduce the harm it causes in our communities.
3. Improve responses and outcomes around domestic abuse and sexual violence.
4. Reduce the excessive harm associated with West Mercia's roads.

Outcomes

Communities experience less harm and more positive criminal justice outcomes.

Organised crime is disrupted and exploitation of vulnerable people is prevented.

Victims are protected and safeguarded to prevent them from becoming re-victimised.

Harm on West Mercia's roads is reduced and safe driving is promoted.





Priorities

1. West Mercia manages its resources to maximise value, effectiveness, efficiency and meet demand.
2. West Mercia Police will be an organisation fit for the digital age.
3. West Mercia Police will establish and maintain a clear, strong identity with its staff, public and partners.
4. Ensure West Mercia’s estate delivers the facilities police and communities need, in the most effective, efficient way possible.
5. Resources will be prioritised towards front-line services to the public.
6. West Mercia Police will form partnerships in the best interests of local communities to prevent crime and disorder and reduce crime.

Outcomes

- A world class police force that delivers both outstanding service and value for money.
- Develop a culture within West Mercia Police that is focused on delivering service improvement, quality, innovation and value.
- The public have trust and confidence in West Mercia Police to keep them safe/feeling safe.
- Partners plan and deliver services in a more strategic and collaborative way.
- Communities live safe from crime, disorder and danger.





Priorities

1. Ensure all communities have a voice that is heard within policing, crime, criminal justice and community safety matters.
2. Ensuring all communities can access their police service quickly and conveniently when they need to.
3. Ensure West Mercia's local policing community charter delivers on its commitment to the public.
4. Empower communities to contribute to community safety and play a leading role where appropriate.
5. Ensure all individuals and communities are dealt with fairly, equally and respectfully.

Outcomes

- Communities live safe from crime, disorder and danger.
- Communities take responsibility for their own actions and how they affect others.
- Communities improve their understanding and participation in community safety/justice.
- Partners plan and deliver services in a more strategic and collaborative way.
- People have better access to the services they require, when they require it.
- Improved social cohesion, public trust and confidence.
- Community concerns are taken into account and acted upon which builds public trust and confidence.
- The workforce better reflects the community it serves.



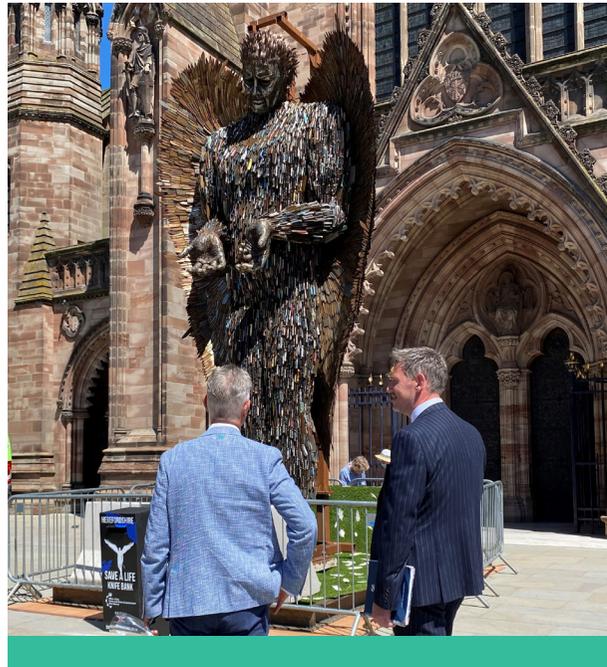
Putting victims and survivors first

Victims and Survivors are at the heart of all I do as Police and Crime Commissioner.

Whilst I will relentlessly focus on preventing crimes and victimisation in the first place, where offending does occur we can, and must provide a better service to the victims of crime. I will ensure victims in West Mercia have the services, support and information about their case they need to cope and recover. I will also focus resources and effort to prevent them becoming victims again, whatever their circumstance.

I will support and challenge West Mercia Police to become a high performing force in supporting victims.

The voice and needs of the victim are the core foundation of the work I have done to date and will continue to do throughout my term. I will ensure this is the guiding voice from which I commission services, hold the Chief Constable to account and engage with partners across the community and criminal justice system.



Priorities

1. Put victims and their voice at the heart of the criminal justice system.

I will:

- Play a leading role in supporting and challenging criminal justice partners to deliver swifter access to justice and improved outcomes for victims.
- Implement continuous improvement processes to review complaints from victims, identifying trends and areas for change and/or improvement.
- Ensure compliance from my office, West Mercia Police and partners with the Victims' Code, and that services are delivered in a caring, compassionate way.
- Continue to act as the voice of the victim within the force and the wider criminal justice system.

- Hold the Chief Constable and criminal justice agencies to account for ensuring policies and processes are applied consistently and fairly, delivered with care and compassion.

The Chief Constable will be responsible for:

- Delivering sustained improvements in victims' satisfaction.
- Ensuring officers and staff have the appropriate training for their role in victim care.
- Ensuring an effective first response is provided by understanding the victim's needs, adapting behaviour to meet those needs, and ensuring appropriate referrals are made to access support services.
- Ensuring a victim focused, trauma informed approach is provided by officers and staff from first point of contact.



- Ensuring all victims are kept regularly informed, regardless of outcome, and have regular access to information about their case, including the ability to self-serve where possible.
- Offering all victims of crime whose case is closed without what they view as a positive outcome an explanation why.

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2. Ensure an appropriate range of support services for every victim.

I will:

- Ensure that every victim has access to services they need as individuals to help them cope and recover, regardless of geography, circumstance, or whether they have reported the crime.
- Work with West Mercia Police and partner agencies to ensure victims have meaningful opportunity to inform and shape service provision.
- Ensure representation of all demographics and communities across West Mercia, in plans for victim services, acknowledging their needs and challenges.
- Ensure effective delivery and development by the Victim Advice Line, to ensure all victims can access support to cope and recover.
- Undertake victim needs assessments to inform the commissioning of future service provision.
- Continuously monitor the experience of victims and their journey through the criminal justice system, to ensure support services are coordinated and seamless.
- Ensure victims are treated with care and compassion as individuals, not simply part of a process.
- Review and refresh my own victim and witness strategy to ensure it remains focused and effective.



The Chief Constable will be responsible for:

- Ensuring officers and staff are trained to recognise vulnerabilities of victims and are proactive in identifying opportunities to access service provision.
- Actively promoting the availability of support services both within West Mercia Police and to the communities of West Mercia.
- Continually improving the provision of support provided by the Victim Advice Line, to ensure all victims can access support to cope and recover.
- Ensuring that access to specialist interview suites is seamless and fit for purpose.

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3. Deliver effective, early intervention and prevention for vulnerable people.

I will:

- Play a lead role in bringing police, partners and the community together to more effectively prevent crime and repeat victimisation.
- Work closely with partners to facilitate effective engagement with young people to ensure their voice is heard in how we keep them safe.
- Work with West Mercia Police to deliver educational campaigns to prevent victimisation and raise awareness for victims' services.
- Adopt a commissioning approach which focuses on early intervention and prevention services for victims, and those who are displaying perpetrator behaviour.
- Ensure my work around crime prevention is aligned to West Mercia Police's preventative approach, and vice versa.



- Work with the voluntary sector to pilot innovative approaches which focus on early identification of, and support for, vulnerable people.
- Work to reduce demand on police generated by mental health by working with partners and challenging them to ensure people receive the support they need.
- Work with partners to ensure the drivers of offending are more effectively understood, to commission more effective interventions to reduce or stop that offending.

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The Chief Constable will be responsible for:

- Ensure that the work of exploitation and vulnerability trainers reaches the people most at risk of victimisation or re-victimisation.
- Working with partners to better understand the wider circumstances and lived experience of vulnerable people through the implementation of a whole family approach to their support.

4. Ensure victim support services are sustainable in the medium and long term.

I will:

- Continue to increase the amount of resources I make available as Commissioner to fund services that support victims to cope and recover.
- Be an effective champion on behalf of victims to government to provide sustainable, long term funding for victim services.
- Evaluate the impact of short term funding on the provision of service to victims and commission services for longer terms where there is an evidence base of effectiveness.
- Place greater emphasis on market development and promoting sustainability within PCC funded organisations.
- Challenge partners where there are known areas of concern with funding of services.
- Support voluntary and community sector victim service providers to be sustainable.



Building a more secure West Mercia

For the communities of West Mercia being safe is non-negotiable. I will ensure an effective and efficient police service is at the very centre of building a safer West Mercia.

We have seen record increases in officer numbers in West Mercia, and will continue to do so in the years ahead. Those additional resources will be deployed effectively to maximise the benefit of that investment for our communities. I will continue to ensure that our police have the resources, plans and focus they need to relentlessly fight crime and keep all our communities safe from harm.

Criminals often target and exploit the most vulnerable within our society. I will work tirelessly both with the police and other partners to make it clear this will not be tolerated in West Mercia. I will support and challenge West Mercia Police, its partners and the community so that we are more effective at preventing crime and stop people being drawn into criminality in the first place.

Where offences do take place I will ensure communities and victims get a strong and effective response from the police. I will ensure West Mercia Police and I will act decisively to ensure that crime doesn't pay.

Domestic abuse and sexual violence have no place in our society and yet they continue to adversely affect the lives of many people, for some on a daily basis. Domestic abuse features in 1 in 5 crimes in West Mercia. I will ensure that domestic abuse and sexual violence in all their forms are understood and effectively responded to.

In West Mercia we are not immune from wider societal issues including those identified in the National Policing Priorities such as violent crime and drugs, but must also tackle our local issues such as the number of people killed on our roads. 130 lives lost in the last three years is not acceptable. I will take all the action possible to address these issues and ensure others also play their parts.



Priorities

1. Make West Mercia a safer place by reducing crime and re-offending.

I will:

- Challenge and support partners within the criminal justice system to deliver more positive outcomes and swifter access to justice.
- Work with the police and partners to implement early intervention strategies with the aim of diverting at risk people away from the criminal justice system.
- Work with partners to ensure appropriate intervention is in place to break the cycle of offending.
- Ensure prevention activity will be effectively integrated into all elements of operational policing, to prevent re-victimisation and better manage demand.
- Target resources to increase the number of investigators and specialist investigators to bring more offenders to justice and use the powers available to confiscate the proceeds of crime.
- Review and refresh my rural crime strategy to ensure it remains focused and effective in addressing rural crime.
- Work with partners to more effectively tackle the issue of fly-tipping in communities.
- Work with partners to ensure we are effectively managing offenders who pose the biggest risk in our communities.
- Collaborate with police and partners to prevent and reduce serious violence in West Mercia.



The Chief Constable will be responsible for:

- Targeting the crimes and anti-social behaviour that impact most on our communities.
- Ensuring West Mercia Police is using effective problem solving approaches, working with partners and local communities to prevent, solve and reduce crime and anti-social behaviour.
- Having clear plans to tackle business crime.
- Having clear plans to tackle rural crime.
- Ensuring officers and staff have the right skills to identify and support people with vulnerabilities and reduce harm.
- Ensuring regular reporting against a performance framework to achieve genuine reductions in crime.

2. Ensure a robust response to serious and organised crime to reduce the harm it causes in our communities.

I will:

- Support and challenge West Mercia Police to take an approach to serious and organised crime (SOC) that recognises vulnerability and exploitation as part of both victimisation and offending.
- Support and challenge West Mercia Police to work effectively with partners to intervene early and protect those in our communities who are most vulnerable to exploitation.
- Continue to deliver West Mercia-wide services to prevent at-risk children and young people from being drawn into organised criminality.
- Work with the police and partners to ensure all SOC offenders in prison and in our communities are robustly managed and have the opportunity to rehabilitate



- Review and refresh my SOC and drugs strategies to ensure they remain focused and effective in addressing SOC and drugs, whilst delivering against the aspirations and commitments in them.
- Provide strong and effective governance for regional collaborations.

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The Chief Constable will be responsible for:

- Focussing on bringing those that commit serious and organised crime to justice.
- Maintaining a good understanding of the ever changing landscape of serious and organised crime, and take effective action to disrupt and dismantle organised crime groups.
- Utilising all available powers to ensure crime doesn't pay.
- Working with partners locally, regionally and nationally to ensure a borderless approach to disrupt serious and organised offending.

- Ensuring West Mercia Police plays its part in securing effective outcomes for victims of the most serious offences.
- Ensure effective and efficient regional collaborations with partners.

3. Improve responses and outcomes around domestic abuse and sexual violence.

I will:

- Support police and partners to use education and early intervention to identify and reduce the harm caused by domestic abuse and sexual violence.
- Invest in education and engagement to prevent people either becoming perpetrators, or becoming repeat perpetrators. I will ensure effective domestic abuse perpetrators programmes are available in all parts of West Mercia.



- Continue to work with local and national partners to explore implementation of multiagency models which focus on domestic abuse and the needs of the whole family, sharing best practice and evidence bases accordingly.
- Review and refresh my domestic abuse strategy to ensure it remains focused and effective in supporting my approach to domestic abuse.
- Work with partners to develop an effective, responsive and sustainably funded local violence against women and girls (VAWG) strategy.

The Chief Constable will be responsible for:

- Increased proportions of positive police outcomes.
- Using all available powers effectively to tackle domestic abuse and sexual violence.
- Reducing the number of repeat incidents of domestic abuse and sexual violence and encouraging earlier reporting by increasing confidence of victims.

4: Reduce the excessive harm associated with West Mercia's roads.

I will:

- Work with the police and other partners to address the harm caused by dangerous driving and the adverse impact on local communities by the anti-social use of our roads.
- Work with the police and partners to further develop understanding of what causes death and serious injury on our roads (KSIs), and ensure that work informs more effective action to reduce KSIs.
- Support West Mercia Police with the resources to more effectively enforce the law and prevent crime on our roads, and ensure those resources deliver the best possible results for our communities.
- Empower community action by doubling the number of Community Speed Watch groups in West Mercia. I will target funding towards community speed reduction schemes.



- Prioritise resources for the recruitment of more specialist road policing officers to target those motorists causing most harm and ensure a high visibility presence to positively impact on road user behaviour.
- Promote education initiatives aimed at improving road safety.
- Review and refresh my own road safety strategy to ensure it remains focused and effective in improving road safety.

The Chief Constable will be responsible for:

- Reducing KSIs, and preventing harm and anti-social use of our roads through enforcement, education and effective partnerships.
- Denying criminals the use of the roads, by disrupting serious organised crime.
- Ensuring community concerns about criminal or anti-social use of our roads are heard, understood and acted upon.



Reforming West Mercia

I will build on the significant steps I have taken to enable West Mercia Police to be a lithe and effective organisation, delivering high quality policing with value for money for the tax payer. I have backed the force on behalf of our community with major investments in increased officer numbers, new technology and improvements to police estates.

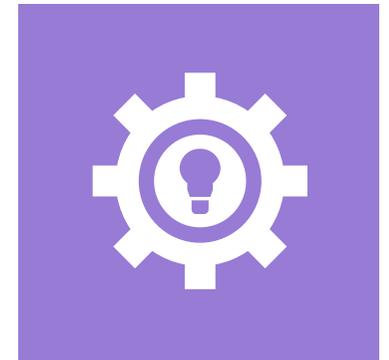
Page 27 I have supported the Chief Constable to make sure partnerships work to the benefit of our communities; ensuring our resources are deployed to maximum effect for the benefit of the public.

I will build on these foundations but now is the time to capitalise on the opportunities I have created and realise the maximum benefits for local communities.

The process of reform and transformation must continue in West Mercia at pace. I will ensure the police force can not only respond effectively to the changing demands and needs of its communities, but can also play a much greater role in shaping and reducing that demand in the first place.

As Commissioner I will challenge and support West Mercia Police to have a clear, consistent, persistent and determined focus on transformation to deliver better services for the public. It will require greater organisational agility, the right resources and careful management of them in all levels and elements of business.

I will reduce the environmental impact of policing on our environment and ensure that the wider economic, social and environmental wellbeing of our communities is considered when services are commissioned or procured.



Priorities

1. West Mercia manages its resources to maximise value, effectiveness, efficiency and meet demand.

I will:

- Ensure an ever greater proportion of West Mercia Police's budget is spent on front line policing.
- Ensure West Mercia Police spends its resources efficiently and effectively before asking residents to increase their Council Tax contribution.
- Challenge and support West Mercia Police to produce and deliver a balanced budget each year including ambitious savings targets to enable investment in new priorities.
- Ensure decisions for investment are transparent, based on robust cases, clear evidence and need.
- Ensure the benefits of those investments are tracked and delivered.

- Support and challenge West Mercia Police to reduce its corporate carbon footprint.
- Ensure commissioned or outsourced services are actively managed so that they stay within set budgets and deliver the agreed outcomes.

The Chief Constable will be responsible for:

- The force living within its means and delivering a balanced budget.
- Aligning resources to identified priorities.
- Effective use of data and information to deliver the best possible outcome to the public.
- Delivering the benefits identified where investments are made (including the annual budget).
- Having clear accountability for all budget holders and decision makers in respect of use of public money.



- Having a clear plan to deliver excellence in the procurement of goods and services, and that social value plays a relevant and appropriate part in any procurement and financial decisions.
- Delivering best value in its transport fleet, maximising the use of the fleet for the benefit of the community.

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2. West Mercia Police will be an organisation fit for the digital age.

I will:

- Challenge West Mercia Police to identify opportunities for improvements to effectiveness and efficiency.
- Support West Mercia Police with resources to deliver improved effectiveness and efficiency, enabling re-investment in priority areas.

The Chief Constable will be responsible for:

- Ensuring digital solutions are fully integrated into new, improved working practices, promoting the best interests of the whole police workforce, and the communities it serves.
- Enabling greater access and convenience around self-service where appropriate, both for staff and communities.
- Ensuring West Mercia Police produce, deliver and keeps under review a long term digital strategy for the force, which complements its vision and values.
- Maintaining compliance with key legislation and security.



3. West Mercia Police will establish and maintain a clear, strong identity with its staff, public and partners.

I will hold the Chief Constable to account to:

- Ensure West Mercia Police has a clear, single vision and values that all levels of the organisation are aware of, understand, support and actively work towards, to improve the service to the public.
- Ensure West Mercia Police has the resources and infrastructure needed to support, value and develop its officers, staff and volunteers, enabling them to deliver to the best of their abilities.
- Ensure a long term plan for policing in West Mercia is delivered and regularly reviewed to ensure maximum benefit for the community.

4. Ensure West Mercia's estate delivers the facilities police and communities need, in the most effective, efficient way possible.

I will:

- Deliver an estates strategy that meets community needs and supports the police's operational needs.
- Deliver a new police station for Redditch by October 2023 as part of a wider collaboration with Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service.
- Deliver redevelopments to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of West Mercia's police headquarters by 2022.
- Reduce the carbon footprint associated with the police estate.
- Work with the police and others to explore and maximise opportunities in respect of one public estate.



5. Resources will be prioritised towards frontline services to the public.

I will:

- Continue to increase Officer numbers in West Mercia.
- Increase proportions of annual budgets prioritised towards frontline services, through continued organisational efficiency and transformation.

The Chief Constable will be responsible for:

- Ensuring the benefits of mobile working are fully utilised by all officers, PCSOs and Special Constables to support increasingly efficient and effective policing in West Mercia.
- Ensuring emergency and non-emergency incidents are promptly responded to.

6. West Mercia will form partnerships in the best interests of local communities to reduce crime and harm.

I will:

- Work with my regional counterparts and wider partners to ensure we have the capability and capacity to tackle major challenges to public safety set out in the Strategic Policing Requirement.
- Support fire governance changes to deliver closer working with our local fire and rescue services where it is in the public interest, and in line with government reform.
- Develop partnership and collaboration agreements that clearly and demonstrably are in the interests of West Mercia's communities.



The Chief Constable will be responsible for:

- Engaging with partners and stakeholders where it is in the interest of the wider community.
- Developing more localised approaches to local needs, while maintaining consistent standards of delivery and outcomes across the force area.
- Having the necessary planning and resilience in place to be able to meet the resourcing requirements arising from any national threats, inline with the strategic policing requirement.



Reassuring West Mercia's communities

It is my role to be the voice of the public in policing. I will work tirelessly to ensure that voice is heard and acted upon. I will ensure the communities of West Mercia have a police service that understands the needs of the community it serves and the public can trust and have confidence in.

I am resolute in my commitment that 'the Community' must be at the heart of policing and I will work tirelessly to make it so.

Our communities should not only be safe, but feel safe too. People in West Mercia want greater visibility and accessibility from their police. These things will ultimately help develop and enhance engagement, transparency and, crucially, positive relationships between the police and the communities they serve.

Through West Mercia's Local Policing Community Charter I will ensure that the public can easily and conveniently access their police.

I will also make sure communities have the support they need to play their part in a safer West Mercia, working alongside or even leading with the police playing a supportive role in local initiatives.



Priorities

1. Ensure all communities have a voice that is heard within policing, criminal justice and community safety matters.

I will:

- Develop and implement a new engagement strategy to ensure I represent everyone in West Mercia.
- Develop new platforms and outlets to engage with under-represented voices from our communities, and ensure their needs and concerns are acted upon, ensuring that I am able to give a voice to those that may otherwise not be heard.
- Maintain a visible presence across West Mercia's communities, playing my part in community leadership.

- Actively engage with business communities, to ensure they get the service they need from their police force.
- Continue to carry out pro-active consultations with communities and partners on key PCC business, and demonstrate how these views have been considered and acted upon.

The Chief Constable will be responsible for:

- Increasing engagement with communities and partners to improve public confidence and community safety.
- Ensuring anyone needing a non-urgent appointment to see a police officer will be offered one within two days (48 hours), or at a later time by mutual agreement.



2. Ensuring all communities can access their police service quickly and conveniently when they need to.

I will:

- Ensure West Mercia Police set and consistently achieve targets regarding 999 and 101 calls.
- Support implementation of new platforms and technology, enabling the public to report crime and ASB in more convenient ways.
- Monitor performance around public perceptions of police accessibility and ensure improvements are delivered by West Mercia Police.

The Chief Constable will be responsible for:

- Ensuring appropriate West Mercia Police buildings are accessible to the public, with easy access to information through technology such as digital front counters.

- Ensuring West Mercia Police is easily accessible to the public via a range of contact channels.
- Increasing the use of mobile police stations across the force area, ensuring West Mercia Police improves accessibility and visibility.

3. Ensure West Mercia's Local Policing Community Charter delivers on its commitments to the public.

I will:

- Seek regular feedback from the public in respect of the commitments made in the Community Charter.
- Hold the Chief Constable to account for delivering the commitments, including increases in public confidence.
- Hold the Chief Constable to account for keeping the Community Charter under review, to ensure it continues to deliver what West Mercia's communities need most.



The Chief Constable will be responsible for:

- Delivering all aspects of the West Mercia Police Local Policing Community Charter.

4. Empower communities to contribute to community safety and play a leading role where appropriate.

I will:

- Create opportunities for community led initiatives and volunteering which have the potential to make a real difference on local issues.
- Work with West Mercia Police to continue to support watch schemes across the West Mercia area, building new relationships with communities and partners to deliver the best possible solutions to community issues.

5. Ensure all individuals and communities are dealt with fairly, equally and respectfully.

I will:

- Publish my equality, diversity and inclusivity objectives.
- Carry out my police complaint review duties to ensure the processes and outcomes provided by the police to complainants are reasonable and proportionate.
- Continue to run an effective independent custody visitor scheme, to provide reassurance around how people are being detained in West Mercia.

The Chief Constable will be responsible for:

- Delivering equality of opportunity for all its staff and volunteers and the organisation promotes a culture that fully embraces this.



- Ensuring officers, staff and volunteers reflect the demographics of the communities they serve.
- Ensuring the Code of Ethics is fully embedded and adhered to within West Mercia Police.
- Setting out levels of service that people can expect from their police force, in response to certain types of crimes and incidents.
- Ensuring there is a fit for purpose complaints process; enabling the public to raise their concerns or dissatisfaction and have a timely response.

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Partnerships and collaboration

To successfully tackle crime and build a safer West Mercia it is crucial that partners work together. My role extends beyond policing and includes working with community safety partnerships and criminal justice partnerships amongst others. I am committed to bringing relevant partners together to tackle crime, the causes of crime, and support victims and offenders.

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The Government's Beating Crime Plan and future legislative changes proposed in the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill will provide new opportunities along with new responsibilities for partners and partnership working. I am committed to working with local partner organisations to develop strong partnerships that deliver on existing shared outcomes along with any changes arising from these new responsibilities.

I will work with regional and national partners on threats and areas of policing which go beyond a single force's boundaries, interests and capabilities.

These include national threats set out in the Home Secretary's Strategic Policing Requirement (SPR) currently identified as terrorism, civil emergencies, organised crime, threats to public order, large scale cyber incidents and child sexual abuse.

I will work with my regional counterparts and wider partners to ensure we have the capability and capacity to tackle major challenges to public safety set out in the SPR and that robust governance arrangements are in place to hold the chief constable to account for responding to these national threats.

I will explore further operational collaboration with other police forces, particularly our neighbouring regional forces. I will also work with other Police and Crime Commissioners to improve and increase our collaborative working in respect of organised crime and criminal use of the road network, regional criminal justice and criminality in prisons. I will continue to explore further co-commissioning opportunities across the system with a focus on early intervention and prevention.

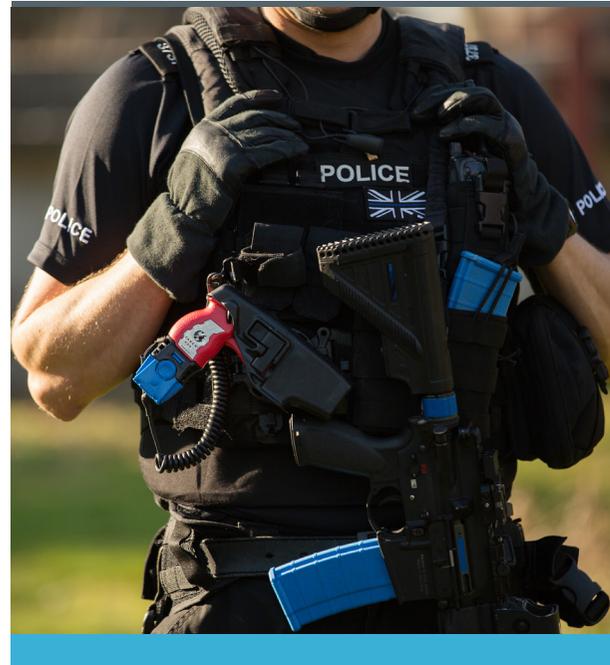
My role extends beyond policing and includes working with community safety partnerships and criminal justice partnerships amongst others.



I will ensure that there is effective regional and national oversight of counter-terrorism policing and other national collaborations including the National Police Air Service.

Beyond this, I will look to work with my regional partners to develop collaborative approaches to other policing activity, such as uniformed operations (including armed policing) and other specialist functions. While ensuring continued responsiveness and preserving local accountability, these steps can deliver cost effectiveness, increased capability and greater resilience.

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Performance and accountability

The public need to have confidence and trust in my work, along with that of the force. My holding to account programme provides a clear and robust way for me to closely scrutinise key areas of the force and to hold the Chief Constable to account for ensuring the force's efficiency and effectiveness. I will continue to use my holding to account powers to provide oversight and scrutiny of the force on behalf of the public, raising matters of community concern and ensuring any additional investment set out in the annual budget is delivered.

On publication of this plan I will begin publishing and regularly updating a statement which explains how West Mercia Police are contributing towards achieving the national priorities for policing. These priorities are to: reduce murder and other homicide; reduce serious violence; disrupt drugs supply and county lines; reduce neighbourhood crime; tackle cybercrime; and improve satisfaction among victims with a particular focus on victims of domestic abuse. I will work with the force to develop a performance framework which not only

shows how the force is achieving these national priorities but also the outcomes I have set out in this plan.

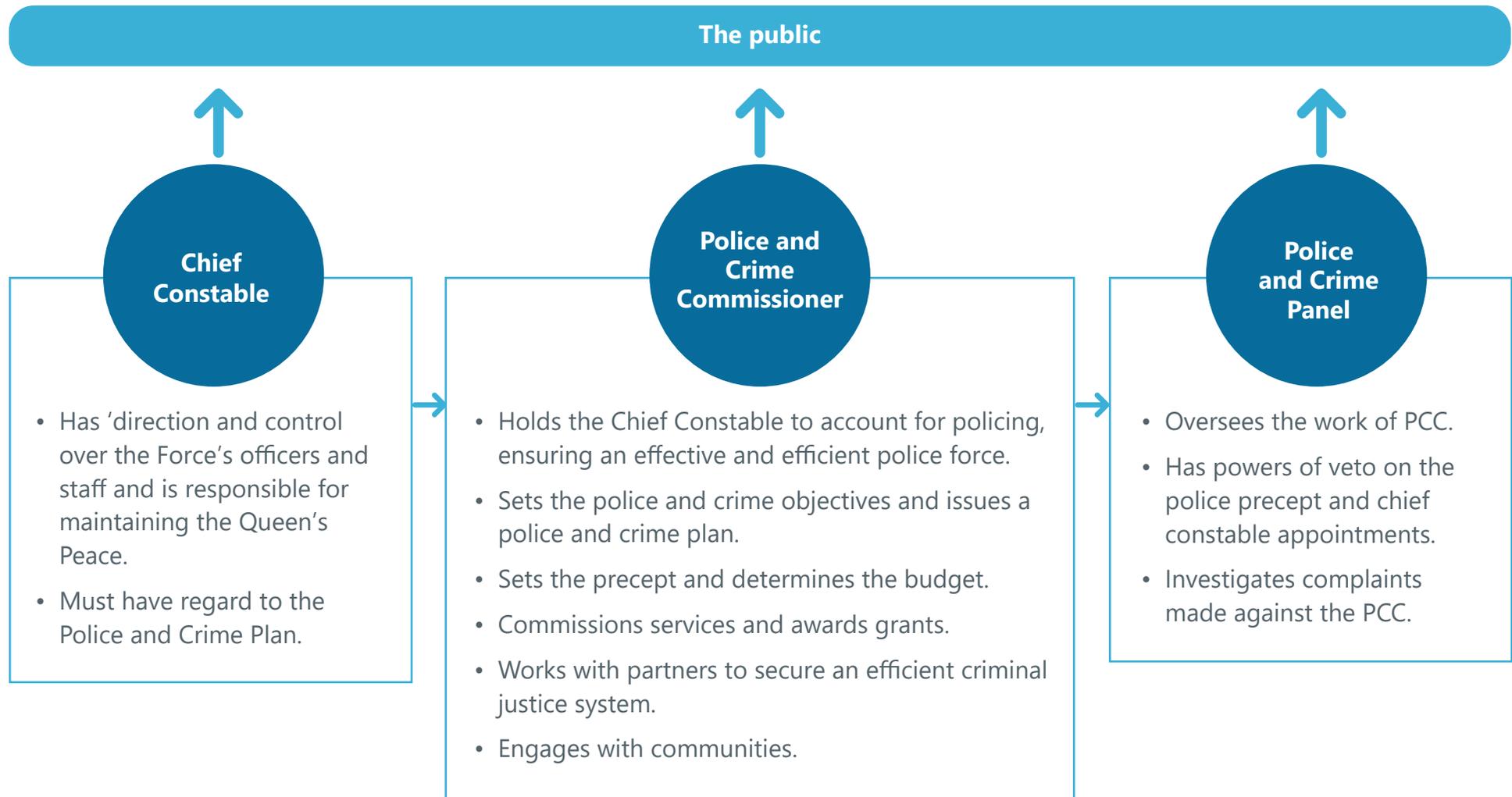
In addition, I have revised my holding to account programme to include a number of dedicated performance meetings where the performance framework will be subject to closer scrutiny. Findings from the holding to account programme will be published on my website and will be available to view and download at any time from my website. I am also committed to making meaningful performance information more easily available on my website.

A delivery plan will be developed to enable me to monitor progress of both the force and my own office in achieving the commitments set out in this plan. The delivery plan will be a dynamic document that will be reviewed and updated on a regular basis and will be subject to external scrutiny by the West Mercia Police and Crime Panel.

The public need to have confidence and trust in my work, along with that of the force.



Performance and accountability



Resources

Financial resources

Setting the police and crime budget for the each financial year is one of the most important decisions I have to make. The budget is funded by a combination of central government grants and council tax contributions.

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A value for money approach

I will keep council tax increases to a minimum through a value for money approach which will be achieved by improving efficiencies in all aspects of this plan. In support of this approach I will:

- Set a balanced budget with services delivering best value for all those who live in, work in or visit West Mercia.
- Undertake a comprehensive review of the allocation of resources so that they are deployed effectively to meet community needs.
- Use monies from reserves on a prudent basis, and in doing so minimise their use.
- Hold the Chief Constable to account for the provision of sound financial planning that will ensure the force operates within the set budget and can clearly demonstrate good financial control.

- Support the continued development of the force transformation and change programme.
- Ensure the force invests and uses technology innovatively, allowing more resources to be focussed on frontline policing.
- Ensure that the land and buildings are fit for purpose, and efficient, enabling services to the public to be provided effectively.
- Seek opportunities for collaborative working with other partners and police forces to deliver further operational and financial efficiencies.
- Develop an outcomes based approach to service delivery that focuses resources towards the right priorities for communities in West Mercia.

Throughout my term I will invest in local, outcome-focused interventions and projects that demonstrate value for money.



Commissioning and grants

I have a central role in the commissioning of services related to victims, community safety and crime reduction.

Throughout my term I will invest in local, outcome-focused interventions and projects that demonstrate value for money. The investments I make will be targeted towards early intervention and prevention activities, supporting victims to cope and recover, and reducing offending and reoffending throughout West Mercia. In every case I will ensure the best possible return on investment for our communities.

- I will invest in a variety of tailored services for victims including specialist support services and the West Mercia Victims Advice Line (VAL).
- I will maximise all available opportunities to secure additional funding to support my commissioned activity, to include joint commissioning opportunities where feasible.

- I will work with a variety of partners and stakeholders, including Community Safety Partnerships to target investment according to local need and demand.

My commissioning intentions will be set out in a Commissioning Strategy which will be subject to annual review and published on my website. Details of all the services I commission along with any grants I issue, including the standard conditions of grant are available to view and download on my website.



West Mercia policing area

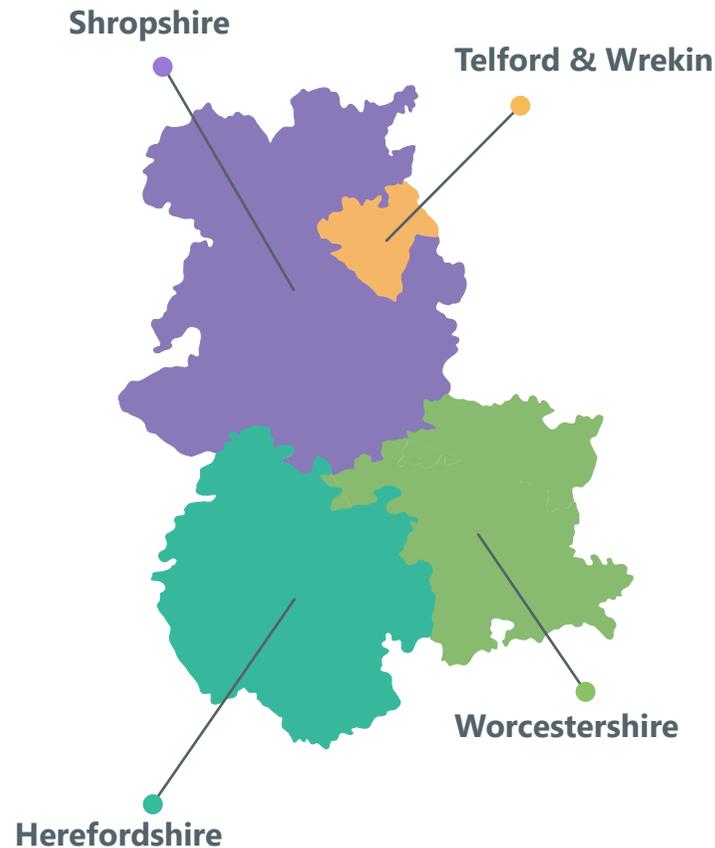
People and communities

West Mercia is the fourth largest geographic police area in England and Wales, covering 7,428 square kilometres. West Mercia comprises of three unitary local authority areas; Herefordshire, Shropshire and Telford and Wrekin along with Worcestershire, a county council area with six district/borough/city councils. The West Mercia Police force is currently divided into five local policing areas aligned to local authority boundaries.

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There are approximately 1.2 million people living in the area, this is projected to grow a further 1.5% by 2024. The majority (96.1%) of the population is white British.

Much of the force area is rural, especially in Herefordshire and Shropshire, but there are also urban areas of Hereford, Redditch, Shrewsbury, Telford and Worcester and small areas of social deprivation that are among the 10 percent most deprived areas nationally.

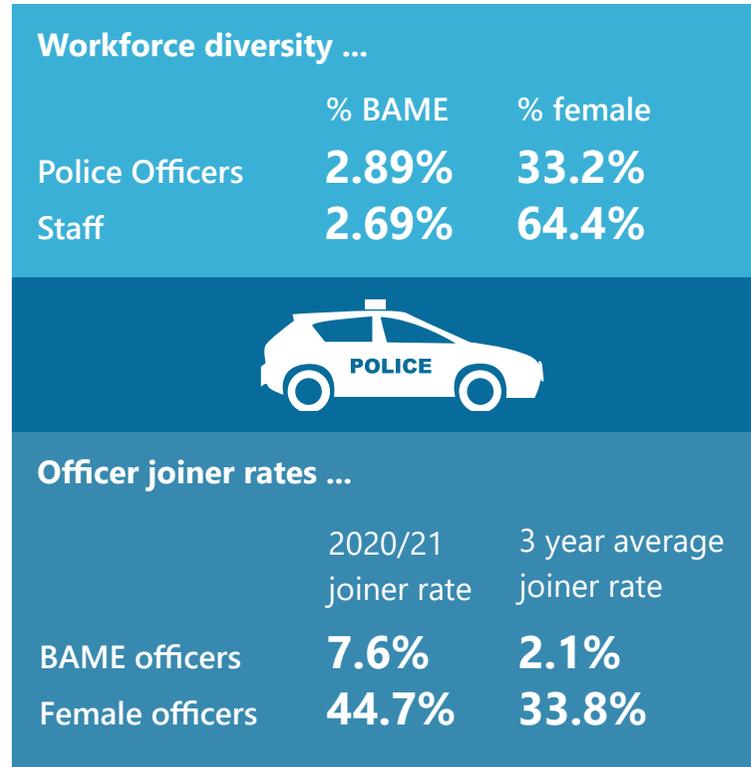
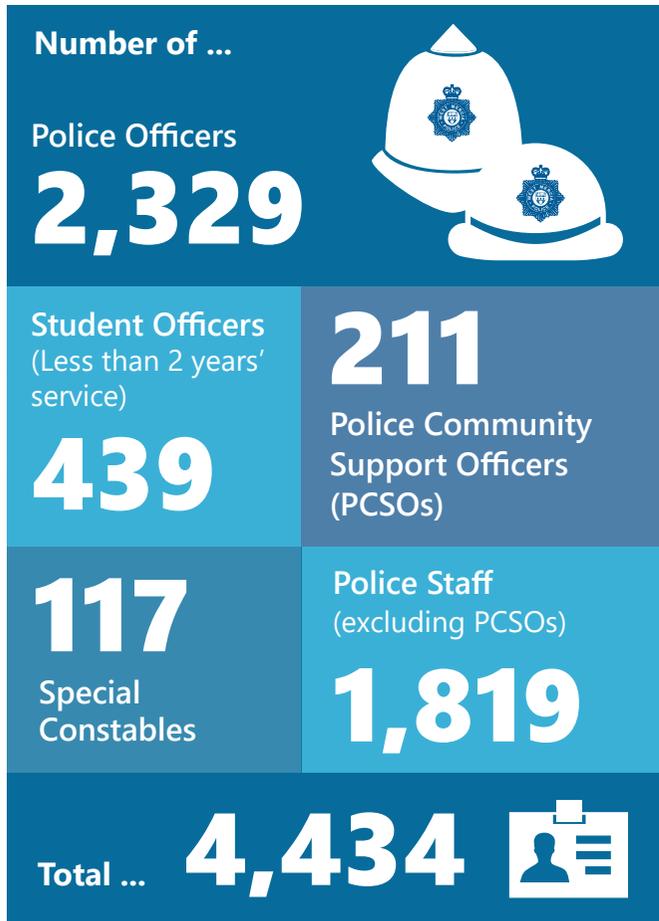


There are approximately 1.2 million people living in the area, this is projected to grow a further 1.5% by 2024.



West Mercia personnel in numbers

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Figures shown are as at 1 April 2021



Plan Glossary

The Code of Ethics – issued by the College of Policing sets out the principles and standards of behaviour that all officers, staff and police volunteers are expected to adhere to.

Code of Practice for Victims of Crime in England and Wales (The Victims’ Code) – the Victims’ Code focuses on victims’ rights and sets out the minimum standard that organisations must provide to victims of crime.

Control Strategy – is an internal document outlining the policing priorities that have been identified as having the highest risk.

Community Speed Watch – the scheme enables volunteers to work within their community to raise awareness of the dangers of speeding and to help control the problem locally.

Criminal Justice System (CJS) – the collection of agencies involved in the detection and prevention of crime, the prosecution of people accused of committing crimes, the conviction and sentencing of those found guilty, and the imprisonment and rehabilitation of ex-offenders.

The Strategic Assessment – provides an overview of the current and medium-term future issues that affect, or have the potential to affect, West Mercia’s communities.

National Policing Priorities – the key national policing priorities are as follows: reduce murder and other homicides; reduce serious violence; disrupt drugs supply and county lines; reduce neighbourhood crime; tackle cybercrime and; Improve satisfaction among victims – with a particular focus on victims of domestic abuse.

Strategic Policing Requirement – is issued by the Home Secretary and sets out the key national threats that require a coordinated response in which resources are brought together from a number of police forces.

Victims Advice Line (VAL) – is a free and confidential service offering support to anyone affected by crime in West Mercia, whether they have reported it or not and regardless of how long ago it took place.

Contact your Police and Crime Commissioner John Campion:

01905 331656
opcc@westmercia.pnn.police.uk

-  @WestMerciaPCC
-  West Mercia PCC
-  WestMerciaPCC

John Campion
Police and Crime Commissioner
OPCC, West Mercia Police
Hindlip Hall, Worcester
WR3 8SP





WEST MERCIA POLICE AND CRIME PANEL 15 SEPTEMBER 2021

HER MAJESTY'S INSPECTORATE OF CONSTABULARY AND FIRE & RESCUE SERVICES (HMICFRS) REVIEW OF POLICING DOMESTIC ABUSE DURING THE PANDEMIC

Recommendation

1. Members of the Panel are invited to note this report.

Background

2. On 23 June 2021 Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) issued the fifth in a series of national thematic domestic abuse publications, looking at how the police responded to the unique challenges the Covid-19 pandemic placed on preventing and responding to domestic abuse (the first in the series was issued in 2014). A copy of the latest report is attached at appendix 1.
3. The report states the pandemic had put domestic abuse victims at greater risk, but also praised the police for making good use of technology and working with partners to find new ways to support victims.
4. The inspectorate found that many forces had fewer than usual reports of domestic abuse at the start of lockdown. But as time went on, reports returned to normal levels. By contrast, specialist domestic abuse services have seen very large increases in calls to their helplines and online platforms, such as webchats. Several helplines reported more requests for emotional support, worries about controlling behaviour and escalating experiences of violence and abuse.
5. The report contains three recommendations for all forces. The recommendations and the initial response to these by West Mercia Police is set out in the *Inspection report recommendations* section of this report.

Domestic abuse in West Mercia during the pandemic

6. In line with the report findings, in the period immediately following lockdown, there was a small decline in reporting, followed by a steady increase back to more typical levels. Volumes remained above average until September, leading to a small, but not statistically significant increase compared to the previous year. Following the post-Christmas lockdown, there was a further fall in reporting. Overall, 20/21 saw a 3% reduction in recorded domestic abuse compared to 19/20. In the first quarter of 21/22 domestic abuse crimes and crime incidents saw a 3% increase on the same quarter in 19/20 and an 11% increase on the previous quarter.

7. Between April and December 2020 third sector support services across West Mercia saw a significant increase in calls for service; Women's Aid saw a two-third increase in calls for help. Again, this is in line with findings in the inspection report.

8. An example of how the force continued to reach out to domestic abuse victims during the pandemic is over the Christmas period the force shared regular posts, including a bespoke video, aimed at domestic abuse victims, and friends and family of victims. Within the video, there was representation of both genders, a range of ages, ethnicities and types of relationships. The content covered physical, mental, financial abuse and coercion and control. It urged victims to speak up and contact partner agencies if they needed support. In total these posts gained over 159,000 impressions on Facebook alone and were posted on a range of other platforms.

9. Pre Covid, in addition to the wider victim satisfaction survey, the force also ran a dedicated domestic abuse victim satisfaction survey. This was halted in March 2020 due to potential safeguarding issues, only recommencing in April 2021. The first results from this should be included in the quarter two performance report.

Inspection report recommendations

10. The force has implemented a monitoring system for tracking progress against open recommendations arising from HMICFRS inspection reports. All recommendations are allocated to strategic leads, who update the tracking report on a regular basis. The Deputy Chief Constable maintains oversight of recommendations via the Service Improvement Board (SIB), where progress is subject to scrutiny and challenge. The PCC is represented at this meeting.

11. Policing in the Pandemic contained 3 recommendations for all forces. These were allocated to strategic leads who provided an initial assessment of the force's position and the work required to meet the recommendations. This initial assessment was taken to SIB in July.

12. The three recommendations and a brief summary of the West Mercia position is set out below.

13. Recommendation 1

*We recommend that if forces continue to adopt online contact methods in respect of victims of domestic abuse, they should **immediately** introduce an effective supervision and monitoring framework. The framework should assess the suitability of such contact methods, ensuring that victim needs are at the forefront of decisions around their use and appropriate onward action is taken in all cases.*

*We recommend that forces **immediately** review their use of a telephone-based initial response to any domestic abuse incidents and crimes and ensure that it is in accordance with the strict parameters set out by the College of Policing*

In West Mercia, a victim of domestic abuse can report their abuse using an online form on the force's website. The force remains committed to providing digital channels for reporting, which increases the options available to meet victim's needs.

The current processes in place ensure that crimes reported by digital routes are responded to in a timely manner and with supervisory oversight where appropriate.

Since the commencement of the digital desk in Feb 2021, processes have been reviewed and it is considered that the appropriate framework is in place to respond to victim's needs. Reality testing is scheduled to take place to ensure the supervision and monitoring frameworks in place is sufficient to comply with this recommendation.

14. Recommendation 2

We recommend that forces immediately review their capacity to provide ongoing support and safeguarding to victims of domestic abuse whose case is awaiting trial at court. This should:

- *ensure there are sufficient resources available to maintain contact with victims to keep them up to date with the progress of their case; and*
- *enable the offer of access to specialist support services as well as opportunities to address concerns victims may have regarding continuing to support a prosecution through the delays.*

The Force's Witness Care Unit keep victims updated throughout the court process, arrange pre-court visits if required and inform them of any changes with adjournments. Post-covid the unit are supporting 60% more victims and witnesses with the same staffing levels as pre-covid. The level of service currently given to a victim is delivered on an individual basis of need, however, the level of service given to vulnerable victims such as those of domestic abuse offences has not changed as they are recognised as a priority. The force has now secured additional Ministry of Justice funding to provide 2 additional Victim and Witness Care Officers for 12 months to support the team with the ongoing demand and focus on supporting the most vulnerable (including domestic abuse victims and Witnesses).

Domestic Abuse Risk Officers (DAROs) update victims on the investigation progress for high-risk cases to make sure the victim is informed from the start. They provide personal contact to victims with advice and guidance to assist and enable them to manage their vulnerability to domestic abuse. DAROs support and present information at multi-agency meetings, including, child protection and vulnerable adult meetings/conferences. If domestic abuse victims have been engaging with an Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA), the DARO will explain the court processes and who to contact if IDVA are due to close their service. Victims can call the IDVA if needed during this time regardless whether the case is closed. They may also be engaging in group work or ongoing 121 work.

The Victim Advice Line (VAL) has two dedicated Victim Care Coordinators (VCC) to contact and offer immediate support to DA victims and survivors, where safe to do so; and depending on their needs, enable them to access ongoing specialist support. This tends to be done at the early stages of an investigation and it is unlikely that the VCC will continue to be engaged with the victim post-charge.

In addition, the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) has provided additional supporting letters to share with victims and witnesses to explain the current position and wider support available.

15. Recommendation 3

*We recommend that all forces **immediately** review their use of outcome 15, outcome 16 and evidence-led prosecutions. This is to ensure that:*

- *domestic abuse investigations guarantee all attempts to engage victims are explored, and that all possible lines of evidence are considered so that in all cases the best possible outcomes for victims are achieved;*

- there is regular and effective supervision of investigations that supports the above point to be achieved; and*
- the use of outcomes 15 and 16 is appropriate, and the reasons for using them, including auditable evidence of victim engagement, are clearly recorded.*

The force has previously been identified by HMICFRS as an outlier for its use of outcome 16 (Evidential difficulties victim based – named suspect identified – The victim does not support (or has withdrawn support for) police action). Ongoing work is in place to identify the reasons for this and to support officers in a more effective use of outcome codes. A domestic abuse reality testing exercise undertaken in North Worcestershire was part of the work used to identify where improvements need to be made. Moving forward supervisor CPD training will include input to ensure outcomes are applied more effectively and timely so that appropriate referrals to support agencies can be correctly classified. More information is being disseminated to officers via internal communications channels and via local domestic abuse SPOCs.

The PCC's responsibilities

16. The PCC has a specific duty to respond to the Home Secretary when HMICFRS publish any recommendations within an inspection report. This is published on the force website. Ongoing oversight of the force response will be via the Service Improvement Board and through the PCC's holding to account programme as required.

Risk Management Implications

None.

Financial Implications

None.

Legal Implications

None

Equality Implications

None.

Supporting Information

Appendix 1 – HMICFRS: Review of policing domestic abuse during the pandemic - 2021

Contact Points

For the PCC's office: Andy Champness, Police and Crime Commissioner Chief Executive
andrewchampness@westmercia.pnn.police.uk

For Panel support: Sheena Jones, Democratic Governance and Scrutiny Manager
Tel: 01905 846011
Sjones19@worcestershire.gov.uk

Review of policing domestic abuse during the pandemic 2021

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Foreword

This is the fifth in a series of thematic domestic abuse publications since our first report in March 2014, [*Everyone's business: Improving the police response to domestic abuse*](#). This review looks at how the police responded to the unique challenges the COVID-19 pandemic placed on preventing and responding to domestic abuse.

The United Kingdom entered the first national lockdown on 23 March 2020. Most of us were instructed to stay at home. This meant many victims of domestic abuse couldn't distance themselves from their abuser, safely contact the police for help or get support from family and friends. Forces started to work differently, recognising that the absence of a call to the police doesn't imply absence of abuse and harm. Many forces adopted innovative new practices to check on the safety of victims of domestic abuse, finding new ways to 'reach in' to them rather than waiting for victims to 'reach out'.

We are pleased that policing recognised the risks to those who felt trapped in their own homes with their abusers and that it made sensible decisions on how to manage those risks. This review expands on the findings in our recent [*policing COVID-19 report*](#), highlighting good practice and innovation. We have also made three recommendations aimed at ensuring forces continue to respond to the challenges of policing domestic abuse during the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond.

We are grateful for the collective focus by the police, domestic abuse organisations, charities, the National Police Chiefs' Council lead for domestic abuse, the Victims' Commissioner and Domestic Abuse Commissioner, the Home Office, the College of Policing, and academia on the issue of domestic abuse. Some of that activity is discussed in this review.

There can be little doubt that the restrictions imposed during the pandemic have put some victims of domestic abuse at greater risk. The police responded effectively in the most challenging of situations, adapting their practices, focusing on prevention and sharing ideas for new ways of working through well-established national arrangements. However, evidence suggests that this success was, at least in part, due to domestic abuse truly being prioritised during lockdown as the competing demands of other crimes, like burglary and night-time economy disorder, reduced with people staying at home.

It is intended that, in England, most remaining lockdown restrictions will ease during the height of the summer, a time when typically (along with other holiday periods) there is an increase in reporting of domestic abuse incidents. It is vitally important that police forces maintain their focus on protecting and supporting victims of domestic abuse as life returns to normal.

We have seen progress in important areas of the police response to domestic abuse, including the opening up of new channels enabling victims to contact and interact with the police online. We applaud these innovations, many of which have led to a more tailored and timely police response. But we seek reassurance that the new ways of working are properly monitored and supervised – they must not become a shortcut to a less effective response to victims.

We have significant concerns about the backlogs that have built up in the courts during the pandemic. Delays in cases coming to trial increase the likelihood of victims disengaging from the criminal justice process, often out of frustration and despair. Failure to bring offenders to justice in a timely way means they have further opportunities to offend, increasing the risk of harm to victims and their families. The police cannot solve the issue of court backlogs, but others in the criminal justice system must do so rapidly. In the meantime, we expect the police to continue to take measures to safeguard victims who are waiting for court hearings.

Not all victims of domestic abuse want or expect the police to pursue a criminal justice outcome, but all want the harm to stop. The police must use their powers appropriately and effectively. In earlier reports we have expressed concern about the number of reported domestic abuse crimes that the police decide to take no further action on. The situation has worsened considerably over the past five years, to the extent that on average the police now decide not to continue to investigate three in every four domestic crimes reported to them. Many forces are unable to explain why these figures are so high and there is significant variation among forces. We have asked all forces to take immediate action to review their own position.

The murder of Sarah Everard in March 2021 was a catalyst for women concerned for their own safety and that of women and girls across this country. In the wake of the tragedy, the Home Secretary commissioned us to do a bespoke inspection; we will shortly be reporting on the effectiveness of the police response in keeping women and girls safe. We will revisit some of the areas in this review and those we have highlighted previously, assessing where the police need to redouble their efforts in supporting victims of domestic abuse and bringing offenders to justice.

Zoë Billingham

HM Inspector of Constabulary

Summary of findings

The police responded proactively to protect victims of domestic abuse

The COVID-19 pandemic heightened concerns for people living with fear and violence because of domestic abuse. Many forces told us that they quickly recognised domestic abuse victims and their families as a priority. Most forces made sure that they planned responses that would meet victims' needs.

At first, the police were worried that there would be a large rise in domestic abuse incidents. This view was based on statistics from European countries that had been tackling the pandemic for longer.

Anticipating increased reporting of domestic abuse, forces prepared as well as they could. Many moved staff into domestic abuse investigation units so they could continue to respond effectively.

Many forces had fewer than usual reports of domestic abuse at the start of lockdown. But as time went on, reports returned to normal levels. There was an overall increase in first-time reporting. Incident levels were up by 4 percent at 18 May 2020 and 7 percent at 11 June 2020, with normal trends beginning as of 8 June 2020. Most forces were back to expected levels of domestic abuse crime and arrests at that time.

By contrast, specialist domestic abuse services have seen very large increases in calls to their helplines and online platforms, such as webchats. Several helplines reported more requests for emotional support, worries about controlling behaviour and escalating experiences of violence and abuse. There were also calls from victims planning to leave their partner when restrictions eased and who needed support to do so. It is important that police forces understand that victims are still reporting domestic abuse through other services, why victims may choose to report in that way and how they can work with partner organisations and victims to break down any barriers to reporting to the police.

The police were proactive in keeping people safe

Forces told us that they acted proactively in supporting victims of domestic abuse, for example, addressing the threat posed by repeat domestic abuse perpetrators by creating plans to mitigate threats posed by them. Many forces greatly increased their applications for Domestic Violence Protection Orders (DVPOs). Many were also proactive in contacting people who had previously reported domestic abuse and who were assessed as being at greatest risk of harm from further abuse because of being repeat victims or as a result of the level of violence they had previously suffered.

While we saw an increase in arrests from a three-month snapshot during the first lockdown, overall, there is an annual downward trend. Forces should ensure that any changes in performance are recognised and understood through existing routine monitoring mechanisms. This will support forces to determine whether officers are using the most appropriate methods to protect victims of abuse.

Police and partner organisations also made some adaptations to the way in which they responded to domestic abuse. One such positive development was the move to virtual court hearings for DVPOs, which forces have reported as being more efficient than attending a physical court hearing. Under the DVPO scheme, police and magistrates have the power to ban a domestic abuse perpetrator from returning to their home or contacting the victim for up to 28 days after a domestic abuse incident. The process also provides a further window of opportunity for police and partner organisations to work together to protect victims from future harm.

Although forces historically haven't used a telephone-based initial response for domestic abuse cases, some chose to implement this process for 'grade 3' incidents (those not needing an immediate or priority response). This was in recognition of the need to continue to offer a response to all calls from victims, at a time of reduced officer capacity and based on a threat, risk and harm assessment.

Some forces informed us that they had expanded the ways in which a victim could report a crime or contact police for advice. This included online reporting processes, web chats, video links and virtual waiting rooms, which victims could log into and be connected to a specialist investigator.

While we welcome the increased options for victims to make and maintain contact with police, and applaud forces for the rapid, innovative steps they took in difficult circumstances, we are concerned that online contact in all forms is not scrutinised through performance management and oversight in the same way as traditional reporting routes. Although a risk-assessed approach to phone-based domestic abuse response may be appropriate, we would urge forces to ensure this approach is reviewed regularly. Furthermore, any future innovative practice that is developed should have all appropriate safeguards and monitoring frameworks in place.

Recommendation 1

- We recommend that if forces continue to adopt online contact methods in respect of victims of domestic abuse, they should **immediately** introduce an effective supervision and monitoring framework. The framework should assess the suitability of such contact methods, ensuring that victim needs are at the forefront of decisions around their use and appropriate onward action is taken in all cases.
- We recommend that forces **immediately** review their use of a telephone-based initial response to any domestic abuse incidents and crimes and ensure that it is in accordance with the strict parameters set out by the College of Policing.

Police and partner organisations made good use of technology and innovated to support victims

The police work with other public services and organisations to keep domestic abuse victims safe. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, many of those involved moved to working from home. This meant they needed to establish new ways of communicating with victims and each other. Some organisations had to overcome problems with the compatibility of their technology with that of others. Importantly, meetings focused on sharing information between organisations for the protection of victims, such as multi-agency risk assessment conferences (MARACs), continued to take place. Feedback also suggested that virtual meetings were better attended and more easily arranged, which in turn supported the ability to keep victims safe.

Forces used technology to manage the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (DVDS), also known as Clare's Law. The DVDS has two functions:

- 'right to ask': this enables someone to ask the police about a partner's previous history of domestic violence or violent acts; and
- 'right to know': third parties can make a request via this process, or police can proactively disclose information to a potential victim about a partner's previous history of domestic abuse or violence.

The process helps the person receiving the disclosure to make informed choices about continuing a relationship and about their personal safety, even after the relationship ends.

Disclosing information could now be done securely online, where previously it had to take place at a police station. So the pandemic did not prevent this important tool from being used to prevent future offending.

The need to keep in contact with victims has never been more important as during the pandemic. Many forces told us that they worked with other domestic abuse organisations and businesses to create safe spaces. This meant that domestic abuse victims could report abuse online or go to designated locations without being put at greater risk from their abusers.

Some forces gave victims safety equipment such as doorbell cameras.

Delays and backlogs in the criminal justice system are a significant concern

Forces adapted rapidly to a changing pattern of criminal behaviour. They moved staff to work on areas of greater risk, like domestic abuse and managing virtual remand court hearings, which was viewed by criminal justice partners very positively. However, this was not without difficulties, such as financial constraints, resourcing issues, the lack of an efficient court scheduling tool, and detainees being held in police cells for an extra 16–24 hours rather than being transferred to court cells. The challenges described above mean that most forces have been unable to continue with virtual remand hearings.

Many forces told us that delays in getting Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) advice for some domestic abuse cases meant victims were potentially exposed to further risk of harm. In some cases, victims withdrew their support for prosecution. While withdrawal of support is not new, it was exacerbated due to the delays.

According to the report [Impact of the pandemic on the criminal justice system – A joint view of the criminal justice chief inspectors on the criminal justice system’s response to COVID-19](#), time from charge to trial greatly increased in 2020. This created more opportunities for re-offending and increased risk of harm to victims and families. Until we have the results of investigations and court hearings that arose in the pandemic, we won’t know the true impact of these delays.

Recommendation 2

We recommend that forces **immediately** review their capacity to provide ongoing support and safeguarding to victims of domestic abuse whose case is awaiting trial at court. This should:

- ensure there are sufficient resources available to maintain contact with victims to keep them up to date with the progress of their case; and
- enable the offer of access to specialist support services as well as opportunities to address concerns victims may have regarding continuing to support a prosecution through the delays.

Investigative outcomes: the number of occasions when victims do not support police investigations is increasing

In cases of domestic abuse, it is sadly not uncommon for victims to feel unable to support police action and this can be for a variety of reasons. It is also important to recognise that when victims make a call to the police, not all are seeking a criminal justice outcome. In many cases they simply want the abuse to stop.

In the 12-month rolling period up to March 2020, we found that on average 54.8 percent of domestic abuse cases were discontinued for this reason (outcome 16). There is huge variation between forces, with between 36 percent and 71 percent of cases having this outcome. There are different reasons why cases fail. For example, a victim may be reluctant to give evidence, due to fear of having to relive their experiences or of reprisals from the perpetrator and/or their family. They may simply not have faith that a positive outcome will occur. In these instances, there may be sufficient other evidence to enable police to proceed on an evidence-led basis. However, this will not always be the case.

We have reported previously that officers appear to have a working knowledge of what is needed to prosecute on an evidence-led basis, but that there were still cases that could have been progressed in this way that were discontinued.

There are times when there is insufficient evidence even with the support of the victim (outcome 15). In the same 12-month period, on average 20 percent of cases did not proceed due to evidential difficulties but where a victim did support the prosecution.

While we acknowledge that there will be crimes whereby there is no possible means by which to take a case forward to charge, we remain concerned at forces' unacceptably high use of outcome 16. It is even more disturbing that, when combining rates of the use of outcome 15 and outcome 16, on average 75 percent of cases are discontinued by police, leaving victims at potential risk of further harm.

It is imperative that forces collect and understand their data in this area to improve their understanding of why so many cases are finalised in these ways, and whether those outcomes are appropriate. Additionally, they should determine whether more can be done to connect victims who are particularly scared or vulnerable with specialist support services. This may increase the likelihood of victims continuing with the legal process and may also support the prevention of future harm.

We will continue to monitor these points closely within our PEEL inspection framework and our violence against women and girls thematic inspection this year.

Recommendation 3

We recommend that all forces **immediately** review their use of outcome 15, outcome 16 and evidence-led prosecutions. This is to ensure that:

- domestic abuse investigations guarantee all attempts to engage victims are explored, and that all possible lines of evidence are considered so that in all cases the best possible outcomes for victims are achieved;
- there is regular and effective supervision of investigations that supports the above point to be achieved; and
- the use of outcomes 15 and 16 is appropriate, and the reasons for using them, including auditable evidence of victim engagement, are clearly recorded.

Methodology

This review is based on several sources of information, as detailed below.

In July 2020, we announced our intention to inspect the police response to the COVID-19 pandemic. That inspection looked at what happened from March to November 2020, focusing on preparedness and the wider response to policing during the pandemic.

After that inspection, we published a thematic report, [*Policing in the pandemic – the police response to the COVID-19 pandemic during 2020*](#).

To understand the response to domestic abuse during this period, we reviewed the information that all 43 forces gave us through a self-assessment questionnaire as part of the COVID-19 inspection (put simply, what they told us was happening). We also carried out more detailed inspection in 19 forces, most of which we did remotely.

We wanted to ascertain how lockdown restrictions affected:

- the way in which victims contacted the police or other organisations for help and support;
- forces' ability to respond effectively to risk;
- the data reflecting the prevalence of domestic abuse;
- whether criminal justice processes were affected (in terms of closures of buildings and courts);
- how organisations worked effectively together to safeguard victims and their families; and
- the innovations that developed to make sure systems and processes could continue effectively.

We also reviewed the Home Office police-recorded crime and outcomes data tables for the 12 months to 31 March 2020. And we used information from specialist domestic abuse services highlighting 'the victim's voice'. This is referenced in the 2020 Women's Aid report, [*A perfect storm*](#).

A domestic abuse expert reference group advises on, and informs, our work relating to domestic abuse. The group includes representatives from the police service, police and crime commissioners, the College of Policing, the Home Office and the voluntary sector. We have tested out the early findings of the review with the group. We list the members of the group in Annex E.

Our findings

The scale of domestic abuse in England and Wales during the pandemic

The United Kingdom entered the first national lockdown on 23 March 2020, until 10 May 2020. At that time, in a televised address we were instructed to stay at home. This presented an acute set of new circumstances for policing to work within. For domestic abuse, this meant people were trapped at home, and usual support mechanisms were unavailable or could not be provided in the same way.

Unlike in some European countries, the large increase in reports to police of domestic abuse incidents didn't happen in England and Wales. But domestic abuse organisations reported very significant increases in contact for help at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has continued. People made contact for various reasons. Many used helplines for the first time to get support, either for themselves or on behalf of a relative or friend.

At the time data was collated for this review, except for controlling or coercive behaviour, domestic abuse wasn't a specific criminal offence. This changed on 29 April 2021, when the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 was enacted. Before this, forces recorded offences that related to domestic abuse under the respective offence that had been committed (for example, assault with injury). The true prevalence of domestic abuse is challenging to understand, and estimates vary depending on the source of the information.

In the 12 months to March 2020, the police service in England and Wales received approximately 1,150,000 domestic abuse calls – an average of 130 calls an hour.

In an average 24-hour period there around 3,100 domestic abuse calls. Control room staff recorded approx. 3,000 incidents and 2,200 crimes.

Domestic abuse-related crime constitutes 1 in 6 (15 percent) of all crime recorded by the police in England and Wales and over a third (35 percent) of all recorded violence against the person crimes.

The Office for National Statistics recorded that only 1 in 5 incidents of domestic abuse were reported to the police in 2017. This figure was taken from the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW). The data held by the police can therefore only provide a partial picture of the actual level of domestic abuse experienced in England and Wales. Similarly, CSEW data should not be viewed in isolation. The estimates from the survey show a higher level of domestic abuse, in terms of the number of victims, than other data sources. Therefore, while the CSEW provides the best available

estimate of trends in the prevalence of domestic abuse, this may not match trends in administrative data sources and therefore an accurate picture of demands on the police, the criminal justice system or service provision cannot be produced.

What we do know is that many cases won't enter the criminal justice process and that it is too soon to say whether the pandemic has affected reporting levels.

Crime recording

Since the publication of [Everyone's business](#) in 2014, there has been a 181 percent increase in the number of domestic abuse-related crimes recorded by police forces in England and Wales. In the 12 months to 31 March 2020 (compared with the 12 months to 31 August 2013), the volume of recorded crime increased from 269,700 to 758,941.

The tables below highlight the changes in domestic abuse recording since the last [thematic inspection report in 2017](#).

Table 1: Changes in domestic abuse recording in England and Wales from March 2016 to March 2020

Volume police activity	12 months to 31 March 2017	12 months to 31 March 2018	12 months to 31 March 2019	12 months to 31 March 2020	Change since 2017
Domestic abuse-related crimes	488,049	599,549 (+23%)	746,219 (+24%)	758,941 (+2%)	Up 56% (+270,893)
Domestic abuse-related sexual offences	15,480	18,545 (+20%)	21,007 (+13%)	24,407 (+16%)	Up 58% (+8,927)
Domestic abuse-related violence against person crimes	375,629	458,711 (+22%)	579,633 (+26%)	595,859 (+3%)	Up 59% (+220,266)
Domestic abuse-related harassment crimes	74,894	106,905 (+43%)	166,472 (+56%)	176,837 (+6%)	Up 136% (+101,943)

*Please note this data is for 12 months to June 2017

Table 2: Changes in domestic abuse-related crime as a proportion of total crime and of other crime types in England and Wales from March 2016 to March 2020

Domestic abuse-related crime is:	12 months to 31 March 2017	12 months to 31 March 2018	12 months to 31 March 2019	12 months to 31 March 2020	Change since 2017
of total recorded crime (excluding fraud)	11%	12%	14%	15%	Up 4 percentage points
of all recorded sexual offences	13%	14%	14%	16%	Up 3 percentage points
of all violence against person crimes	32%	33%	35%	35%	Up 3 percentage points
of all recorded harassment crimes	36%	36%	37%	40%	Up 4 percentage points

Source: HMICFRS data collection

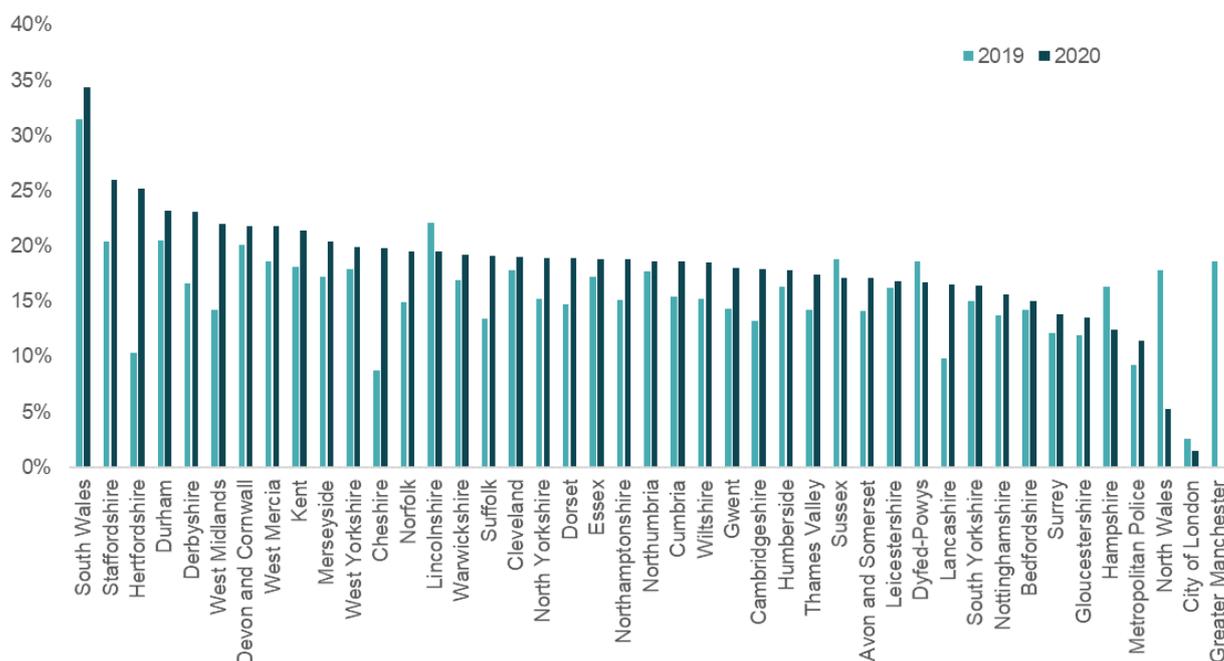
Please note that the ‘Change since 2017’ column in the tables above calculates changes in the number of crimes using percent, and changes in the proportion of crimes using percentage points

The gap between what is reported in the CSEW and the police-recorded crime data has decreased, indicating that the changes could be due to increased reporting rather than an increase in offending. An increase in reporting as opposed to offending is positive.

While police-recorded crime data showed an increase in offences that were flagged as being domestic abuse-related during the pandemic, and we anticipated a rise in domestic abuse calls, we cannot attribute the rise solely to the pandemic. It also highlights that the work undertaken by forces in developing their approaches to tackling domestic abuse and engaging with victims has been beneficial in increasing confidence to report.

However, as this review highlights, there are areas that still require further focus and improvement.

Figure 1: Domestic abuse as a percentage of recorded crime by force, 12 months to 30 September 2020



Source: HMICFRS data collection

Police-recorded crime data showed an increase of 7 percent in offences that were flagged as being domestic abuse-related compared with the same period last year. Greater Manchester Police was unable to provide data for 2020.

Some forces bucked the trend and reported higher levels of domestic abuse; for very few there was a decrease. West Midlands Police reported an increase of more than a third. This may be due to several factors, and the force has told us that it believes some of those may be:

- clear communication from police and partner organisations about support;
- increased accessibility through online reporting; and
- a reduction in the availability of support services.

London’s Metropolitan Police Service received a total of 41,158 calls for service for domestic incidents between 25 March and 10 June 2020. This is a 12 percent increase compared with 36,727 calls over the same period in the previous year. The weekly number of calls from victims remained at similar, sometimes lower, levels to the previous year. However, there were large increases in calls from third parties.

In several forces there was a reported increase in stalking or harassment cases. For example, North Wales Police told us that it experienced an increase of almost a third.

Some forces reported increased cases of adolescent to parent violence and abuse. Although the numbers were low, the cases are still troubling, and forces need to be alert to this in developing approaches to domestic abuse.

Domestic homicide

Since the introduction of COVID-19 restrictions, some forces and domestic abuse organisations rightly expressed concern that COVID-19 restrictions might increase the prevalence of domestic homicide.

Existing arrangements to examine and report on domestic homicides can take many months or even years. It was important for forces to quickly establish emerging patterns and where possible take preventive action. To address this, the National Policing Vulnerability Knowledge and Practice Programme developed a project in collaboration with the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC), the College of Policing and the Home Office.

The project, established in August 2020, counted deaths from the start of the first lockdown restrictions in England and Wales. Its aim was to design and implement a national pilot to better understand domestic homicides in England and Wales during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The project sought to understand:

- the true scale and nature of domestic homicide deaths during the pandemic compared with previous years, and whether any increase was related to lockdown;
- rapid learning for police as to how they might predict, intervene or manage risks to prevent homicide (by examining domestic homicide deaths); and
- typology of perpetrators and to what extent they were already known to police, to inform interventions to prevent homicide.

Early findings from November 2020 show that most domestic homicides are still carried out by a current or former partner (50 percent). Victim suicide following domestic abuse was the second most common type (20 percent). Adult family homicide and child deaths accounted for 13 percent and 12 percent respectively.

However, there was no apparent rise in the overall number of domestic homicides based on data from previous years.

Further information about the methodology of this important project can be found in Annex A.

The final report is due in early summer 2021. For more information on this work, [contact the DH project team](#).

Demand was high for specialist domestic abuse support organisations

Specialist domestic abuse services have had very large increases in calls to their helplines and visits to their online contact points (such as webchats). This was particularly the case as lockdown measures eased. Several helplines reported increased requests for emotional support, escalation in violence and abuse, and worries about controlling behaviour.

Refuge, which manages the National Domestic Abuse Helpline (NDAH) in England, reported that there was a 61 percent increase in calls up to February 2021 compared with the 2019/20 baseline. Increase in calls for support doesn't necessarily indicate an increase in the number of victims. It could be an increase in the severity of abuse being experienced and a lack of available ways of coping (such as the ability to leave home to escape the abuse or attend counselling).

Refuge's helpline calls from January to December 2020 showed that 24 percent of women had been stalked, 40 percent had been subject to economic abuse, 58 percent subjected to physical violence and 81 percent reported being controlled by their partner. There were also calls from victims who were planning to leave their partner when restrictions eased, and who needed support to do this.

Between March and November 2020, there was an overall increase of 49 percent in new referrals to the helpline. Calls levelled out at approximately 50 percent higher than pre-COVID-19 averages (Office for National Statistics data, November 2020).

For the period 1 April to 31 December 2020, the number of calls and contacts that staff logged on the helpline's database (both incoming and outgoing) increased by 34 percent against the same period the previous year. The team increased the number of responses/support offered to women by 22 percent compared with the same period last year. This data was taken from the 2020 Women's Aid report, [A perfect storm](#).

During this period, the helpline's advisers made 3,785 referrals to emergency refuge accommodation; 72 percent of calls were from survivors, 10 percent were from professionals and 11 percent were from third parties. The proportion of calls from third parties was at its highest level during the first national lockdown. Analysis of the calls shows an increase in complexity, severity and diversity, which has increased the average call duration. Safeguarding referrals from the helpline also increased significantly.

The trend of an increase in the number of young people (16–24 years old) contacting the service also continues, with more than a 50 percent increase on figures for this demographic from 2019/20.

The highest call volume was in May 2020. The lowest was in December 2020. There were higher call volumes during the summer months and the second national lockdown in England.

The NDAH's new digital platform offers information and support for survivors and those who support them. It received 712,426 visits during the period 1 April to 31 December 2020. There were about 10,500 visits per month in the first three months of 2020, but an average of 73,595 per month between April 2020 and February 2021 – a seven-fold increase.

In Wales, the national Live Fear Free Helpline is run by Welsh Women's Aid (commissioned by the Welsh Government). Since it launched its new 'live chat' service on 5 May 2020, 3,397 live chats have taken place.

A June 2020 survey by Women's Aid found that 93.5 percent of victims living with an abuser said COVID-19 had affected their experience of abuse in more than one way. The ways included an increase in abuse or the level of violence, or the abuser flouting

government guidance and putting the victim at risk. Women's Aid included the results of its survey in its 2020 report, [*A perfect storm*](#).

On 3 February 2021, the Domestic Abuse Commissioner gave evidence to the Home Affairs Select Committee, giving some detail and context to the rise in demand. The Commissioner stated that before the pandemic the NDAH helpline's staff experienced that callers were mostly looking for understanding, validation and emotional support. Now, the helpline staff are taking on complex cases where experiences of domestic abuse are compounded (and exacerbated) by stress and distress due to several factors: continuous lockdowns, increased isolation and worries about housing, income issues, escalating mental health issues, and the lack of – or limited access to – other crucial support services (such as health services).

This increase in demand also affected refuge provision. Data from Women's Aid shows that in May and June 2020 it saw around a 50 percent reduction in the number of refuge vacancies available in England in comparison with same period in 2019, showing that easing of lockdown had a clear impact on demand for refuge spaces.

The police responded proactively to protect victims of domestic abuse

Making and encouraging contact

It was important that forces considered proactive contact with victims who were isolated in their own homes, often with their perpetrator, to encourage them to seek support from police and partner services.

Many victims felt scared or unable to safely contact the police. This was particularly difficult for victims while lockdown restrictions were in place. This section covers the ways in which many forces tried to contact those victims.

Police-led campaigns

The domestic abuse sector lobbied to secure changes to the Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions) (England) Regulations 2020 to specifically enable victims to leave their home and seek support, which was accompanied by a Home Office national awareness raising campaign #YouAreNotAlone.

Most forces developed media campaigns alongside this. They included poster, radio and billboard campaigns, all offering reassurance to victims and promoting the national Silent Solution 55 system for emergency contact. Under the system, a 999 caller who is too scared to speak or make a noise can press 55 on their mobile phone when prompted. This informs the police that the call is a genuine emergency. The system is potentially lifesaving and is well established in the UK. But it is only effective if the public know and understand how it works.

Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in the UK, the chief constable of Kent Police has had a regular slot on BBC Radio Kent to talk about issues affecting the public, including domestic abuse. The following excerpt is taken from a letter received by the radio station about the effect of that input and how valuable the police response is.

Dear Anna

Listening to you talking to the Chief Constable regarding domestic abuse call outs I felt I had to respond on behalf of my daughter. She unfortunately had to use this service and I would like you to pass on my thanks to the Chief Constable for the amazing help throughout the whole procedure.

His officers were a credit to the force and are still providing help and guidance, not easy in Covid restrictions.

Thank you for your coverage of this distressing subject which affects the whole extended family.

Many forces told us that some victims at high risk of domestic abuse who were classified as such before the lockdowns didn't appear to report abuse to the police during those periods.

Conversely, in the standard and medium categories of risk, the police received an increase in calls from victims who were reporting abuse for the first time.

It was recognised by many forces that a different method of engaging victims was needed, including consideration of joint initiatives with businesses that victims might have greater opportunity to engage with. After the initial lockdown, several forces worked with hairdressers and barbershops to promote an understanding of the signs of abuse. It was recognised that these were services that might be accessed by victims and where trusted relationships may exist that could enable a victim to feel confident disclosing abuse and discussing how to access support. The approach was based on the #CutItOut campaign first developed in Norfolk in 2017 after the death of Kerri McAuley.

Cleveland Police did a mass text messaging activity. This involved the force contacting some of its existing victims at high risk of domestic abuse (after analysing telephone numbers to make sure they were secure). The text messages gave details of how to contact the police and how to use the Silent Solution 55 system.

Suffolk Constabulary contacted more than 600 previous domestic abuse victims by telephone to offer reassurance, provide information about support services and encourage them to report further incidents. In recognition that due to lockdown restrictions it may be more likely that the perpetrator would be at home with the victim, a call script was used to help reduce risk. This enabled the victim to explain without arousing suspicion that they were unable to speak, but it also provided a rationale for the call if it was answered by the perpetrator.

As part of Operation Fortify, Northumbria Police telephoned medium-risk victims who had been in regular contact with the police before lockdown, and who hadn't come to police attention since lockdown began. The police disguised the calls as follow-up welfare calls and offered support and help. Victims gave feedback to the force, saying the calls had made them feel reassured and safer, knowing they hadn't been forgotten and that the police were easily accessible.

Kent Police worked with important organisations such as education, social services, Refuge, a MARAC and an independent domestic violence adviser (IDVA).

They identified three different groups based on criteria such as frequent callers who hadn't contacted the police in lockdown, repeat victims and families with children. Specialist domestic abuse officers then carried out proactive visits to those groups. The force reported that 330 visits were favourably received by families. The force is continuing this activity.

Many forces have worked to create safe spaces in a variety of community locations where victims can report incidents or speak with specialist support staff.

National campaigns

Hestia's 'UK says no more' is a national campaign focused on raising awareness of, and preventing, domestic abuse and sexual violence. It partnered with Boots UK, Superdrug, Morrison's and independent pharmacies across the country to provide Safe Spaces in their consultation rooms for people experiencing domestic abuse. These Safe Spaces increased the opportunity for victims of domestic abuse to access specialist support, providing a space for them to phone a helpline, contact a support service or talk to a friend or family member.

Hestia also runs the Bright Sky app in collaboration with the Vodafone Foundation. The app is free to download and can support people to assess the safety of a relationship and provides a directory of specialist domestic abuse support services. Evaluation of the app is being conducted by London Southbank University. A six-month evaluation report has already been published, which shows a 52 percent increase in the download of the Bright Sky app for the six months following 23 March 2020 compared with the same period the previous year.

In 2020, the government hosted the Hidden Harms Summit. It focused on tackling crimes such as domestic abuse, sexual abuse, child sexual abuse and modern slavery, all of which may have worsened during the lockdowns. At the summit, the government announced a codeword scheme for victims of domestic abuse. Launched on 14 January 2021, the scheme is run by the Home Office and supported by the independent Victims' Commissioner and Domestic Abuse Commissioner, and specialist domestic abuse services. Under the scheme, victims can signal to staff in participating outlets (such as supermarkets and pharmacies) that they need immediate support by using the codeword 'Ask for ANI'. 'ANI' stands for 'assistance needed immediately'. This will alert staff to the fact that the victim needs an emergency police response or help to contact a domestic abuse specialist support service. Through the weekly NPCC, College of Policing and the Domestic Abuse Commissioner conference call, this innovative practice was shared and promoted in all force areas. The scheme is currently being evaluated through Ipsos MORI.

The police worked proactively to keep people safe

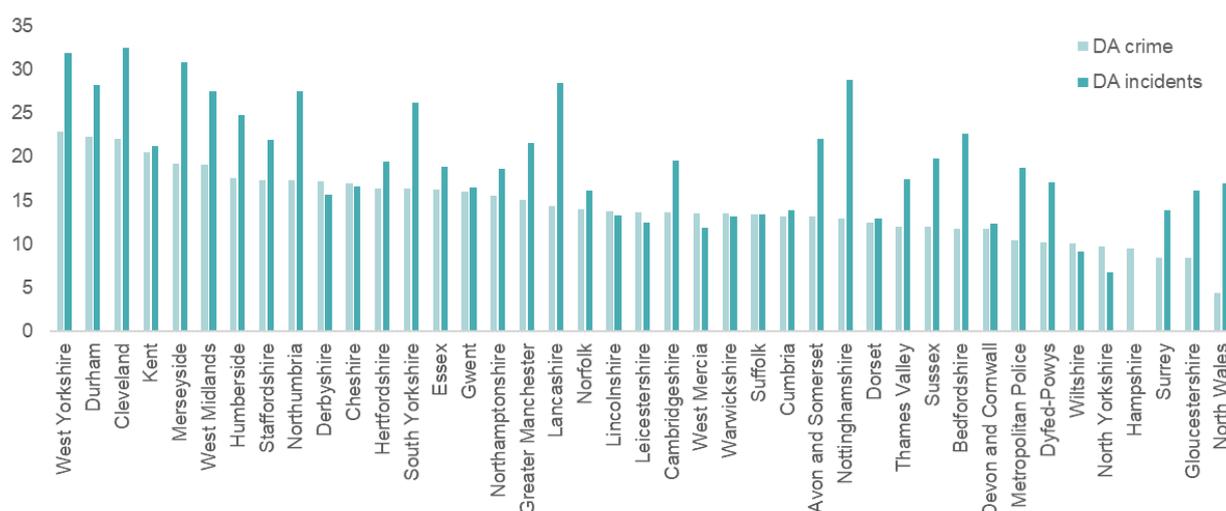
Calls for service

Most forces use the THRIVE system in their control rooms. This is a structured way for call handlers to assess the threat, harm and risk to a caller. It also helps call handlers to determine the vulnerability of the victim, the type of response needed and any action officers should take at the scene to help the investigation.

The THRIVE model allows forces to tailor their service to the individual needs of each victim. It also helps staff decide how best to deal with a call. We support this approach.

Many forces described how their approach to calls for service hadn't changed during the COVID-19 pandemic. They continued to use the THRIVE system for all calls. Some forces gave briefings and extra training to officers and staff. This training emphasised the risk from hidden harm and the need to be professionally curious when attending incidents, especially during the period of pandemic restrictions.

Figure 2: Domestic abuse crimes per 1,000 population per police force, 12 months to 30 September 2020



Source: HMICFRS data collection. See Annex D regarding the collection of data

Some forces added extra questions to assess the risk posed in responding to calls for service. These allowed them to determine personal protective equipment requirements or the suitability of remote deployment. (Remote deployment, remote resolution or remote investigation is where a force has deemed that the risk to a victim can allow the investigation to be conducted remotely, without the need for attendance to speak to the victim in person.)

Gloucestershire Constabulary introduced a vulnerability car, staffed by experienced and specially trained staff. They responded to (and supported) local policing teams who attended to vulnerable victims, with a focus on domestic abuse victims.

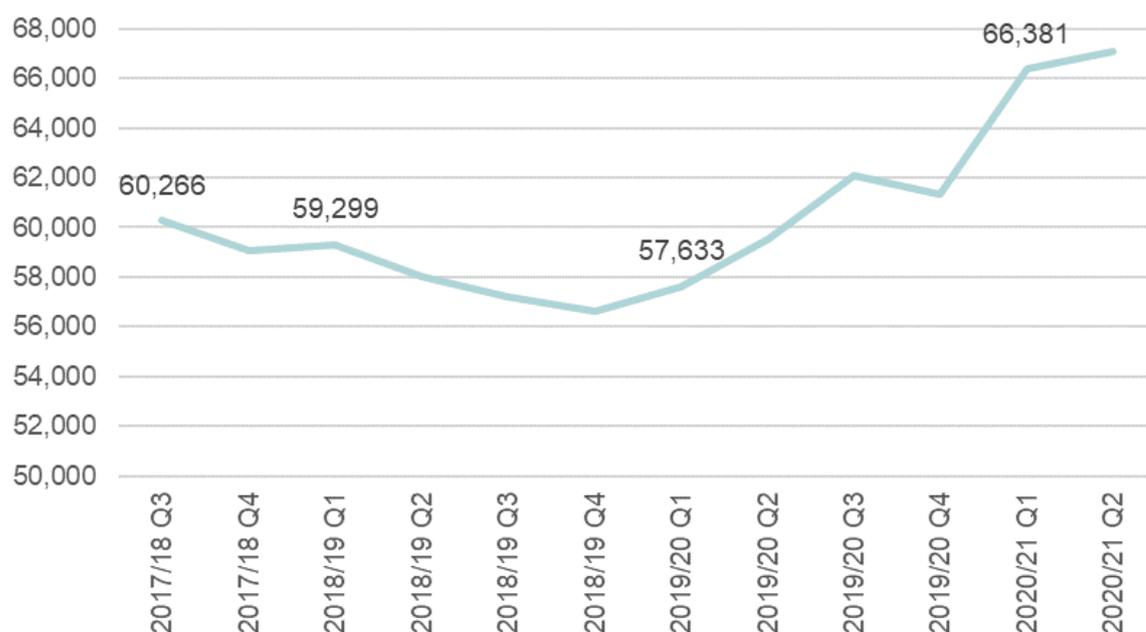
In some areas of Devon and Cornwall, police provided an unmarked car. A trained specialist domestic abuse officer and an independent domestic violence adviser (IDVA) used the car at times of highest demand for domestic abuse incidents. The IDVA supported victims, allowing officers to gather evidence and do a thorough risk assessment.

Northumbria Police introduced domestic abuse specialist support advisers. Their role is to telephone victims and give immediate advice and support. They also gather further information to inform risk assessments, establish any immediate or short-term needs, and ensure appropriate referrals.

Initial response

The below chart highlights that the number of arrests for domestic abuse has risen consistently since January–March ('Q4') 2018/19 and rose significantly during the first phases of the pandemic in England and Wales.

Figure 3: Number of arrests for domestic abuse in England and Wales



Source: HMICFRS data collection

Most forces made sure that when victims called for help, the response provided was appropriate to the risks identified in the THRIVE assessment. If that meant attending a victim's house quickly and apprehending a perpetrator, they did so. This is supported by data showing that there was a 15 percent increase (+8,748) in arrests from April to June 2020 (66,381 arrests) compared with the same period the previous year (57,633 arrests).

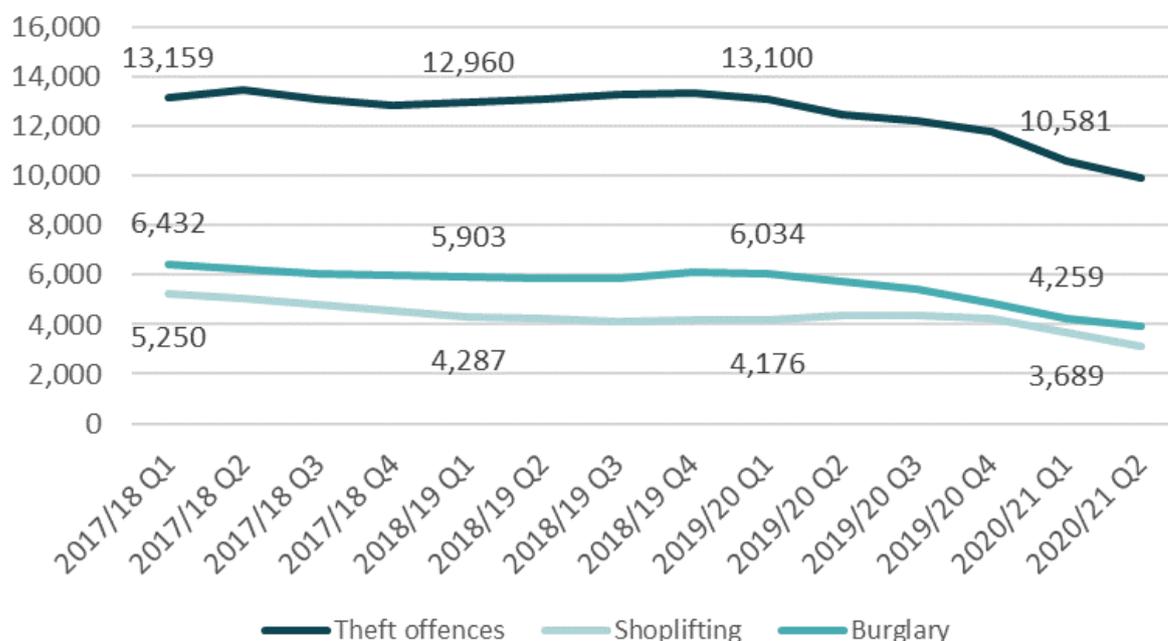
Domestic abuse arrest and prosecution rates increased between 2013 and 2016, when they reached an all-time high. They then plateaued and fell when acquisitive crime like burglary, robbery and car crime experienced a resurgence after more than 10 years of reductions. The increase in other crimes presented forces with a greater challenge in terms of prioritising their resources, but it is unacceptable if the fall in domestic abuse arrests and prosecutions was because of these crimes being treated as less important.

In general, forces recognised that domestic abuse may increase during lockdown and that therefore they needed to be proactive in responding to calls for support. In addition, most forces reported a reduction in some crimes, such as burglary and theft. This meant police were able to focus staff on investigations involving vulnerability, like domestic abuse.

Theft crimes decreased by 20 percent (-2,578) from April to June 2020 compared with the same period in 2018. Shoplifting crimes decreased by 30 percent (-1,561) and

burglary crimes decreased by 32 percent (-2,173 offences). The below chart highlights the changes in these crimes over time from 2017 to Q2 2021.

Figure 4: Number of theft, shoplifting and burglary crimes in England and Wales



Source: HMICFRS data collection

In some cases where a fast response wasn't necessary, forces developed ways to contact victims and conduct enquiries remotely.

We are aware that there is not a consistent approach to domestic abuse across all forces. And there are inconsistencies in investigations and officers' understanding of domestic abuse and coercive control.

Of those women currently experiencing domestic abuse and who took part in the Women's Aid study, 17.6 percent (13 out of 74) reported one or more incidents to the police during lockdown. Some of the comments describing their experiences referred to lack of follow-up from police or delays in arresting and charging (see [A perfect storm](#)).

"The police investigation is ongoing, but there have been delays because of the virus. My ex was due to be questioned, but this hasn't happened yet."

Others were critical of the level of understanding of domestic abuse shown in police responses:

"They made me feel like the criminal, asking why I haven't left, like it was my fault. No matter what he does to me now, I'll never ring them again."

Investigations

During the pandemic, the police changed the way in which they investigated crime. Officers had to consider social distancing, holding interviews with suspects in enclosed rooms, the wearing of personal protective equipment and methods of communicating with victims remotely rather than in person. These considerations added to the existing difficulties in managing investigations, such as gaining the confidence of the victim, supporting them through the investigation and collecting evidence to support a prosecution.

In recognition of this, the NPCC lead for criminal justice worked with the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS). They advised forces about the viability of officers obtaining initial accounts through online communication where attendance at scenes wasn't possible.

Most forces reviewed their caseloads of domestic abuse crime during the pandemic. This review helped them to update victims about the progress of investigations and inform them of local support services.

Kent Police told us that it wanted to reassure itself that it maintained the quality of domestic abuse investigation during the pandemic. In May 2020, the force carried out a domestic abuse internal inspection. It examined ten domestic abuse calls and crime reports from each policing area following the March lockdown. It looked for any notable changes in working practices, other organisations' involvement, safeguarding or service provision. Most investigations it reviewed were approached in the same way as cases before the pandemic.

Sussex Police created a local resolution team of specialist officers and staff to deal with standard-risk domestic abuse cases. The team conducts virtual interviews with victims by using discreet video conferencing technology. This helps officers to speak with victims face-to-face while listening to their reports. The team gives safeguarding advice during the initial stages of an investigation. This approach hasn't yet been evaluated.

Maintaining contact and support

Forces told us that online contact from the public increased during the pandemic. The public's ability to choose its preferred contact method is now better (and more widely) publicised than before the pandemic. It is important that, from their very first contact, victims feel supported and safe while an investigation is underway.

Forces have reported contact methods such as Facebook and other social media platforms, surgeries, online chats and webinars as being hugely successful. Forces that are adopting these alternative contact methods include Cumbria Constabulary, Cambridgeshire Constabulary, Greater Manchester Police, Cheshire Constabulary and Derbyshire Constabulary.

Several forces also tried to target their social media campaigns to specific groups of people who may be at higher risk of domestic abuse. They include those who live with their perpetrator, are repeat victims or can't make contact to get support.

Forces adopted other digital solutions for contacting victims. For example, Bedfordshire Police introduced secure links to facilitate face-to-face video calls.

Nottinghamshire Police moved the follow-up visits for victims at medium risk of domestic abuse from its neighbourhood policing teams to its research and insight team. That team could telephone victims and guide them to support services. Some early evaluation showed that between May and October 2020, the team contacted 676 domestic abuse victims by telephone or letter. This ensured the victims had details of any support services that might be able to help them following the report to the police.

Several forces contacted previous victims by telephone, text, email and newsletter to offer reassurance and advice.

We welcome the increased choices for victims to maintain contact. And forces should be applauded for the rapid, innovative steps they took in difficult circumstances. But we are concerned that online contact is not scrutinised through performance management and oversight in the same way as traditional reporting routes.

Forces have adapted through necessity. But online approaches need to be evaluated, with support from the College of Policing, before they are adopted long term as normal procedure for domestic abuse. It is important that victims' experiences are considered. Some victims who are unable to access digital communication will not have this option, so face-to-face contact must always be an option. The consequences of these approaches also need to be fully understood; for example, where an investigation has been less than thorough, or where it wasn't possible to adequately assess the risk posed to the victim.

Recommendation 1

- We recommend that if forces continue to adopt online contact methods in respect of victims of domestic abuse, they should **immediately** introduce an effective supervision and monitoring framework. The framework should assess the suitability of such contact methods, ensuring that victim needs are at the forefront of decisions around their use and appropriate onward action is taken in all cases.
- We recommend that forces **immediately** review their use of a telephone-based initial response to any domestic abuse incidents and crimes and ensure that it is in accordance with the strict parameters set out by the College of Policing.

Domestic abuse perpetrators

In response to the pandemic, most forces told us they had identified perpetrators who posed the greatest risk of harm. They did this by looking at factors such as the recency, frequency and gravity of the domestic abuse incidents. They then intervened with these offenders to prevent further harm. Examples are given below.

Perpetrator programmes

Some forces made visits to known perpetrators, which were conducted as safely as possible bearing in mind the COVID-19 guidance about social distancing. South Wales Police and the perpetrator-focused Drive programme worked with probation services, targeting those who had previously been convicted and released for domestic abuse offences and who were on licence. Being on licence means that a person is still serving a prison sentence, but they can live in the community rather than in prison. They must follow certain rules, the duration of which depends on the length of the sentence. If the rules are broken, the person may be returned ('be recalled') to prison.

In Cambridgeshire Constabulary, the CARA (Cautions and Relationship Abuse) programme aims to rehabilitate domestic abuse offenders. The programme changed from a group session to one-to-one sessions, held virtually or by telephone. The constabulary told us that feedback from victims and practitioners suggests this change has been positive. Perpetrators have become more involved, due to working alone with practitioners.

Derbyshire Constabulary created the MARAC+. This involves a team of officers reviewing all serial and repeat domestic abuse data. They determine which victims and perpetrators need enhanced intervention. A multi-agency response then makes the intervention.

Dyfed-Powys Police piloted a domestic abuse perpetrator scheme that was developed with academia. It is intended to educate and divert non-convicted perpetrators away from domestic abuse. The force carried out the scheme remotely and online. On completion of the pilot, the force will publish its results and an evaluation.

Integrated offender management

Integrated offender management is a multi-agency approach to tackling persistent offenders who commit a lot of crime, causing damage and harm to individuals and communities.

South Wales Police told us that it linked activity between domestic abuse investigation, safeguarding units and integrated offender management. It did this by introducing referral methods. The force referred more domestic abuse perpetrators with complex needs (over and above the existing integrated offender management domestic abuse group) for early intervention and online diversionary work.

For the South Wales programme, prevention is the priority. This is followed by early intervention, reducing repeat victimisation and then escalation through the criminal justice system if no other method is successful. In December 2020, the force created an online intervention programme for low-risk domestic abuse perpetrators. As it has been commissioned as a two-year pilot, there isn't yet an evaluation.

Greater Manchester Police and local probation services gave the offender management teams a list of domestic abuse perpetrators who they considered to be of concern. The list, which was outside of the usual group, triggered home visits. The police conducted visits to assess likely re-offending throughout the lockdown

period. The visits also served as a safeguarding check on vulnerable victims and children.

Nottinghamshire Police's neighbourhood teams focused on perpetrators and the use of perpetrator-centred orders. These are court orders, such as the DVPO, or a domestic abuse perpetrator programme. They can be issued as part of a court sentence. There has been some limited evaluation of Nottinghamshire Police's scheme, through measuring the number of victims applying to support services. The number has increased. The full impact of this scheme on victim involvement and enforcement against perpetrators hasn't yet been assessed.

In Manchester city centre, Operation Mantle involves plain-clothed officers proactively identifying and talking to perpetrators and potential vulnerable victims of domestic abuse. This is a multi-agency operation. It includes volunteer organisations such as the Village Angels, Student Angels and Street Pastors.

Reducing risk by managing perpetrators

The number of domestic violence remedy orders showed a mixed picture. From mid-April to the end of June 2020, both the weekly number of non-molestation applications and the number of orders granted were above the pre-lockdown starting point.

A non-molestation order prohibits a person (the respondent) from molesting the person who is applying for an order (the applicant) or a related child. The order is to protect the person who is applying for it from the respondent's behaviour. Most non-molestation orders are issued outside of criminal proceedings by the family court, so the police would not be involved at this stage.

The weekly number of occupation orders granted between March and the end of June 2020 was generally below the pre-lockdown starting point. An occupation order is a court order that specifies who can and can't live in a property as a way to protect victims of domestic abuse (not only physical abuse but also other forms such as emotional or financial abuse).

Due to the protracted period courts were closed during lockdown, the number of protective order applications will have reduced.

Police and partners made good use of technology

Domestic Violence Protection Orders and the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme

During the first lockdown, most courts closed. However, Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunal Service (HMCTS) agreed that applications for DVPOs could continue virtually through the remand courts. The CPS and courts prioritised applications for DVPOs. Many forces reported that making DVPO applications remotely was more efficient, and that they would continue to do this beyond the pandemic.

The police service recognised that DVPO powers to eject a potentially violent perpetrator from the home conflicted with the government's advice on self-isolation and the message "You must stay at home".

The Home Office addressed this issue in conjunction with local authorities and housing providers. It issued specific advice:

If a suspect is ordered to leave premises (DVPN/O or bail conditions) they may claim to be homeless and contravening COVID-related legislation.

Forces will wish to consider options to ensure the suspect does not suffer disproportionate consequences, e.g. assisting the suspect to find a place to stay with friends or relatives or referring them to the local authority.

Forces will want to consider similar support for victims who feel unable to remain at home.

Northumbria Police established agreements with all local authority housing providers to ensure 24/7 housing provision for domestic abuse perpetrators who were displaced after being served with a Domestic Violence Protection Notice (DVPN) or Order (DVPO). This was to reduce the risk of them returning to their victim's home.

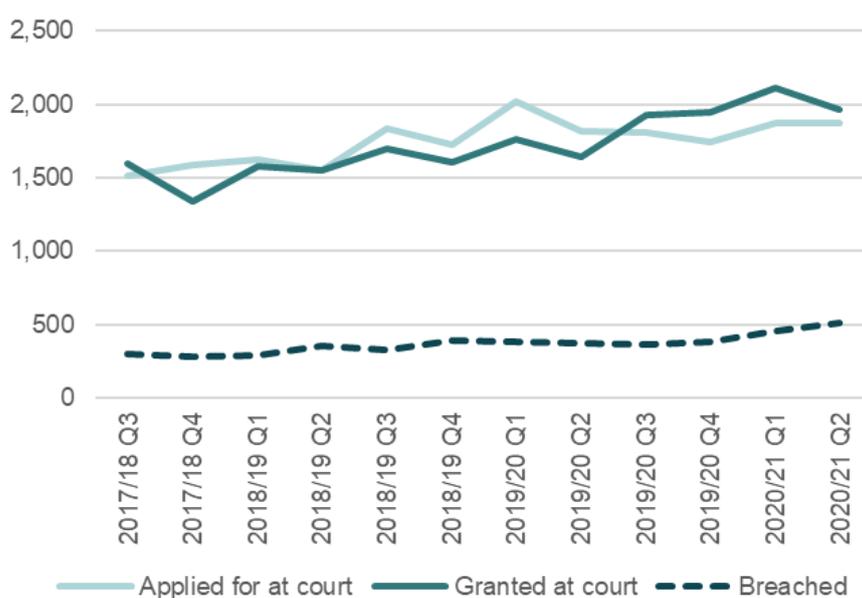
Forces used technology to manage the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (DVDS) effectively. They made disclosures securely online. Previously, this could only be done at police stations.

As a result, most forces substantially increased the numbers of DVPO and DVDS applications.

Essex Police was proactive in its approach. Between March and October 2020, it granted 181 DVPOs and dealt with 51 breaches.

Within Nottinghamshire Police, every domestic abuse occurrence is now subject to consideration for right to know, as part of the risk assessment process. Subsequently, the force is on track to have more DVDS applications than last year but it is too early to provide a final figure.

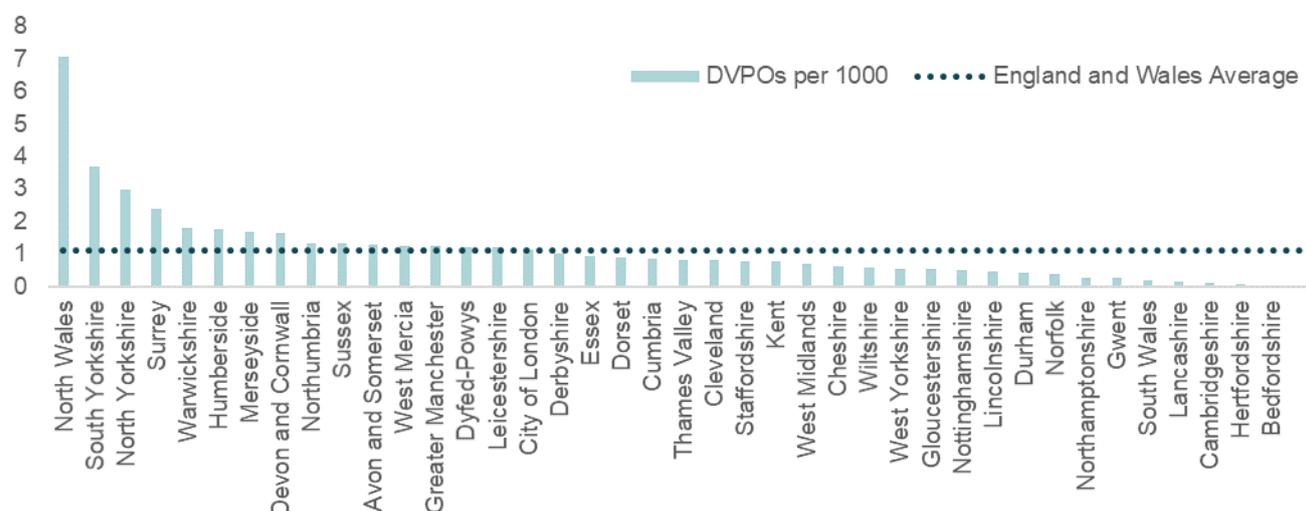
Figure 5: Number of DVPOs, England and Wales



Source: HMICFRS data collection

Despite DVPO applications remaining nearly level, DVPOs granted at court continued to increase to Q2 2020–21, and breaches have also increased but remain in the same proportion as the historic trend.

Figure 6: Number of DVPOs granted per 1,000 domestic abuse-related offences, by force, in the 12 months to 30 September 2020



Source: HMICFRS data collection, Home Office domestic abuse data

Suffolk Constabulary, the Metropolitan Police Service and Hampshire Constabulary could not provide data on DVPO applications. The England and Wales average number of DVPOs granted is just over 1 per 1,000. Most forces grant numbers of DVPOs around this average, but numbers range from 7 per 1,000 to nearly zero. On average, 88 percent of DVPOs applications are granted. This figure is reduced by relatively few forces with lower than average grant rates. However, the bottom four forces also received well below average numbers of applications (the England and Wales average being 44, and the total for Lincolnshire Police being 12), meaning that even slight changes will result in large differences.

Through the initial stages of the pandemic, some forces continued to contribute to the work they do with other organisations. This included the safeguarding children partnerships and the safeguarding adults boards.

Home working became common for many officers and staff, who held meetings with other organisations via virtual platforms. Forces adapted well. Initially, there were concerns about the ability of probation staff and children’s social care to access technology from their homes. This was due to a lack of technical compatibility. There were times when police officers took on the roles of other bodies, such as visiting perpetrators to check their compliance with sentence and order conditions, supporting victims awaiting court processes and carrying out safety checks on children at home.

The effectiveness of joint visits by police and probation staff with offenders was curbed until most partners could access technology and particularly Microsoft Teams, the system that is used by most other organisations.

Hertfordshire Constabulary worked with the Domestic Abuse Alliance on a national launch of We Protect, a victim referral app. Frontline officers use the app to refer victims to free legal advice (with their consent). A panel of solicitors then offers help in securing non-molestation orders.

Hampshire Constabulary works with other organisations to maintain a COVID-19 domestic abuse gold group. Attendees at this group include local specialist domestic abuse services, the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, IDVAs and housing associations. The focus is on reviewing domestic abuse demand and risk, and ways to support vulnerable people.

At the start of the pandemic, some forces' investigations were initially delayed. This was because investigators couldn't access evidential material from other organisations, such as information from GPs and children's social care records.

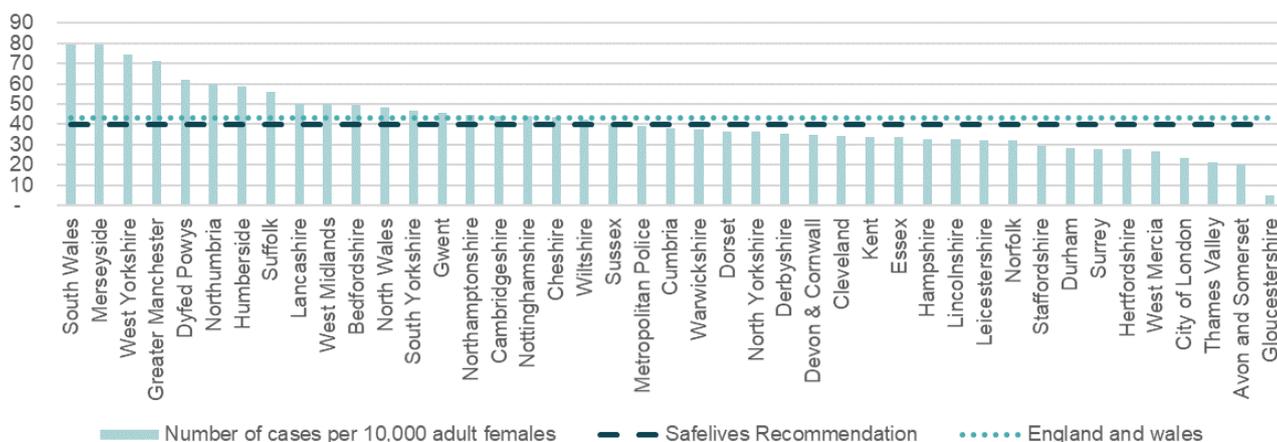
Multi-agency risk assessment conference

A MARAC is a meeting where information on the highest risk domestic abuse cases is shared between representatives of local police, health, child protection, housing practitioners, independent domestic violence advisers (IDVAs), probation and other specialists from the statutory and voluntary sectors. After sharing all relevant information about a victim, the representatives discuss options for increasing the safety of the victim and create a co-ordinated action plan. The primary focus of the MARAC is to safeguard the adult victim. The MARAC will also make links with others to safeguard children and manage the behaviour of the perpetrator. At the heart of a MARAC is the working assumption that no single agency or individual can see the complete picture of the life of a victim, but all may have insights that are crucial to their safety. The victim does not attend the meeting but is represented by an IDVA who speaks on their behalf.

MARACs take place after domestic abuse is reported to the police. The case is either established as high risk, or a support organisation assesses it as needing discussion at a MARAC.

The use of MARACs is broadly proportionate to that suggested by SafeLives for the local population. SafeLives is a national charity dedicated to improving the response to domestic abuse in conjunction with other organisations. It recommends 40 MARACs per 10,000 women in the population, based on its analysis of the prevalence of domestic violence. The suggested level was exceeded by West Midlands, Greater Manchester, West Yorkshire, Lancashire, Northumbria, Merseyside, South Yorkshire, South Wales, Nottinghamshire, Cheshire, Humberside, Cambridgeshire, Suffolk, North Wales, Northamptonshire, Wiltshire, Bedfordshire, and Gwent police forces. We were unable to source data for Dyfed-Powys for 2020, but it exceeded the SafeLives recommended number in 2019.

Figure 7: Number of cases discussed at MARACs per 10,000 adult females, per force, in the 12 months to 31 March 2020



Source: SafeLives

The most recent data from SafeLives indicates that the total number of cases discussed at MARACs decreased in April to June 2020 compared with the previous quarter (see the Women’s Aid report, [A perfect storm](#)). This was the first time in five years that one quarter’s data had reduced compared with that of the previous quarter. This may reflect the difficulties that victims at high risk of domestic abuse faced reporting abuse or attempting to safely contact the police during the first lockdown. (Victims at high risk of domestic abuse are the main source of referral to MARACs.)

Soon after the initial lockdown, MARAC processes moved online. Most forces reported better attendance and contributions to the process. However, 30 percent of MARAC attendees interviewed in the SafeLives survey said they were not meeting virtually, with some opting for a reduced attendance. Some MARACs reported improvement in multi-agency working, but well over half reported IT issues. Those MARACs sitting virtually should strive for full attendance for all nine core agencies, as detailed in the [SafeLives guidance for multi-agency forums](#) released at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Durham Constabulary reviewed the cases of all victims who have been discussed at a MARAC and contacted those victims. The constabulary also reviewed repeat domestic abuse incidents. It defined ‘repeats’ as two incidents in five days. It then reviewed the incidents or further lines of enquiry.

Prior to the pandemic, Humberside Police referred approximately 200 people a week to a MARAC. At the start of the lockdown, referrals from other agencies to a MARAC reduced significantly. This raised concerns about victims at risk who would ordinarily have been protected through a referral.

Together with other organisations, the force agreed a process for maintaining contact with victims at high risk of domestic abuse. IDVAs arranged contact calls with victims. If the IDVA couldn't speak with a victim after two calls, the case was referred to the police. An officer then visited and conducted a safe and well check. The force extended this service to the top 15 medium-risk victims. As a result, it identified and dealt with more than 20 breaches of DVPNs and DVPOs.

The police and partners innovated to support victims

During the initial phase of the pandemic, forces used creative ways to interact with callers

Lincolnshire Police produced a short video made in collaboration with EDAN Lincs Domestic Abuse Service. The service offers emergency accommodation and support to people who are experiencing domestic abuse. Police show victims the video at the scene of an enquiry. The video educates them about domestic abuse and its effects and advises about support.

Sussex Police bought a new IT system so it could have virtual appointments with victims of domestic abuse.

This simple and intuitive program sends a one-time link to the victim, at a time of their choosing, to any internet-enabled smart device. The victim clicks on the link and arrives at a virtual consultation room, where an officer is waiting.

At the end of the consultation, the victim is asked to delete the link and all evidence of the appointment is gone. This helps to protect victims if their abusers check their devices.

Local feedback indicates high levels of satisfaction with the program. But it hasn't yet been fully evaluated.

West Mercia Police worked with TSB Bank to offer Safe Spaces in some of the bank's branches as part of the 'UK says no more' campaign.

The force trained bank staff and agreed how they should respond to calls from Safe Space branches. Worcestershire became the first region in the UK where TSB Bank offers support through the Safe Spaces initiative. Four of the bank's branches have dedicated space to help local people who are suffering domestic abuse. The intention is that victims will have someone to talk to who is trained to understand domestic abuse, in a safe environment. Victims can then tell the police what is happening to them.

Norfolk and Suffolk constabularies worked with a victim advocacy agency to trial Ring doorbells for victims of domestic abuse. These are usually used for burglary victims. They help victims to identify callers via an app on their mobile phone, which accesses a camera at their front door. This helps to deter perpetrators from attending the address. The constabularies told us that the trial was reported to be successful.

Staffordshire Police trialled a scheme that gave domestic abuse and stalking victims links to the Hollie Guard and Bright Sky apps. Hollie Guard gives real-time alert notifications if a victim feels in danger. It has 24/7 monitoring by trained security personnel. If a victim can't call the police directly, they can use the app to enable a third party to contact the police on their behalf.

Bright Sky is a mobile app that is free to download. It was launched in partnership between Hestia and the Vodafone Foundation. Thames Valley Police, as part of the Thames Valley Partnership, promoted the app locally. It offers support and information to anyone who may be experiencing domestic abuse or is concerned about someone they know. The app offers information about domestic abuse, covering matters such as online safety, stalking and harassment, and sexual offences. The app is available in Polish, Punjabi and Urdu. It features a UK-wide directory of specialist domestic abuse support services, so victims can contact their nearest service from the app.

Hampshire Constabulary told us about its work with a local charity, Aurora New Dawn. The charity has a 24-hour helpline and allows victims and police to speak to a domestic abuse advocate at any point.

Delays and backlogs in the criminal justice system are a very significant concern

The COVID-19 pandemic has presented significant difficulties for the criminal justice system in England and Wales. It has meant that criminal justice procedures, including court processes, couldn't operate as they normally do. This has created delays and backlogs in timescales for cases to be heard at court and caused trial dates to be repeatedly rescheduled.

The impact on victims of domestic abuse should not be underestimated. We know that ordinarily a high proportion of victims of domestic abuse are reluctant to support a prosecution for a variety of reasons. Delays in investigations, lack of contact and lengthy court processes more generally result in high levels of disengagement. Extended waiting times between a charge being made and a case being heard at court increase the risk of victims disengaging.

In the report [*CPS response to COVID-19: dealing with backlogs*](#), it was highlighted that victims were left in a state of limbo while waiting for new hearing dates to be set when previous ones had been adjourned. Witness Care Units (run by the police who contact, update, and warn victims and witnesses for court) made huge efforts to work through lists of postponed cases to update victims and provide reassurance and access to support. However, in nearly all cases, a clear indication of a future hearing date could not be given.

The report highlights that some magistrates' courts fixed single future dates for all trials – locally called 'bucket lists' trial dates. The rationale for this was that there needed to be a court date for all parties to plan for. While this may seem better than having no clear indication of when a hearing might happen, in reality it meant that the vast majority of victims and witnesses would end up with entirely different dates for hearings when magistrate courts reopened. The impact of this on victims is at best unsettling.

Sometimes, courts listed multiple cases for the same time to maximise court time, which often led to repeated trial date rescheduling. This only serves to support victims' views that their experiences and the harm they are enduring is not taken seriously. This in turn can have longer term implications regarding their willingness to report future offences and engage in future prosecutions. Individually and collectively, these issues place victims at greater risk of harm from perpetrators and enable a cycle of abuse to continue.

More detail regarding the backlogs and measures to reduce their impact is contained in the report by the four criminal justice inspectorates entitled [Impact of the pandemic on the criminal justice system – A joint view of the criminal justice chief inspectors on the criminal justice system's response to COVID-19](#). (The four inspectorates are Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services, Her Majesty's Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons, and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation.)

According to this joint statement, the length of time to trial increased greatly during 2020. On 14 December 2020, HMCTS released data showing that the volume of live magistrates' court cases at that time was 83 percent higher than usual, with Crown Court cases 44 percent higher. The Lord Chancellor told the Justice Select Committee at that time that cases were being listed in 2022, but that it was hoped additional funding would allow listing officers to bring trials forward. A report published by HM Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate in March 2021 stated that in some areas trial dates are now having to be set into 2023 ([CPS response to COVID-19: dealing with backlogs](#)).

As previously mentioned in this report, at the time of reviewing data, other than coercive control, there was no specific criminal offence for domestic abuse. Cases are dealt with in line with the offence recorded (such as assault or harassment). These are summary only offences and have a time limit: court proceedings should begin no later than six months after the date of the offence. A summary only offence is assessed as lower severity. It includes most driving offences and common assault. These can only be tried in magistrates' courts.

The Coronavirus Crisis Protocol was agreed between the CPS, HMCTS and the senior presiding judge. As part of the protocol, time restrictions were extended on prosecuting summary only offences in domestic abuse cases.

CPS advice

CPS Direct gives charging decisions on priority cases throughout England and Wales. Much of its work is out of hours; it offers an emergency response 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Many forces said that CPS Direct's approach of dealing only with in-custody remand charging decisions has been detrimental, as it resulted in delays obtaining advice and charging decisions for some domestic abuse crimes. This left suspects on bail for longer, which could result in victims being exposed to further risk of harm, particularly those who were still living with their abuser. In some cases, victims withdrew their support for a prosecution to due delays in charging decisions.

Pre-charge bail and released under investigation

An aim of the Policing and Crime Act 2017 was to end the police practice of keeping people on pre-charge bail for long periods without independent judicial scrutiny. Where bail is still used, the circumstances of the investigation must fully justify it. When bail can't be justified, accused persons are released under investigation. In these cases, the police can't place restrictions on the person's release, for example to prevent them from contacting the victim, witnesses or otherwise interfering with an investigation.

Often conditions are needed for suspects who are released on bail while being investigated for domestic abuse offences. The conditions are to help safeguard victims from further abuse. Domestic abuse crimes can result in tragic outcomes if victims aren't protected.

Our joint thematic inspection in 2019 with Her Majesty's Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate found cases of released under investigation without bail conditions in place to protect domestic abuse victims. When those cases were finalised in court, the court imposed restraining orders to prevent the suspects from contacting their victims. However, in many cases the victim had been left for several months prior to that without the protection that bail can offer. More details can be found in the report [*Pre-charge bail and released under investigation: striking a balance*](#).

Since the joint thematic inspection, every force increased the use of bail in domestic abuse cases and significantly reduced the use of released under investigation, which was a very positive move.

However, during the pandemic, some investigations couldn't be finalised due to delays in getting necessary information from other parties within initial bail periods. While offenders can be bailed on more than one occasion if enquiries are taking longer than expected, some suspects were released under investigation. This is worrying in domestic abuse cases, as perpetrators will have no conditions to deter them from re-offending against the victim.

Some forces told us they were concerned about an increased use of pre-charge bail during the pandemic in case it negatively affected victims and witnesses.

Court closures and delays

Some forces continued to staff the running of the virtual court systems. All court buildings were closed, and remand hearings for prisoners who were in custody at police stations still needed to continue. The hearings ran from police stations, linking remotely with the judiciary.

This arrangement came with additional responsibilities for managing risks, as well as caring for victims and witnesses, and detainees during their stay in police custody. More detail can be found in [Impact of the pandemic on the criminal justice system – A joint view of the criminal justice chief inspectors on the criminal justice system’s response to COVID-19](#).

The length of time to trial increased significantly during 2020, with magistrate cases charge to finalisation timeframes almost doubling from 8 to 14 weeks. The true impact will only be clear when all outcome data is available for cases that are currently in the criminal justice system and awaiting decisions and trials.

As all four criminal justice inspectorates highlighted in the report, delays in courts represent a fundamental risk to the effective running of the criminal justice system. These problems were present before COVID-19 and have been exacerbated by the pandemic. All inspectorates are committed to monitoring progress in this area.

Recommendation 2

We recommend that forces **immediately** review their capacity to provide ongoing support and safeguarding to victims of domestic abuse whose case is awaiting trial at court. This should:

- ensure there are sufficient resources available to maintain contact with victims to keep them up to date with the progress of their case; and
- enable the offer of access to specialist support services as well as opportunities to address concerns victims may have regarding continuing to support a prosecution through the delays.

Witness care and continued victim involvement

Three factors have put additional pressure on forces during the pandemic: the need to manage domestic abuse reports and support to victims; on occasions managing staff who were absent due to sickness, who needed support or to self-isolate; and court closures.

These factors meant that cases progressed (and continue to progress) very slowly through the criminal justice system. While the police were able to progress cases more quickly, these have been held up initially by court closures, but latterly due to courts being unable to implement COVID-secure measures, referenced in the 2020 study by Women’s Aid, [A perfect storm](#).

Some forces told us that the slow progress did affect victims’ willingness to remain involved with the prosecutions. Officers involved in the cases (or witness care officers)

had to manage victims' expectations carefully. They had to do this alongside the long-term considerations for managing risk posed by the perpetrator.

On 12 June 2020, a memorandum of understanding was agreed across the criminal justice system. It concerned existing commitments under the Victim's Code, and set out how witness care units, HMCTS, the CPS and the police would ensure effective court hearings. The [Code of Practice for Victims of Crime](#) is a statutory government document. It sets out the information, support and services that victims of crime are entitled to receive from criminal justice agencies in England and Wales. These agencies include the police and the CPS. The memorandum seeks to maximise the effectiveness of court hearings by identifying issues and having a clear understanding of the needs of victims and witnesses in domestic abuse cases. It also reinforces the principle that victims should be told about local specialist support services, including IDVAs, and should be referred to them when it is appropriate to do so.

In Devon and Cornwall, the force and the CPS developed a retraction statement. A victim gives this statement to indicate their unwillingness to attend court and give evidence. Usually, but not always, a domestic abuse expert takes such statements. The aim of creating a proforma statement is to help improve the quality of information to support evidence-led prosecutions to continue when a victim declines to continue to support a prosecution. (An evidence-led case is one where the victim doesn't wish to support the prosecution, but the police and CPS pursue the complaint using other evidence. This includes body-worn video evidence, statements from GPs or other organisations, and the call to the operator.)

The exceptionally low volume of domestic abuse cases resulting in a charge remains unacceptable

Charge rates remain low

The charge rate for domestic abuse crimes in England and Wales continues to fall. This is despite forces increasing their focus on victims. Data highlights that in 2016 the average charge rate for domestic abuse cases was 23.2 percent. In 2020 this had dropped to 9 percent, a reduction of 14.2 percent.

The below chart lists the outcomes that can be used when finalising an investigation for domestic abuse. The chart highlights the decrease over the previous five years, in the percentage of domestic abuse cases in which a charge was applied.

For 2018/19, data is not available for Cumbria, Humberside, Kent, South Yorkshire, West Midlands or Wiltshire. For 2019/20, data is not available for Dyfed-Powys, Greater Manchester, Humberside, Kent, Nottinghamshire, South Yorkshire, Warwickshire or Wiltshire.

Table 3: Outcome comparisons in England and Wales from March 2016 to March 2020

Outcome	12 months to Mar 2016	12 months to Jun 2017	12 months to Sep 2018	12 months to Mar 2019	12 months to Mar 2020
Charged/summonsed	23.2%	18.6%	12.6%	11.4%	9.0%
Caution – adults	5.6%	3.8%	2.0%	1.9%	1.5%
Caution – youths	0.3%	0.3%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%
Community resolution	1.4%	1.1%	0.8%	0.8%	0.6%
Outcome 15 – Evidential difficulty prevents further action; victim supports police action	24.1%	23.7%	23.8%	23.1%	23.0%
Outcome 16 – Evidential difficulty prevents further action; victim does not support police action	35.4%	43.0%	51.9%	53.1%	54.0%

Source: HMICFRS data collection

Use of outcomes 15 and 16

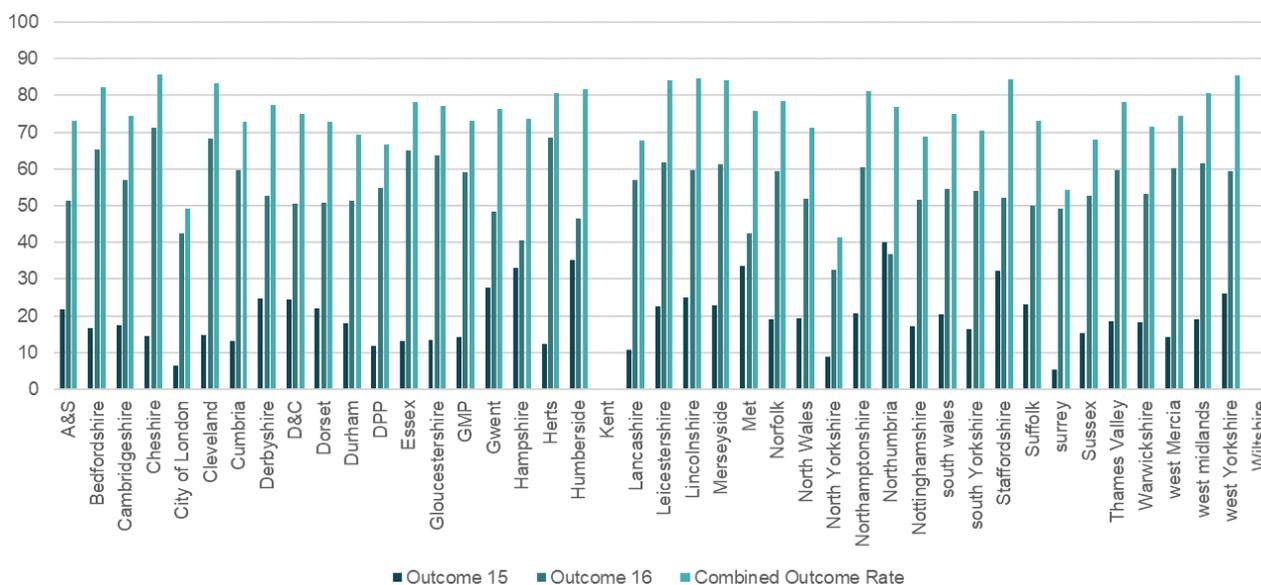
An outcome code allows every crime recorded by the police to be given an outcome, showing how the police deal with all crimes (including crimes that are still under investigation).

Outcome 15 is where a victim supports the prosecution but there are evidential difficulties, which could be a lack of evidence collected, and the case is not continued. Outcome 16 is where a suspect has been identified but the victim no longer supports the prosecution.

The below chart provides a force by force comparator of the use of outcome 15, outcome 16 and the total combined use of both outcomes. The data considers outcomes applied for during a 12-month rolling period up to March 2020.

Data for the full 12-month period was not available for Kent or Wiltshire, so the chart shows 0 outcomes for all categories for those forces.

Figure 8: Rate of use of outcomes 15 and 16 for domestic abuse-related crime, by force, in the 12 months to 31 March 2020



Source: HMICFRS data collection

The use of outcomes 15 and 16 by forces continues to increase, which is particularly concerning. It means that victims are not receiving a criminal justice outcome and as a result may be unprotected from their abuser.

Our most recent data shows that on average over 50 percent of cases are finalised using outcome 16. This represents an 18.6 percent increase from 2016 to 2020. Most concerning, on average 75 percent of victims' cases (combining outcome 15 and outcome 16) are being discontinued by police, which represents a 17.5 percent increase from 2016 to 2020.

As a result, on average across England and Wales, there is only a 25 percent chance that a perpetrator of domestic abuse will be charged or cautioned.

We recognise victims' right to decide what a positive outcome means for them. Furthermore, we understand that victims may not want their case to go to court and purely wish for the abuse to stop. But in many cases, there is a lack of auditable evidence to show that there has been enough engagement with victims about discontinuation. And it often isn't clear that forces have taken all opportunities to support victims to engage in proceedings nor that officers understand the benefits both from a future crime prevention and successful criminal outcome perspective of enabling victims to engage with support services.

We will continue to place close emphasis on this worrying statistic throughout our PEEL inspection processes and our violence against women and girls thematic inspection this year.

Recommendation 3

We recommend that all forces **immediately** review their use of outcome 15, outcome 16 and evidence-led prosecutions. This is to ensure that:

- domestic abuse investigations guarantee all attempts to engage victims are explored, and that all possible lines of evidence are considered so that in all cases the best possible outcomes for victims are achieved;
- there is regular and effective supervision of investigations that supports the above point to be achieved; and
- the use of outcomes 15 and 16 is appropriate, and the reasons for using them, including auditable evidence of victim engagement, are clearly recorded.

More positively, the rate at which the police issue cautions to domestic abuse perpetrators also continues to fall. Usually, the police use a caution for low-level offending where a person admits their guilt. The offenders receive a warning, but don't attend court or receive a conviction.

We don't believe that a caution is appropriate in most domestic abuse cases, given the serious nature of domestic abuse. We remain confident that the police don't consider the use of cautions to be appropriate for the completion of most domestic abuse cases.

Annex A: Academic research

We were pleased to learn that academic research focusing on domestic abuse has continued during the pandemic. Three examples are outlined below.

Domestic Homicides – The National Policing Vulnerability Knowledge and Practice Programme working with the National Police Chiefs’ Council, the College of Policing and the Home Office

The project, established in August 2020, counted deaths from the start of the first lockdown restrictions in England and Wales on 23 March 2020. Its aim was to design and implement a national pilot to better understand domestic homicides in England and Wales during the COVID-19 pandemic and all lockdowns.

The project has adopted wider terms of reference for this work than the standard definition of domestic homicide. The wider definition includes people under 16 years of age; intimate partner homicide, and homicide from a family or household member; victim suicide following domestic abuse; child death; and unexplained deaths that follow domestic abuse incidents.

This wider definition allows identification of emerging issues that affect people who are living together during the COVID-19 restrictions (for example, adolescent to parent violence). Currently, there is no legal definition of adolescent to parent violence and abuse.

The project requires forces to complete an initial assessment form within 48 hours of a domestic homicide being reported. The form asks for details of deaths that meet the wide project definition outlined above. It also asks for details about the circumstances and characteristics of those involved. And it asks for any immediate learning, to support wider practice and policy development.

The process of completing the form and reviewing the details isn’t designed to replace a domestic homicide review or the necessity for gathering wider learning from those working together. (A domestic homicide review is carried out after the murder. Safeguarding organisations such as health, police, social care and others establish what lessons should be learned from a domestic homicide regarding the way in which local professionals and organisations worked individually and together to safeguard the victim.)

The process is designed to inform the development of a national repository of the features and immediate police learning from domestic homicides. It will also support practice and policy development and improved national reporting.

We support the project's approach, its use by forces and the achievements to date. It has established:

- a unique live-time repository of all domestic homicides, including victim suicides and unexplained deaths following domestic abuse; this doesn't exist elsewhere and makes this work more relevant to understanding the dynamic of domestic homicide in all its forms;
- a new central unit to collate domestic homicide deaths nationally, with contacts in each English and Welsh force;
- the evidence base on domestic homicide deaths, including what is known and what is contested on definitions of 'domestic homicide', as well as risk and predictive factors, and typologies of perpetrators and victims;
- a process whereby police forces routinely establish and report all deaths related to domestic abuse to a central unit (the domestic homicide project team), achieving a high quality of data return and completion;
- governance and expert advisory panels consisting of police leaders, government, and an extensive network of third sector interested parties, commissioners and academics in the field of domestic abuse, homicide and child deaths; and
- quick-time data and briefings to assist current debates.

Domestic homicide continued during lockdown, including at least two cases of mothers and their children being murdered by their husband/father, but not all victims were female. There were cases where women killed their sons and/or husbands. There were large differences in the profiles of victim–suspect relationships between male and female victims.

In the year ending March 2020, female victims were more commonly killed by a partner or ex-partner or a family member, while for males the suspected killer was more commonly a friend or acquaintance, stranger or another known person. Almost half (46 percent) of adult female homicide victims were killed in a domestic homicide (81). This type of homicide decreased by 24 compared with the previous year. The 81 in the latest year was the lowest figure since relationship data first started to be collected on the Homicide Index in 1977, and there has been a general downward trend in the number of domestic homicides over the last ten years.

Males were much less likely to be the victim of a domestic homicide, with only 7 percent (33) of male homicides being domestic abuse related. This was an increase of four homicides compared with the previous year (Office for National Statistics, [Homicide in England and Wales: year ending March 2020](#)).

Early findings from the interim report in November 2020 show that most domestic homicides are still carried out by a current or former partner (50 percent). Victim suicide following domestic abuse was the second most common type (20 percent). Adult family homicide and child deaths accounted for 13 percent and 12 percent respectively.

According to the interim report, there was no apparent rise in the overall number of domestic homicides based on previous years' data. There is no comparative dataset for previous years for domestic suicides or unexplained deaths, so these numbers

cannot be contextualised. The project aims to build a comparative dataset on suicides in future.

With intimate partner and adult family homicide, it is easier to draw comparisons with previous years' data. The average number of weekly deaths since the start of the first lockdown appears to be consistent with previous years.

Domestic abuse during COVID-19 – developing a rapid police evidence base (June 2020–December 2021)

This is a national project funded by the Economic and Social Research Council. It is led by Dr Katrin Hohl (City, University of London) and Dr Kelly Johnson is a co-investigator (Durham University). The project brings together several organisations, including the Home Office, the College of Policing, the National Police Chiefs' Council, seven police forces across England and Wales, and domestic abuse third-sector interested parties.

The project provides an evidence base to inform the police approach to domestic violence and abuse during the COVID-19 lockdowns in the UK. Police case file data from seven diverse police forces is being pooled to track the impact of the pandemic on domestic abuse, analysing changes in the risk factors, frequency, nature and profile of domestic abuse reported to police. These changes are being mapped onto changes in the restrictions imposed during lockdowns, transitional phases and post lockdowns, when domestic abuse calls to police are expected to spike. The study is the largest and most rigorous analysis of police domestic abuse case file data conducted anywhere in the world to date. The statistical analysis is complemented by regular focused semi-structured phone interviews with police officers, to identify emerging challenges and best practice in the frontline approach to domestic abuse. The mixed-methods study addresses urgent questions on the impact of COVID-19 on domestic abuse, which may have significant implications for the complex task of accurate police risk assessment, victim safeguarding and criminal prosecution as the COVID-19 pandemic evolves.

Initial findings suggest that the pandemic has exposed, rather than created, the domestic abuse crisis, with long-term trends largely accounting for the observed increase in domestic abuse reporting during 2020. The research suggests that lockdown effects are complex, impacting differently on different types of abusive relationships, and that the pandemic context is keeping victims in abusive relationships for longer, delaying separations until after lockdown. Victim-survivor attempts to separate from the abuser are a known trigger of an escalation in domestic violence. Consequently, the researchers are recommending that police forces and domestic abuse charities prepare for a post-lockdown surge in reports from victims at high risk of domestic abuse and prepare to support victim-survivors wishing to safely exit abusive relationships. More preliminary findings can be found on the [Campaign for Social Science website](#) and in [written evidence to the Home Affairs Committee inquiry into Home Office preparedness for COVID-19](#).

The research directly addresses current knowledge gaps in how lockdown and social distancing measures affect domestic abuse. It provides robust evidence for domestic abuse plans in the event of another pandemic (or similar circumstances). The findings

also have the potential to help the UK Government weigh up the benefits of lockdown restrictions versus their impact on vulnerable people. The research will give guidance to police forces on handling domestic abuse incidents. It will also inform the planning and allocation of resources.

For further information, [contact Dr Katrin Hohl](#), Senior Lecturer, City, University of London.

Responding to the shadow pandemic

The University of Liverpool, funded by the Economic Social Research Council (Research and Innovation), is carrying out research on domestic abuse. This 18-month project runs until December 2021 and is based on an analysis of 26 questionnaire responses from 25 police forces (sent to 43 eligible forces in England and Wales), supplemented by 21 interviews with domestic abuse leads and senior police officers. It focuses on:

- the police and court response to domestic abuse under lockdown, while transitioning out of lockdown, the time following the easing of all restrictions and during the post-lockdown period in England and Wales;
- the innovative practices developed and their longevity; and
- making recommendations on responding to domestic abuse, using examples of good practice.

Findings have shown a mixed picture about the clarity and availability of information on domestic abuse on force websites. During the periods of national lockdown, online video platforms (such as MS Teams) appear to have been vital for a wide range of organisations, including the police. All respondents commented on the significance and value of being able to maintain virtual working relationships with other organisations. Some focused on the absence of face-to-face men's behavioural programmes, and the lack of emergency accommodation. A few forces highlighted the impact of court closures during the lockdown but were largely unaware of the longer term implications of the court backlog for victims of domestic abuse.

Highlighted good practice includes:

- using multimedia platforms to emphasise a 'business as usual' message;
- implementing a single point of contact for all domestic abuse support;
- using Facebook/online forums, and working with community leaders to access hard-to-reach audiences;
- having a police presence in supermarkets, pharmacies and local shops, offering safe spaces for victims to report domestic abuse, and giving doorbell cameras to victims at high risk of domestic abuse;
- using analytics to identify victims at high risk of domestic abuse with whom contact had been lost and to identify high-risk offenders, and reminding people on bail or released under investigation of any conditions they have to abide by; and
- holding regular (daily or weekly) online MARACs to ensure swift responses and the development of safety plans for victims at high risk of domestic abuse.

[Other findings are available on the University of Liverpool School of Law and Social Justice website.](#)

For further information, [contact S L Walklate](#), University of Liverpool.

Annex B: Domestic Abuse Act 2021

This year we saw the domestic abuse bill making its way through the legislative process and receiving Royal Assent on 29 April 2021. This new legislation:

- gives a statutory definition of domestic abuse, which recognises children as victims in their own right;
- establishes the office of Domestic Abuse Commissioner and set out the Commissioner's functions and powers;
- provides for a new Domestic Abuse Protection Notice and Domestic Abuse Protection Order;
- identifies non-fatal strangulation as an offence;
- extends coercive and controlling behaviour to post-separation abuse;
- extends the offence of disclosing a private sexual photograph or film with intent to cause distress to an individual who appears in the photograph or film (the so-called 'revenge porn' offence) to include threats to disclose private sexual photographs and films;
- prohibits perpetrators of domestic and other forms of abuse from cross-examining their victims in person in the family courts (and prevents victims from having to cross-examine their abusers);
- gives the courts discretion to prevent cross-examination in person, where it would diminish the quality of the witness's evidence or cause the witness significant distress;
- creates a statutory presumption that complainants of an offence involving behaviour that amounts to domestic abuse are eligible for special measures in the criminal courts, family and civil courts;
- enables domestic abuse offenders to be subject to polygraph testing as a condition of their licence following their release from custody;
- places the guidance supporting the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme on a statutory footing;
- ensures a secure lifetime tenancy where a local authority grants a new secure tenancy to a social tenant who has (or had) a secure lifetime or assured tenancy (other than an assured shorthold tenancy); and
- extends the extra-territorial jurisdiction of the criminal courts in England and Wales to further violent and sexual offences.

We welcome the Domestic Abuse Act, which will equip the police with new tools to provide victims with better support and immediate protection from abusers.

Annex C: Definitions and interpretation

In this review, the following words, phrases and expressions in the left-hand column have the meanings assigned to them in the right-hand column.

Sometimes, the definition will be followed by a fuller explanation of the matter in question, with references to sources and other material which may be of help to the reader.

Term	Definition
bail conditions	terms on which a defendant is granted bail, pending a court hearing. Their purpose is to make sure that the defendant attends the next court hearing, commits no new offences in the meantime, and doesn't interfere with any witnesses or obstruct the course of justice. They are usually set by the court, which can grant bail without any such conditions, or can detain the defendant in custody, before the first court hearing. The police can also detain a defendant in custody or grant bail, with or without conditions attached. The police's powers to do so are more limited than those of the courts. Breach of these conditions may amount to a separate offence under Section 7(3) of the Bail Act 1976.
Code of Practice for Victims of Crime	statutory code of practice issued by the Secretary of State for Justice under Section 32 of the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004. The code establishes minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime. The stated objective is to make sure the criminal justice system puts victims first, making the system more responsive to them and easier for them to navigate. It also aims to ensure that victims of crime are treated well and receive appropriate support to help them cope and recover, and to protect them from becoming victims again. The code specifies the services that must be given to victims of crime in England and Wales and sets a minimum for the standard of those services. Higher entitlements are set for victims of the most serious crime, persistently targeted victims and vulnerable or intimidated victims. The code specifies those public sector bodies that are obliged to give services to victims of crime. They include police forces and police and crime commissioners. The Victims' Commissioner has a statutory duty to keep the code under regular review.

Term	Definition
coercion and control	coercive, controlling behaviour and actions of a perpetrator that are intended to control the victim through isolation, intimidation, degradation and micro-regulation of everyday life. The term and concept were developed by Evan Stark, seeking to explain the range of tactics used by perpetrators, and their effects on victims. The concept highlights the continuing nature of the behaviour, and the extent to which the actions of the perpetrator control the victim. Crucially, the concept sets out that such abuse can be psychological as well as physical. The term is explicitly covered within the definition of domestic abuse. The offence of controlling or coercive behaviour within an intimate or familial relationship is set out in Section 76 of the Serious Crime Act 2015, and carries a maximum sentence of five years' imprisonment, a fine, or both, for offenders.
control room	facility in each police force in which call operators answer telephone calls from the public, determine the circumstances of the call and decide the initial response.
cuckooing	means by which a drug dealer (or network) takes over the home address of a vulnerable person to use it to prepare, store or deal drugs. Commonly associated with exploitation and violence.
domestic abuse, stalking, harassment and honour-based violence (DASH) assessment	risk identification, assessment and management model adopted by UK police forces and other organisations in 2009.
domestic homicide review	multi-agency review within the local police area following a domestic homicide. Aims to establish the lessons that can be learned from homicides where a person is killed because of domestic violence, with a view to preventing future homicides and violence.

Term	Definition
Domestic Violence Protection Notice (DVPN)	made against a suspected perpetrator of domestic violence. Its purpose is to give emergency protection to a person who is believed to be the victim of domestic violence. This notice, which must be authorised by a police superintendent, contains prohibitions that effectively bar the suspected perpetrator from returning to the victim's home or otherwise contacting the victim with immediate effect. It may be issued to a person aged 18 years and over if the police superintendent has reasonable grounds for believing that the recipient has been violent, or has threatened violence, towards an associated person, and the DVPN is necessary to protect that person from violence or a threat of violence by the recipient. It was introduced by Sections 24–33 of the Crime and Security Act 2010. It was piloted in three police areas in 2011–12 and was introduced nationally in 2014.
Domestic Violence Protection Order (DVPO)	power that helps the police and magistrates' courts to put in place protection in the immediate aftermath of a domestic abuse incident. Where there is insufficient evidence to charge a perpetrator and give protection to a victim via bail conditions, a DVPO can prevent the perpetrator from returning to a residence and from having contact with the victim for up to 28 days. This gives the victim an opportunity to consider their options and get the support and guidance they need from a dedicated domestic abuse service.
harassment	causing alarm or distress and/or putting people in fear of violence. It includes the offence of stalking, either in person or through other means of communication. It is defined under Sections 2 and 4 of the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 as amended. High-risk harassment means it is likely that a victim will be subject to an incident that is life-threatening and/or traumatic, and from which recovery, whether physical or psychological, can be expected to be difficult or impossible.
independent domestic violence adviser (IDVA)	trained specialist who gives a service to victims who are at high risk of harm from intimate partners, ex-partners or family members, with the aim of securing their safety and the safety of their children. Also known as independent domestic violence advocates. They serve as a victim's primary point of contact and normally work with their clients from the point of crisis, to assess the level of risk, discuss the range of suitable options and develop safety plans. They also represent the victim's voice in MARAC meetings. They can be accessed through voluntary organisations against domestic abuse or local authority services, and usually work within a multi-agency framework.

Term	Definition
multi-agency risk assessment conference (MARAC)	meeting in which information about domestic abuse victims at high risk is shared between local statutory and voluntary agencies, including nine core agencies (police, IDVAs, probation, children's services, mental health, primary health, substance misuse, housing and adult safeguarding). They work to produce a risk-focused, co-ordinated safety plan to support the victim.
multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH)	location in which staff from the police, local authority and other safeguarding agencies share data, research and decision-making in relation to local children and adults who are vulnerable. Representatives from agencies are likely to include police public protection unit, children's social care, health and education providers, child and adolescent mental health services, adult services, substance misuse, the early intervention services, and probation and housing, among others. The purpose is to ensure a timely and joined-up response for children and vulnerable adults who need protection.
partnership	established collaborative working between the police and other public, private or voluntary organisations.
positive action	activity conducted at all stages of the police approach to ensure effective protection of victims and children, while allowing the criminal justice system to hold the offender to account. It is often used in the context of arrest policy (that is, that an arrest will normally be 'necessary' under the terms of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 to protect a child or vulnerable person, to prevent the suspect causing injury and/or to allow for the prompt and effective investigation of the offence).
risk assessment	structured professional judgment using a guide/checklist method by which the likelihood of risk is determined. Completion is intended to help police officers in the decision-making process on appropriate levels of intervention for victims of domestic abuse.
safeguarding	process of protecting vulnerable people from abuse or neglect.

Term	Definition
SafeLives	UK-wide charity dedicated to ending domestic abuse, for everyone and for good. SafeLives works with organisations across the UK to transform the response to domestic abuse. SafeLives looks at the whole picture for each individual and family to get the right help at the right time to make families everywhere safe and well. Last year alone, nearly 13,500 professionals received SafeLives training. Over 70,000 adults at risk of serious harm or murder and more than 85,000 children received support through dedicated multi-agency support designed by SafeLives and delivered with partners.
vulnerable person	person in need of special care, support or protection because of age, disability, or risk of abuse or neglect.

Annex D: About the data

The information presented in this review comes from a range of sources, including data published by the Home Office, the Office for National Statistics, inspection fieldwork from 19 forces, and self-assessment returns from all 43 police forces in England and Wales.

Where we collected data directly from police forces, we took reasonable steps to agree the design of the data collection with forces and with other interested parties (such as the Home Office).

We gave forces several opportunities to quality assure and validate the data they gave us, to make sure the evidence presented was accurate. For instance:

- we checked and queried data with forces where they had submitted data that was notably different from other forces' data or was internally inconsistent; and
- we asked all forces to check the final data used in the report and to correct any errors found.

Methodology

Forces not included or where the data return isn't comparable to others are listed alongside their respective graphs. Our data is sourced from a combination of published sources and HMICFRS data. British Transport Police was outside the scope of inspection. Any aggregated totals for England and Wales exclude British Transport Police data, so will differ from those published by the Home Office.

Population

For all uses of population as a denominator in our calculations, we use the Office for National Statistics mid-2016 population estimates (unless otherwise noted). This was the most recent data available at the time.

For the specific case of City of London Police, we include both resident and transient populations within our calculations. This is to account for the unique nature and demographics of this force's responsibility.

In the chart 'Domestic abuse crimes per 1,000 population', we were not able to source directly comparable incident data for South Wales Police. Using comparable data, 26.5 domestic abuse marked crimes per 100 were detected; the force told us that that approximately 28 domestic abuse incidents were detected per 1,000 people in South Wales Police. Both figures are significantly above the average for England and Wales. We were not able to source incidents data for Hampshire. City of London had very low incidents and crimes due to its small resident population.

Recorded crime and crime outcomes

We obtained this data from Home Office police-recorded crime and outcomes data tables for the 12 months to 31 March 2020.

Total police-recorded crime includes all crime, except fraud offences, recorded by all police forces in England and Wales. Home Office publications on the overall volumes and rates of recorded crime and outcomes include the British Transport Police, which is outside the scope of this inspection. Therefore, England and Wales rates in this report will differ from those published by the Home Office.

Any data referring to police-recorded crime should be treated with care. Recent increases may be attributed to the renewed focus on the quality and compliance of crime recording since our national inspection of crime data in 2014, and continuing crime data integrity inspection programme.

Other notable points to consider when interpreting outcomes data are as follows:

- Crime outcome proportions show the percentage of crimes recorded in the 12 months to 30 June 2020 that have been assigned each outcome. This means that each crime is tracked or linked to its outcome. Therefore, this data is subject to change, as more crimes are assigned outcomes over time.
- Under the new framework, 37 police forces in England and Wales give outcomes data through the Home Office data hub every month. All other forces give this data via a manual return. They also do this monthly.
- Direct comparisons shouldn't be made between general crime outcomes and domestic abuse-related outcomes. Domestic abuse-related outcomes are based on the number of outcomes for domestic-abuse related offences recorded in the 12 months to 30 June 2020, irrespective of when the crime was recorded. Therefore, the domestic abuse-related crimes and outcomes recorded in the reporting year aren't tracked, whereas the general outcomes are.

Domestic abuse-related offences

Data relating to domestic abuse-related offences is obtained through the Home Office for the 12 months to 31 March 2020. The Home Office collects this data regularly and requires all forces to record accurately, and flag, domestic abuse crimes. Domestic abuse flags should be applied in accordance with the Home Office Counting Rules for Recorded Crime to ensure consistency across forces, and within published datasets.

The Office for National Statistics collected data relating to domestic abuse arrests and outcomes directly from all 43 geographic police forces in England and Wales.

Further information about the domestic abuse statistics and recent releases is available from the Office for National Statistics.

Domestic abuse arrest rate (per 100 domestic abuse-related offences) in England and Wales in the 12 months to 31 March 2020

The arrest rate is calculated using a common time period for arrests and offences. It is important to note that each arrest isn't necessarily directly linked to its specific domestic abuse offence recorded in the 12 months to 31 March 2020 in this calculation. It is also possible to have more than one arrest per offence.

In addition, the reader should note the increase in police-recorded crime which affected most forces over the last year. This may mean arrest rates are higher than the figures suggest. Despite this, the calculation still indicates whether the force prioritises arrests for domestic abuse offenders over other potential forms of action.

During our inspection process, we evaluated the arrest rate alongside other measures (such as use of voluntary attendance or body-worn video cameras), to understand how each force deals with domestic abuse overall.

Annex E: Domestic abuse reference group members

The reference group supports the development and delivery of the domestic abuse elements of the HMICFRS inspection programme. The group also provides expertise and challenge when developing recommendations on police practice. Their input over the years has been invaluable.

- Karen Morgan-Read, Crown Prosecution Service
- Sophie Linden, Deputy Mayor, The Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime
- Nicole Jacobs, Domestic Abuse Commissioner
- Veronica Oakeshott, Drive Partnership
- Helen Davies, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation
- Priya Patel, Home Office
- Karen Reader, Home Office
- AC Louisa Rolfe, Metropolitan Police and the National Policing Lead on Domestic Abuse
- Julia Mulligan, North Yorkshire Police and Crime Commissioner
- Julia Dwyer, Refuge
- Jane Keeper, Refuge
- Kelly Maguire, Respect
- Jo Todd, Respect
- Jessica Asato, SafeLives
- ACC David Thorne, South Wales Police
- David Tucker, The College of Policing
- Vera Baird QC, Victims' Commissioner
- Rachel Nicholas, Victim Support
- Angie Whitaker, West Midlands Police and Staff Officer to AC Louisa Rolfe
- Lucy Hadley, Women's Aid

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WEST MERCIA POLICE AND CRIME PANEL 15 SEPTEMBER 2021

POLICE & CRIME PLAN ACTIVITY AND PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT (JULY – AUGUST 2021)

Recommendation

1. Members of the Panel are invited to consider this report.

Background

2. The purpose of this report is to provide members of the Police and Crime Panel with an overview of activity undertaken by the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) in support of his Safer West Mercia Plan and provide an update on police performance.

Delivery plan and assurance

3. A delivery plan is used to support monitoring and assurance of progress against individual elements within the plan and is updated on a quarterly basis. The next quarterly update is due at the end of September.
4. As the delivery plan remains unchanged from the extract appended to the last Performance and Activity report submitted for the Panel's July meeting, it has not been included on this occasion. However, examples of recent activity in support of the Safer West Mercia Plan's four key objectives, are set out in the following sections.
5. As part of the development work for the new Safer West Mercia Plan a review of the delivery plan's function and format is being undertaken.

Commissioned service provision

6. To date in 21/22, there have been a significant number of developments within the PCC commissioned service provision, which are illustrated below. Of particular note is the increased amount of external funding secured from both the Ministry of Justice and the Home Office. The current total stands at £2,974,333. This is made up of the following:

- ISVA provision - £763,568
- IDVA provision - £241,739
- DA & SV service provision – £649,902
- DA perpetrator provision - £455,939
- Safer Streets 2 - £863,185
- The outcome of a further bid for an additional £1,280,027 to the Safer Streets 3 fund is pending

More detailed information on some of the initiatives this money supports have been included within the *Putting victims and survivors first* and *Building a more secure West Mercia* sections of this report. A number were included in the last Panel report.

Putting victims and survivors first

Perpetrator Funding

7. The Home Office announced a Domestic Abuse perpetrator fund for 2021/22. The PCC was successful in being awarded an additional £455,939.37 to commission the following services:

- Male and Masculinities perpetrator programme for low/medium risk across Worcestershire and Herefordshire for 18 months. This is being jointly funded with Worcestershire Children's First and Herefordshire Children's Services.
- Richmond Fellowship group work perpetrator programme for Shropshire for 18 months. This is being jointly funded by Shropshire Council.
- Extension to Richmond Fellowship group work perpetrator programme in Telford for a further 12 months in line with the current contract with Telford Council
- Independent Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Needs Assessment including looking at the provision for children and young people perpetrator violence towards their parents/carers and within peer relationships.

8. This additional funding now means that there is domestic abuse perpetrator provision in all areas of West Mercia, consisting of all levels of risk in Herefordshire and Worcestershire, and standard and medium levels of risk in Telford & Wrekin and Shropshire. In addition to the Home Office funding, the PCC and local authority partners will be contributing a further £248,949.70 to the services, making a total investment of over £704,000.

Sexual violence and abuse

9. The PCC has taken part in the re-commissioning of the joint regional provision of Sexual Assault Referral Centre for CYP across West Mercia. The commissioning exercise was hosted by NHS England/Improvement, with match funding being provided from the 4 regional PCC areas. The successful provider is Mountain Healthcare, who are the current provider. The new contract will start in February 2022. The PCC investment is currently just under £130,000, forming part of a regional £2m contract.

10. The PCC has secured an additional £50,000 of funding from NHS England/Improvement to create a Sexual Violence Officer, a strategic role which will focus on a number of areas within the sexual violence field, with overall aim of improving outcomes for victims of sexual assault and abuse. This funding will be used to fund a sexual violence portfolio lead for an initial period of 12 months, who will work with the PCC, West Mercia Police and partners to deliver the objectives set out in the national NHSE/I Sexual Assault and Abuse Strategy. The role will also look at potential development of a multi-agency strategic group and development of a local strategy.

Critical support fund

11. The PCC submitted a bid to the Critical Support Fund in June 2021 and was notified in July that the bid had been partially successful, securing an additional £358,191 of funding for services which support victims of domestic abuse and sexual violence. Some services which have benefited from additional funding include sexual violence counselling services across

West Mercia, services working with parents who are experiencing abuse from their children and services working with high-risk victims of domestic abuse.

Victim Service Provision

12. The PCC has recently issued a tender for a consultant to produce a victim and offender needs assessment. The aim of the assessment is to identify local need and demand in relation to victim service provision, primarily services which are currently provided by Victim Support and the Victim Advice Line. The first tender round was unsuccessful, so it was re-launched with closing date for bids of 27th August. Bids will be evaluated during September and work is expected to commence around October 2021.

Building a more secure West Mercia

Substance misuse

13. As reported in July funding has been received regionally for substance misuse diversionary services via £3.3 million seized through the Proceeds of Crime Act. The resulting DIVERT project has now been implemented across the whole of West Mercia. Offenders of any age above 13 found in simple possession of any controlled drug will be eligible provided they agree to attend a substance misuse intervention (DIVERT). This replaces the use of certain outcomes used by the police:

14. This scheme aims to contribute to a culture change in policing, and to work with partners to divert emerging offenders from court into the most appropriate intervention to reduce reoffending.

Serious violence

15. The PCC has previously funded a pilot programme in Telford & Wrekin, Steer Clear. Steer Clear is a partnership project developed between a number of agencies including West Mercia Police, The Children's Society and Telford & Wrekin Council. The scheme works with young people aged under 18 who are believed to be on the periphery of knife - related crime. The PCC's contribution is £10,000 with contributions from the Youth Justice Service (YJS) and Telford and Wrekin council making a total investment of £40,000. The PCC is now in discussions with the Force and other areas about rolling out the project more widely across West Mercia.

16. The PCC is currently working with the force's Serious Violence Sgt to scope the feasibility of rolling the Steer Clear 1-2-1 support out across West Mercia in line with Police roll out of Steer Clear. The YJS have been approached to match fund this. There are also discussions about potentially approaching Community Safety Partnerships for contributions. This is being factored into budget planning discussions which are taking place at present.

Safer Streets round 3 VAWG funding

17. The Home Office recently launched a third £25m Safer Street funding round for PCC's, specifically designed to improve the safety of public places for all, with a particular focus on reducing Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG) crimes. The PCC has worked with West Mercia Police and partners to submit 3 bids, for South Worcestershire, Herefordshire and North Worcestershire. Closing date for these bids was 15th July, and the bid amount is over £1.2m. Notification of the outcome of these bids is due shortly.

Water safety

18. As part of the PCC's ongoing Home and Dry campaign, to reduce water deaths £40,000 has been awarded to the Royal Life Saving Society UK (RLSS UK). In a partnership with RLSS UK, a dedicated Water Safety Education Manager will work closely with the PCC and his team to develop resources for young people. The ultimate aim is to create a cross-curricular pilot which could be delivered across the whole of West Mercia and help to shape education nationally.

CCTV

The PCC originally agreed to continue funding to all 5 Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) until the end of October 2021 for either capital expenditure or monitoring expenses pending the outcome of an internal CCTV review. This seven-month period was pro-rated at £65k giving each area a fund of £37,916. Following the completion of the CCTV review the PCC has now agreed an additional spend of £27,084 per area taking the total to £65K for each CSP (£325K in total). However, from 1 November onward the funding can only be utilised for Capital purchases and can no longer be used for CCTV monitoring. The CSPs affected by this change have been notified.

Criminal justice

19. The end of social distancing has allowed the Courts to fully reopen, which will restore and improve the capacity to process criminal cases. As a result, there has been reduction in both the Magistrates' and Crown Courts backlog. The Crown Court backlog is now around 45% higher than pre-pandemic levels and reducing further every week. The backlog in the Magistrates' Court is actually 5% below pre-pandemic levels and is also decreasing. While the reduction in the backlog is welcome news, concerns remain that cases are taking longer to be heard. It now takes an additional two weeks for a case to be dealt with in the Magistrates' Court and an additional 8 weeks in the Crown Court.

20. To improve transparency, the Government has pledged to publish Criminal Justice System (CJS) scorecards. The first national scorecards will be available in autumn 2021, with regional scorecards available by spring 2022. To further improve local transparency the PCC has recently commissioned CREST Analytics to produce an end-to-end CJS performance pack for West Mercia. This will be published on the PCC's website when available.

Reforming West Mercia

Alliance Update

21. Warwickshire has indicated that continued ICT support will be required from West Mercia in order to ensure delivery of key policing services and functions beyond the end of the current collaboration agreement on 30th September 2021. Discussions regarding the scope and delivery of any necessary residual ICT services are ongoing. Any ICT services delivered by West Mercia beyond the end of the current collaboration will be on a hosted, not shared basis, as per the recommendation of the independent report at the close of the Alliance.

Officer diversity

22. West Mercia Police now has the highest levels of diversity amongst officers and staff than at any point in its history. 3% of officers come from ethnic minority backgrounds, and 34% are female. Across the workforce as a whole, 2.9% are from ethnic minority

backgrounds, while 46% are female. This reflects an increase of new officers recruited being female, up from 30% in 2019/20 to 43% in 2020/21. The amount of new officers from ethnic minority backgrounds also rose, from 2.1% to 7.5%, over the same period.

23. The latest recruitment round for police officer opened in June 2021 and West Mercia Police's "Be the Change" campaign was successful in attracting 5.6% of applicants from ethnic minority backgrounds and 40.3% from females.

Financial management

24. Since the update in June the PCC's office has been working on a review of budgets in preparation for the 2022/23 annual budget setting. A series of workshops are being held which aim to review, challenge and explore potential development of budgets. The PCC will lead on the development of these budget proposals during the autumn to ensure that they are fit for purpose to deliver his priorities as presented in the proposed police and crime plan.

25. The Treasurer and her team are working closely with central government and local authority partners to understand the potential funding scenarios over the medium term which will directly impact on the financial viability of the PCC's plans. At the same time the Force is continuing with its Priority Based Budget (PBB) review, which aims to identify the service priorities and its costs. The PBB will form the detail for presenting the 2022/23 budget proposals for review to the PCC. The Treasurer and her team will provide advice and support to the PCC to ensure that the Force budget proposals reflect the priorities of the police and crime plan and that they are providing value for money.

26. The Treasurer is continuing to work closely with the Head of Estates in the development of the Estates Strategy and a review of the capital programme and estates rationalisation plan. The capital programme must be financially viable and there is an expectation that the rationalisation plan will need to deliver revenue savings, which will offset borrowing costs to deliver new capital projects.

Reassuring West Mercia's communities

Neighbourhood Matters

27. As reported in July, the replacement for the force Community Messaging System (CMS), Neighbourhood Matters went live on 1 July. West Mercia Neighbourhood Watch Association (NHW) have signed up to the system. This will open messages up to a much larger audience and as NHW is the largest voluntary group in England and Wales, it will enable them to tap into a vital support network for receiving and providing information to and from the public. It will also vastly improve their communication with members of the public living and residing outside of our force area, thus improving the sharing of information where "cross border" crime is occurring.

West Mercia Local Policing Community Charter

28. The PCC has secured commitments from the police force around levels of service to the community via its new Local Policing Community Charter.

29. The Charter was formally launched in May and covers six key areas for improved service delivery: visibility & accessibility, responding to communities, prevention, vulnerability, relationships and partnerships. The Charter outlines how the force will ensure it provides a

visible policing presence to local communities and how, using local engagement, social media and new digital channels, it will create further opportunities for dialogue so the public can raise concerns, provide feedback, be involved and help shape policing in their area. The Charter also sets out how the force will work with its partners and the public, to listen, understand and respond to community issues. It will focus on persistent problems and concerns to find long-term and sustainable solutions, prioritising the most vulnerable victims, problem locations and repeat offenders with the aim of preventing crime.

30. The Commissioner and his team have contributed to the metrics associated with the Charter to track its success and delivery for local communities. The PCC also maintains an active oversight role in monitoring activity against the Charter's commitments.

31. Since the launch in May, a range of activity has been delivered against the Charter. This has included local priorities being agreed with 67% of West Mercia's parish councils, improvements around accessibility at police stations with new 'A Boards' delivered to each police station, the launch of the Neighbourhood Matters community messaging system and new toolkits for resolving road safety issues with partners.

Assistant Police and Crime Commissioner

32. Engaging with communities and making sure their voice is heard within policing and crime is a key element of the PCC's function. Previously the PCC was supported in this area by a team of five part-time Community Ambassadors. For his second term in office the PCC has chosen to replace that scheme with a new Assistant PCC role, which will work closely and directly with the Commissioner whilst maintaining a focus on the community and help deliver a financial efficiency within the Commissioner's team. The role was advertised over the summer and interviews will be taking place in September following a shortlisting process.

Town and Parish Council survey

33. The consultation period for the PCC's fourth annual Town and Parish Council Survey launched in May, has now ended. The results will be analysed and the PCC will publish a report of the findings later in the year.

PCC's media and communications

34. The new Safer West Mercia Plan is now out for consultation. During this consultation period, the survey will be shared with the public and partners to encourage feedback. However, the PCC, DPCC, and their team will also go out to speak to the public in person. This will include a series of late summer events and 'on the street' community engagements. A separate report has been submitted to the Panel on the draft Safer West Mercia Plan.

35. The death of a serving West Mercia police officer and his young child in August attracted significant national media attention. A statement from the Commissioner was issued in the hours following the news becoming public, stating:

"Incredibly sad to hear this terrible news today. My thoughts are with the family affected and West Mercia Police officers and staff who are having to come to terms with this awful news."

36. The PCC and his staff have engaged with the force post the incident seeking appropriate reassurances around the issue.

37. The PCC is promoting important messages around issues/crime that continue to affect the public. This includes the Home & Dry campaign, which will be present at Fresher's events to share messages with young people. A new campaign about domestic abuse will also be

launched in the coming months. Road safety continues to be an issue at the top of the PCC's agenda, with partnership work continuing to reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured on our roads.

38. The PCC continues to speak up for victims by commenting publically on reports or findings, as well as allocating considerable amounts of funding towards prevention and support.

39. As lockdown restrictions continue the PCC's communications and engagement function has maintained as much community engagement as possible. With restrictions allowing for socially distanced engagements, the PCC and DPCC have been able to visit local policing teams and community groups with the hope this will continue and increase further into the year.

40. A start of a new PCC term has allowed the team to re-focus on the type of campaigns and engagement the PCC is involved in. A revised Communications and Engagement Strategy will support this.

41. The PCC continues to speak up for victims by commenting publically on reports or findings, as well as allocating considerable amounts of funding towards prevention and support.

Performance and accountability

Holding to account

42. The Commissioner holds a regular scrutiny meeting with the Chief Constable (CC) as part of his role in holding the force to account. Notes from thematic meetings are available to view on the PCC's website. Since the last Panel report no formal meetings have been held, however a number of *virtual* holding to account challenges have been submitted to the force on anti-social behaviour and local performance data.

43. The PCC has finalised his holding to account programme for the remainder of 2021/22. The new programme reflects his commitment to bring more of a focus on tackling crime and disorder and performance into the new Police and Crime Plan. Additional performance meetings have been added to the programme which will allow for scrutiny of the new national priorities for policing and a suite of metrics being developed in support of the Police and Crime Plan outcomes. A copy of the programme is attached at appendix 1.

44. The Facebook Live event planned for the end of July focusing on the policing priorities in the draft Police and Crime Plan, will now be held in October, when the new Chief Constable will be in post.

HMICFRS inspection reports

45. HMICFRS have continued their insight work as part of their continuous assessment process for the new PEEL inspection regime. The onsite inspection of the force commences in September and runs for three weeks. Following this stage, the inspectorate will provide a hot debrief on their findings in early October, with the final inspection report due to be published in January 2022.

46. HMICFRS has published a number of inspection reports since the last report to Panel. These have addressed domestic abuse in the pandemic, a violence against women and girls interim report, a fraud re-inspection report and a summary of how law enforcement agencies use sensitive intelligence. Work is ongoing to review the recommendations within these reports. The Deputy Chief Constable retains oversight of the force's progress against any recommendations or any areas for improvement through the Service Improvement Board, attended by one of the PCC's staff.

West Mercia perception survey

47. As part of the Commissioner's commitment to ensure both he and the force are acting on community concerns locally, and that the service provided by the force leads to increased confidence in local policing, the PCC commissioned a confidence survey which has been running for over two years. The survey results are published on the PCC's website. Headline findings from the latest results, quarter one 2021/22, are set out below:

- 85% of consultees tended to agree or strongly agreed they have confidence with West Mercia Police – up 1% on last quarter
- 75% tended to agree or strongly agreed that West Mercia Police understands issues in their community – down 4% on last quarter but an improvement on the same quarter in the previous 2 years
- 93% said they were confident they could access the police in an emergency and 66% in a non-emergency
- 30% said they see an officer or PCSO at least once per week – up 2% on last quarter
- 60% say they are satisfied with the level of policing in their local area – unchanged from the last quarter

Force performance reports

48. A number of internal performance products are produced by the force to enable senior officers and the PCC to maintain strategic oversight of force performance. In particular the PCC scrutinises a weekly dashboard of performance along with monthly summary reports.

49. The latest, quarter one performance report for the period April to June 2021, is attached at appendix 2. The report sets out a force wide picture of performance particularly in relation to force priorities and key practises. The performance framework uses a reporting hierarchy to monitor performance across the whole organisation at gold (strategic), silver (service) and (bronze) operational levels. The report focusses on gold level key performance indicators (KPI), however there are some measures at a silver level included to create a comprehensive picture across the force.

50. As part of the development of the new Police and Crime Plan the PCC is working with the force to develop a performance framework which not only shows how the force is contributing to achieving the national priorities for policing but also the outcomes set out in the Police and Crime Plan. This framework will not be included in the final version of the plan but will instead be reported on the PCC's website.

Risk Management Implications

None.

Financial Implications

None.

Legal Implications

None

Equality Implications

None.

Supporting Information

Appendix 1 – Holding to account programme 2021/22

Appendix 2 – West Mercia Police Performance Report April to June 2021

Contact Points

For the PCC's office: Andy Champness, Police and Crime Commissioner Chief Executive
andrewchampness@westmercia.pnn.police.uk

For Panel support: Sheena Jones, Democratic Governance and Scrutiny Manager

Tel: 01905 846011

Sjones19@worcestershire.gov.uk

HOLDING TO ACCOUNT PROGRAMME 2021/22

Month	Type	Subject area*	Meeting date
August	No meeting		
October	Thematic	Protecting Vulnerable People	Monday 4 th October
October	Public	Safer West Mercia Plan priorities	TBC
October	Performance	Quarterly Performance Review	Thursday 21 st October
November	Thematic	Impact of Budget Investment	Wednesday 24 th November
December	Thematic	Force Operations	Monday 20 th December
January	Public	Budget Proposals	TBC
January	Performance	Quarterly Performance Review	Monday 31 st January
February	Thematic	PEEL 2021	Monday 28 th February
March	Thematic	Economic, Fraud and Cyber Crime	Tuesday 29 th March
April	Thematic	Review of 21/22 scrutiny areas	Friday 29 th April
May	Performance	Yearly Performance Review	Thursday 26 th May

Notes:

***Subject area** The PCC reserves the right to alter, add or change any agenda item up until the date of the meeting.

Virtual challenge In addition to the scheduled meetings listed above, the PCC will submit written *virtual* holding to accounts requests throughout the year

West Mercia Police

Quarterly Report

Q1 Apr – Jun 2021



Purpose

The purpose of this product is to provide a quarterly overview of current and emerging performance issues relating to West Mercia.

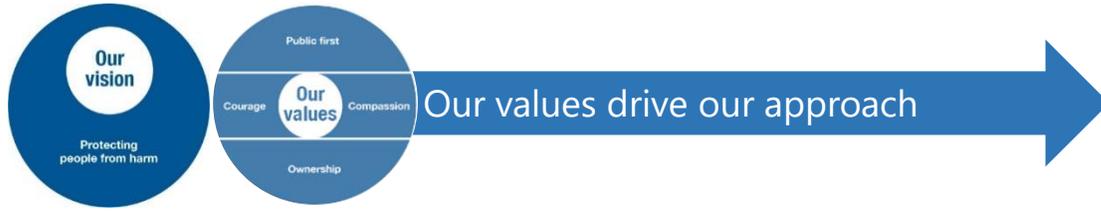
GSC Level	Official
Date of publication	July 2021
Product Reference	SPI/2021/170
Version	Final
Purpose	Overview of Force Performance for April to June 2021
Author	Strategy, Planning and Insight
Owner	DCC J. Moss

Handling Instructions:

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Neither the document nor any of its contents may be disseminated further without the permission of the Information Asset Owner.

Protecting
people
from harm





Introduction

This is the Q1 Performance Report reviewing activity between April to June 2021. The purpose of this report is to inform the Force Delivery Group meeting on 27th July with a force wide picture of performance, however this report is looking to draw particularly on the keys issues faced by the force, particularly in relation to force priorities and key practices.

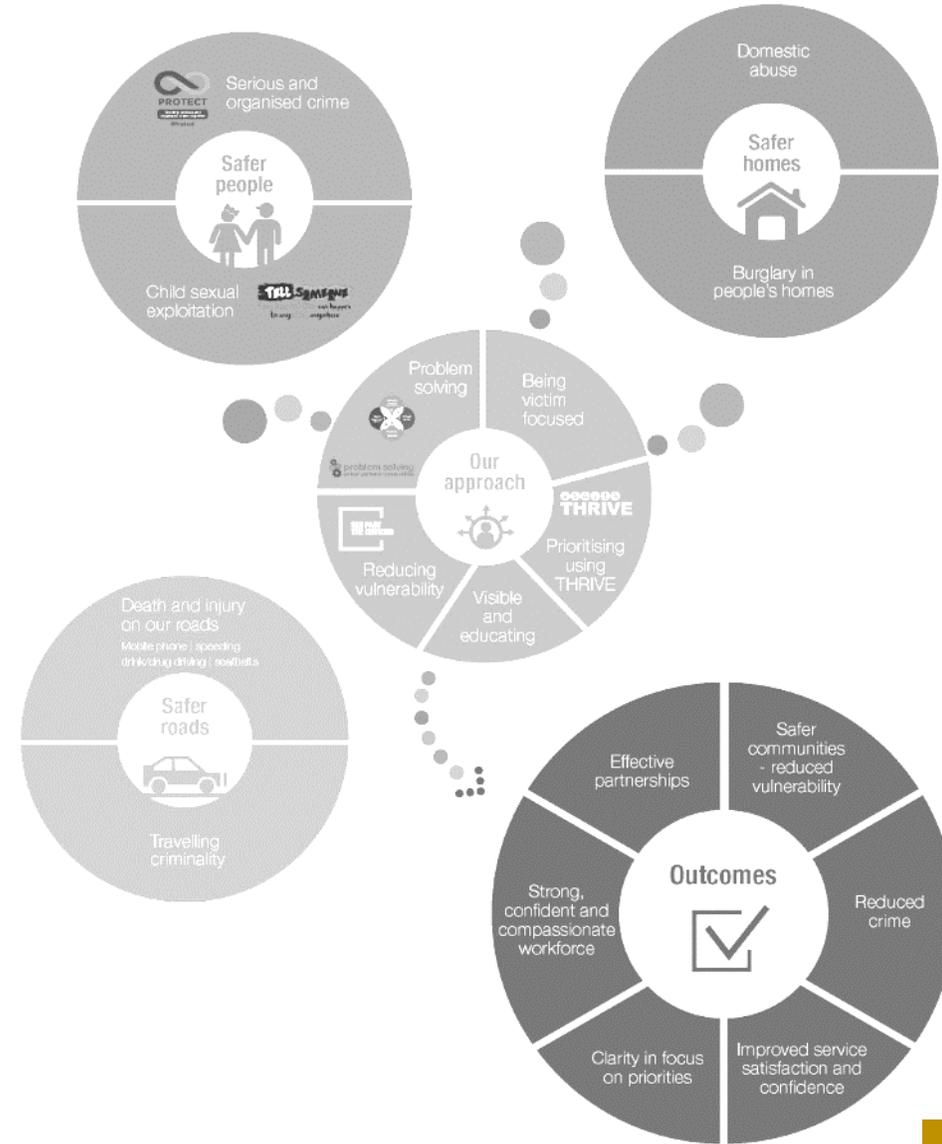
This report focusses on Gold level Key Performance Indicators (KPI), however, there are also some measures included at a Silver level to create a comprehensive picture across the force. The number of measures in this report will continue to be refined to ensure that they are key performance indicators.

Crime and disorder in the last quarter continues to increase in most areas as anticipated with further lockdown restrictions being eased.

The OCC performance in relation to 999 and 101 call handling increased consistently.

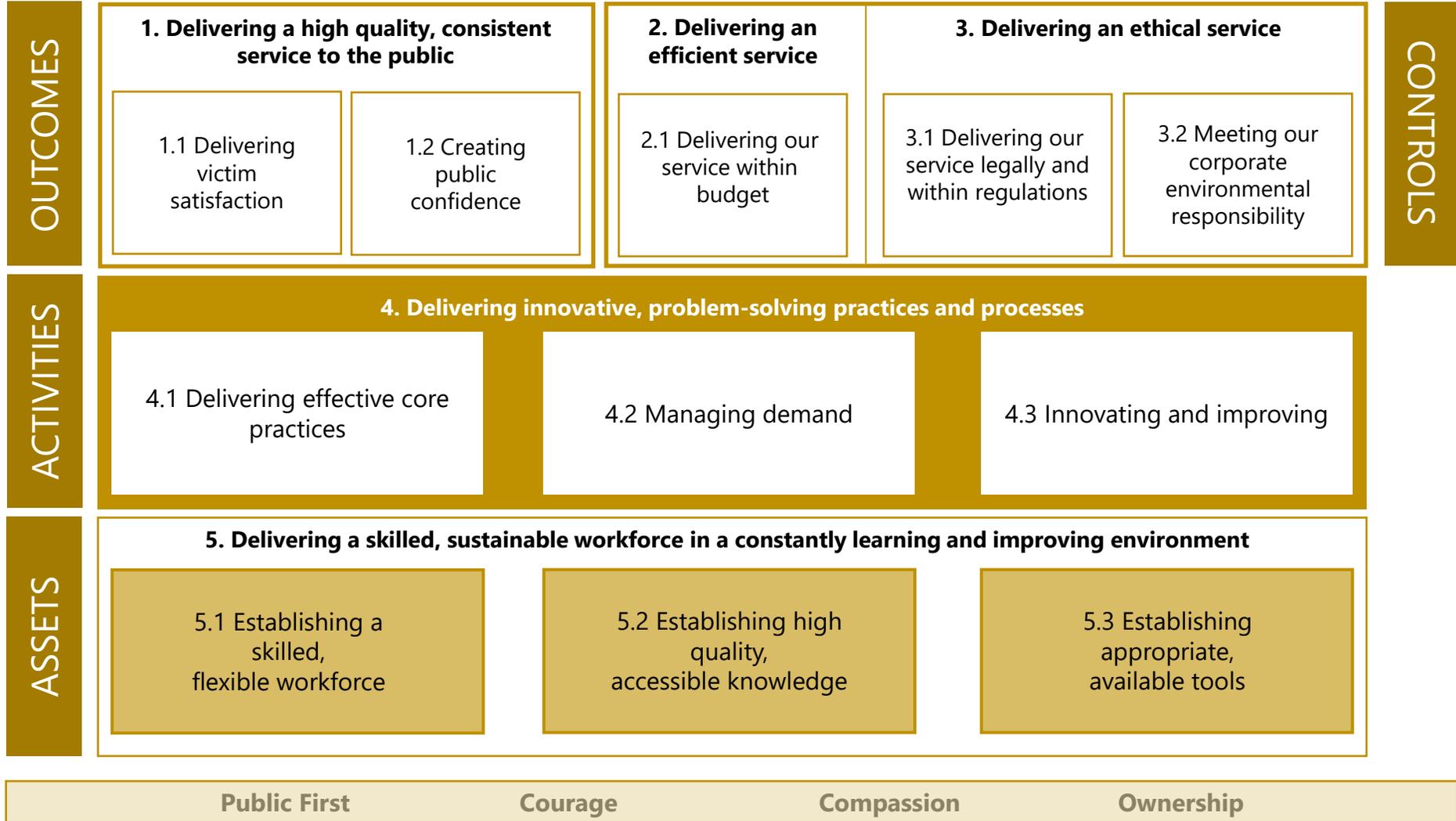
Due to the impact of COVID-19 on crime in 2020/21, the upper and lower control limits for 21/22 are set against 19/20 figures. It is intended that this will provide more realistic limits than if the normal practise of the previous financial year was used.

Projections have been included in this report, however, it should be noted that due to their basis on volumes in previous years the impact of COVID-19 is likely to distort the projections. Factoring the impact of COVID-19 within projections continues to be reviewed.





1. Gold Balanced Scorecard 2021-2022



1. Delivering a high quality, consistent service to the public
 1.1 Delivering victim satisfaction: Burglary, Violent, Hate

Number of victims spoken to:
 Survey targets were not met during Quarter 1 due to staff absences; this is expected to continue until September 21. This adversely affects the statistical validity of the results.

Burglary

Rolling 6-months
 (Jan – Jun 21)

(Completely or very satisfied)

76% Satisfied
 (Previous (Oct 20 – Mar 21): 74%)

Trend: 74% (Apr-Sep 19) to 76% (Jan-Jun 21) ↑2%*

Good looks like:
 Victim Satisfaction – Burglary: 80% Victims Completely / Very Satisfied (rolling 6-month)

Map Data:
 74% (5%* ↑), 65% (1%* ↑), 83%, 87%, 71% (7%* ↓)

Text:
 - With a latest figure of 65%, **Telford is an area of focus**, increasing only marginally since last Quarter*.
 - Previous research in SP&I has identified the **following factors as causing low burglary satisfaction**: low satisfaction with **speed of arrival times / poor expectation management**; low satisfaction for those **dealt with over the phone**; **gaps in service provision** in terms of: **officers' 'softer skills', follow up** and perceived **quality of investigations**.
 - The **possible causes of Telford's continuing lower satisfaction will be explored** by SP&I with similar hypotheses to those above being tested.

Violent

Rolling 6-months
 (Jan – Jun 21)

(Completely or very satisfied)

69% Satisfied
 (Previous (Oct 20 – Mar 21): 69%)

Trend: 62% (Apr-Sep 19) to 69% (Jan-Jun 21) ↑7%**

Good looks like:
 Victim Satisfaction – Violent Crime: 70% Victims Completely / Very Satisfied (rolling 6-month)

Map Data:
 63% (6%* ↓), 67% (3%* ↑), 70%, 73%, 71%

Text:
 - With a latest figure of 73%, **Herefordshire has seen marked increases**** in satisfaction since the dip seen in May-July 20 and is, therefore, an area of focus.
 - Recent research in SP&I has identified the **following factors as contributing to this increase**: a period of **reduced demand**, likely as a result of COVID, and so enabling officers to spend **more time on victim care / quality investigations**; a **change in the survey profile** – reflecting changes in the offence profile – resulting in **reduced proportions of surveys of ABH victims**; an improvement in the **Treatment** service stage, **reassurance drivers** and **keeping victims updated**; the **change in the role of the IPT to provide greater support patrol teams**.

Hate

Rolling 12-months
 (Jul 20 – Jun 21)

(Completely or very satisfied)

64% Satisfied
 (Previous (Apr 20 – Mar 21): 62%)

Trend: 53% (Apr 18-Mar 19) to 64% (Jul 20-Jun 21) ↑11%**

Good looks like:
 Victim Satisfaction – Hate Crime: 70% Victims Completely / Very Satisfied (rolling 12-month)

Map Data:
 66% (2%* ↑), 74%, 61% (↔), 66% (4%* ↑), 57% (5%* ↑)

Text:
 - With a latest figure of 57%, **Herefordshire Local Policing Area (LPA) is an area of focus**, although satisfaction has increased by 5%* since last Quarter.
 - SP&I are undertaking **analysis to explore the reasons for Herefordshire's lower levels of satisfaction** with a number of **hypotheses being tested** as part of this; some of these are outlined, below.
 Lower levels of satisfaction are due to: the **impact of vexatious repeat victims**; the **impact of higher (relative to other LPAs) / increasing proportions of neighbour dispute incidents** comprising the survey sample; the effect of a **gap in service provision** relating to a **service stage** or **demographic group**.



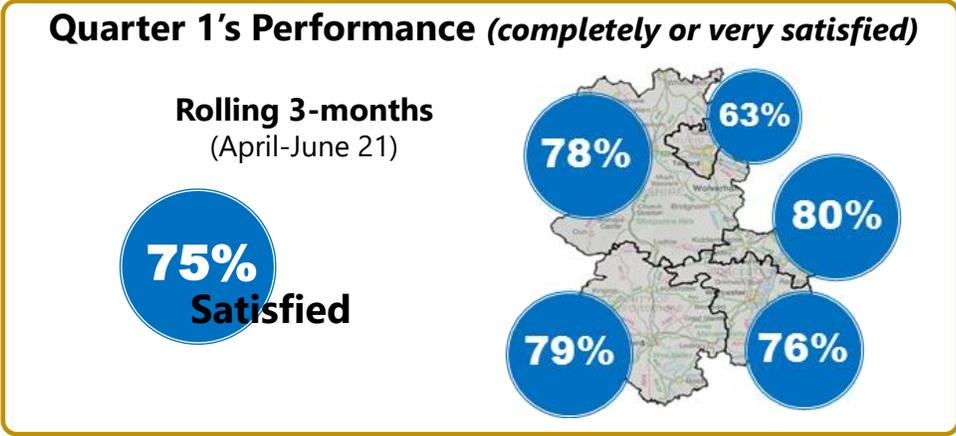
1. Delivering a high quality, consistent service to the public
1.1 Delivering victim satisfaction: Domestic Abuse (DA)

DA surveys were suspended from April 20 due to Covid and did not resume until April 21. Due to the break in data, results are presented as a new dataset from April 21.

Number of victims spoken to:

Qtr 1
115

Previous Quarter: NA
Target: 168



Satisfaction by Service Stage
(Completely or very satisfied)

Initial Report 89% Satisfied

Police Actions 75% Satisfied

Treatment 90% Satisfied

Follow-up 57% Satisfied

What went well...

*I was really **impressed with how they followed it up and cared about my wellbeing**. I feel they **valued my safety**, I couldn't have asked for anything more. Also I received a **personal alarm**, and a **window and door alarm** from the **Victim Advice Line** which have **made me feel safer** as I wasn't sleeping.*

*I had **regular contact throughout**, I was told what they (police) were doing and when they would be doing it. PC *** called me one evening I didn't answer as I had gone to bed so PC *** **came round to the house to see if I was ok which I thought was amazing**.*

DA Service Measures (April – June 2021)

Victim felt SAFER as a result of contacting the police? (% Yes, fully)	71%
Victim felt that the police CARED about them? (% Yes, fully)	77%
Victim would feel CONFIDENT about contacting police again? (% Yes, fully)	83%
If something similar happened to someone you know, would you RECOMMEND for them to contact the police? (% Yes, fully)	88%

What could be better...

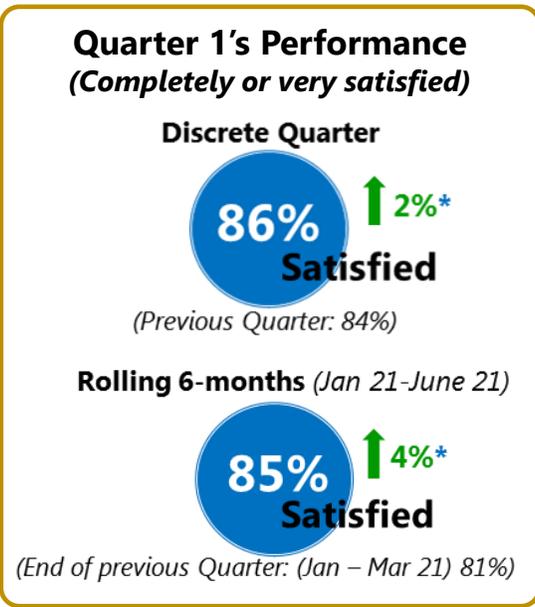
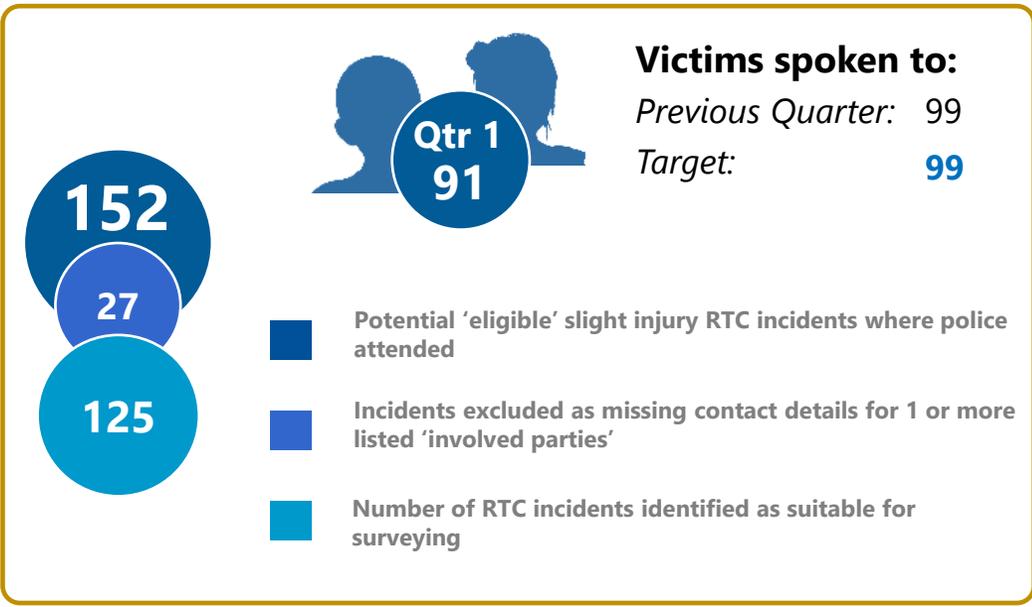
*I have **called the police many times** and am often **ignored**. I am a **15 stone man** so feel I **was treated differently**. I **don't feel safe**. The suspect will do something else to me or get someone else to do it .*

*I am **totally dissatisfied no one has been in touch to update me**. I have **tried contacting the officer direct** and **through the incident room**. I'm **frightened** and have additional information if the officer gets in touch. I **need to know if the suspect has been spoken to**. I presume he has not spoken to them; I don't know what's going on and should I still be looking over my shoulder? I have **not heard anything at all**.*

 **Good looks like:**  **Victim Satisfaction – Domestic Abuse: 80% Victims Completely / Very Satisfied (rolling 6-month)**



1. Delivering a high quality, consistent service to the public
 1.1 Delivering victim satisfaction: Road Traffic Collision (RTC)



What went well...

"They did their job, they **organised the traffic** so there were no hold ups...It was **reassuring** to know they were there as I was in shock. When something like that happens you **need someone to be in charge, to take control.**"

"I told them that **I was dyslexic...they explained things to me slowly and took their time** without making me feel foolish."

"They **made us feel at ease in a bad situation, especially the children.** It was good that they **phoned me a few hours later to see if we were OK.**"

"They have **kept me informed all the way through and I know what is going on with the case.**"

"the officers were **very sympathetic** they were **concerned for everyone.** The officers **took me and my two dogs to the service station to be picked up.**"

What could be better...

"...the police **didn't do any breath tests.** I would have preferred it if the other driver, who was responsible, was given a breath test. **I found witnesses myself after the incident.**"

"The **officer at the scene said she would send me details of where the car was recovered to, but she didn't** send them to me...so I tried to find out through 101...I got a letter from the traffic department with the details, but that came too late..."

"...I **didn't know what was going on** between receiving the first letter and the outcome letter..."

"One **officer kept laughing saying things like "he (perpetrator) was probably on drugs"** and things like that, which I didn't think was funny."

"I **would like some form of update even if it is to tell me that there is nothing to update** just so I know where the case is at."

1. Delivering a high quality, consistent service to the public
 1.1 Delivering victim satisfaction

Good looks like:
Referrals: 25%
 Previous month's referral rate: 22.6%

Victims' Code Compliance

- **VAL referrals** are an identified priority for Local Policing. The Delivery Plan sets out to increase referrals to **25% of victim-based crime by April 2021**.

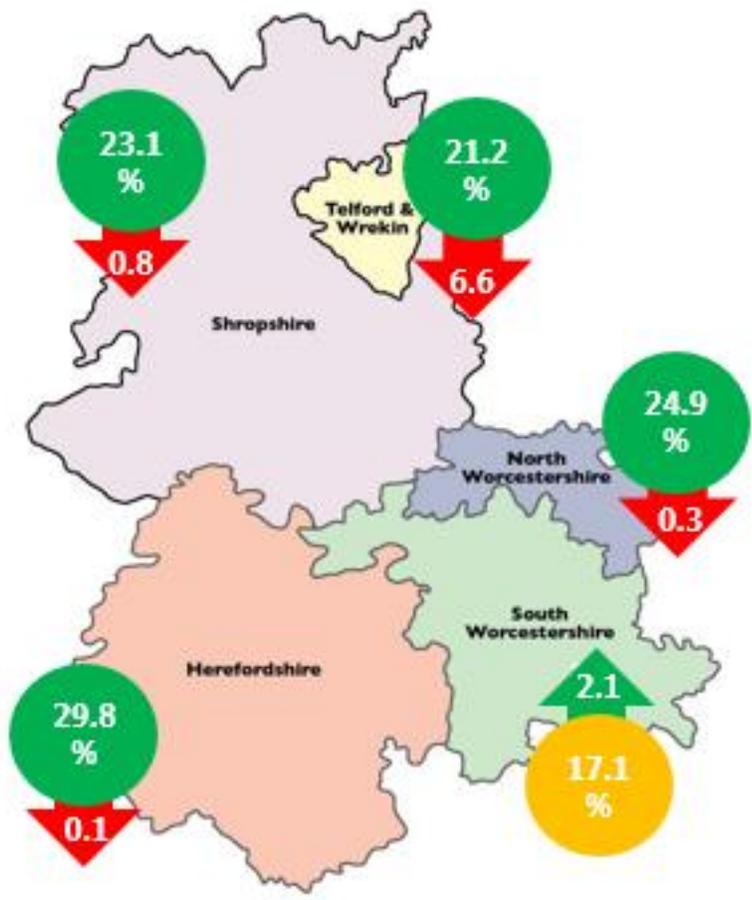
LPA	April	May	June	Year to Date '21/22
S. Worcs	22.3%	15.0%	17.1%	18.1%
N. Worcs	29.2%	25.2%	24.9%	26.2%
Herefs	31.0%	29.9%	29.8%	30.2%
Shrops	25.1%	23.9%	23.1%	24.0%
Telford	26.7%	27.8%	21.2%	25.1%
Force	26.4%	23.7%	22.6%	24.2%

Key:

- 20-30%
- 15-20%
- Under 15%

Key Points

- Minimal change in performance this month,
- Marginally below WGLL at Force level despite exceeding this level in April
- S Worcestershire is currently the outlier



1. Delivering a high quality, consistent service to the public
1.2 Creating public confidence

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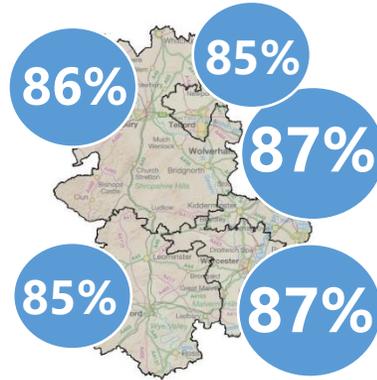
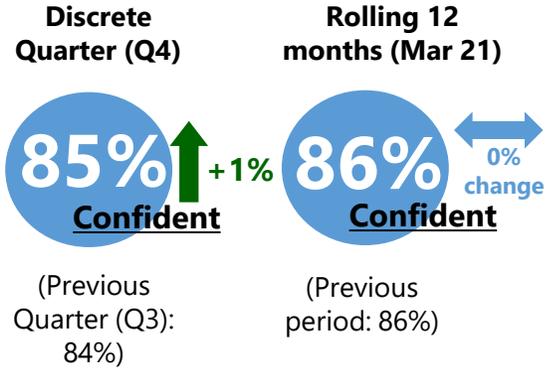
Good looks like: **88%**

Legitimacy – Requires Improvement

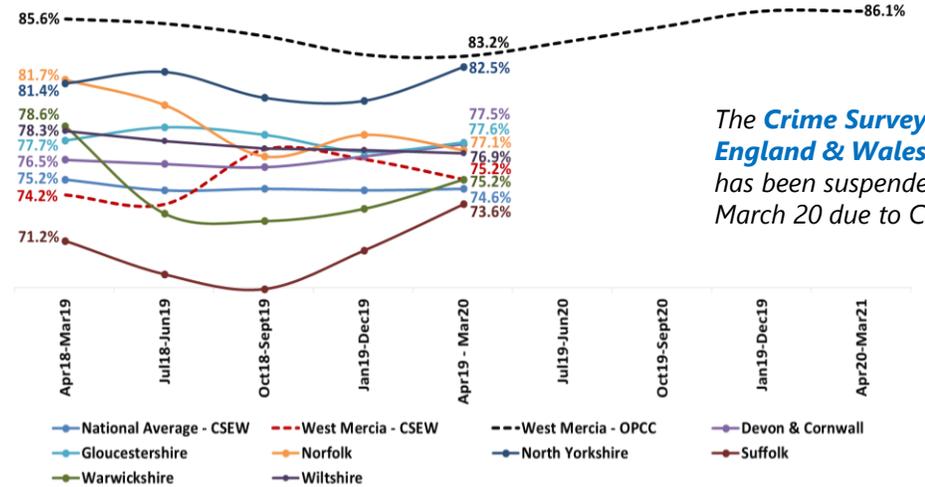


Confidence (Strongly Agree or Tend to Agree)

West Mercia data presented uses WMOPCC Perception Survey (rolling 12-months unless otherwise stated)



Trend Data

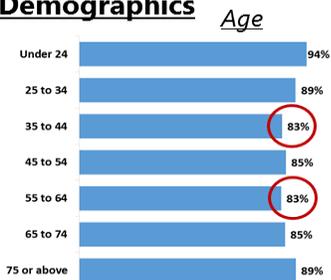


The **Crime Survey England & Wales** survey has been suspended since March 20 due to Covid.

Public Confidence and the Local Policing Charter

In **Quarter 2**, SP&I will be identifying the Safer Neighbourhood Areas (SNAs) having consistently high public confidence and those having consistently low public confidence. **Learning will be identified from the high performing SNAs and applied – alongside other targeted activity – to the low confidence SNAs with changes in confidence evaluated from Quarter 3 onwards.**

Demographics



Disability



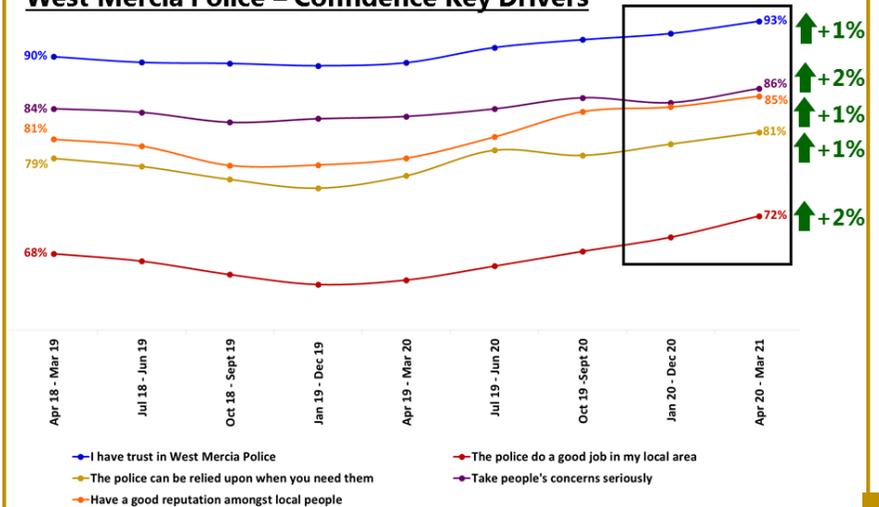
Ethnicity:



In **Quarter 2**, SP&I will be carrying out analysis to explore possible **causes of the lower than average levels of public confidence seen with people in the mid-age categories, those with a disability and B-ME individuals.**

The **driver analysis** will be used to **inform the targeted activities** recommended for the low confidence SNAs (see box above).

West Mercia Police – Confidence Key Drivers



1. Delivering a high quality, consistent service to the public
 1.2 Creating public confidence

LP Charter Development

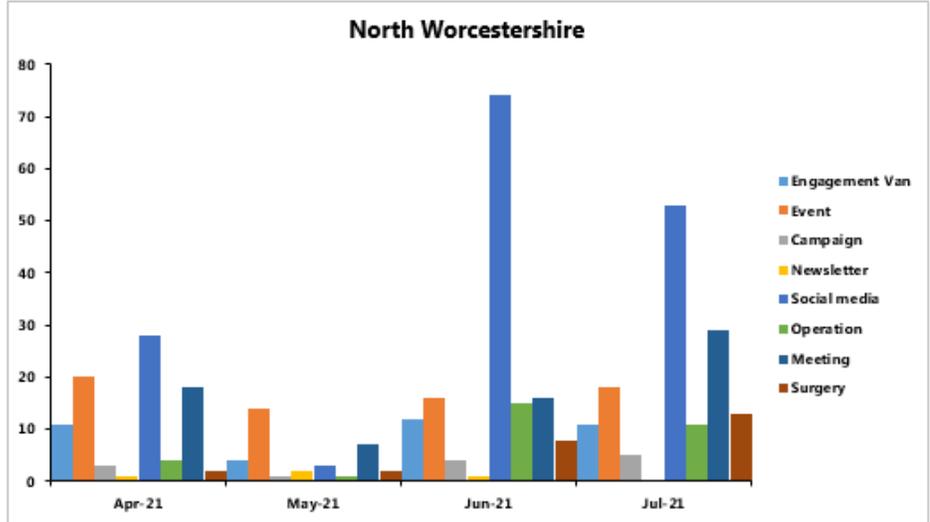
How to sign up for a Neighbourhood Matters account

Neighbourhood Matters information is available on the intranet

Anyone that wishes to send messages via our replacement community messaging service is now encouraged to request an admin account for Neighbourhood Matters. Read more...

Some metrics, such as an events calendar per local policing are in the early stages of being produced

North Worcestersh	Apr-21	May-21	Jun-21	Jul-21
Engagement Van	11	4	12	11
Event	20	14	16	18
Campaign	3	1	4	5
Newsletter	1	2	1	0
Social media	28	3	74	53
Operation	4	1	15	11
Meeting	18	7	16	29
Surgery	2	2	8	13



Meet your Safer Neighbourhood Team

We are a dedicated group of police officers and police community support officers (PCSO) who work with local communities and partner organisations. Working together to keep our residents, businesses and visitors safe, to prevent crime and tackle anti-social behaviour at a local community level.

Officers can be contacted on the below numbers concerning community issues. To report a crime in progress call 999 and for non-emergencies, report online at www.westmercia.police.uk/report

Kidderminster North
 kiddyminnorth@westmercia.pnn.police.uk

Broadwaters
 broadwaters.anti@westmercia.pnn.police.uk

Kidderminster East
 kiddymineast.anti@westmercia.pnn.police.uk

Greenhill
 greenhill.anti@westmercia.pnn.police.uk

Team posters for police station noticeboards are available on the intranet

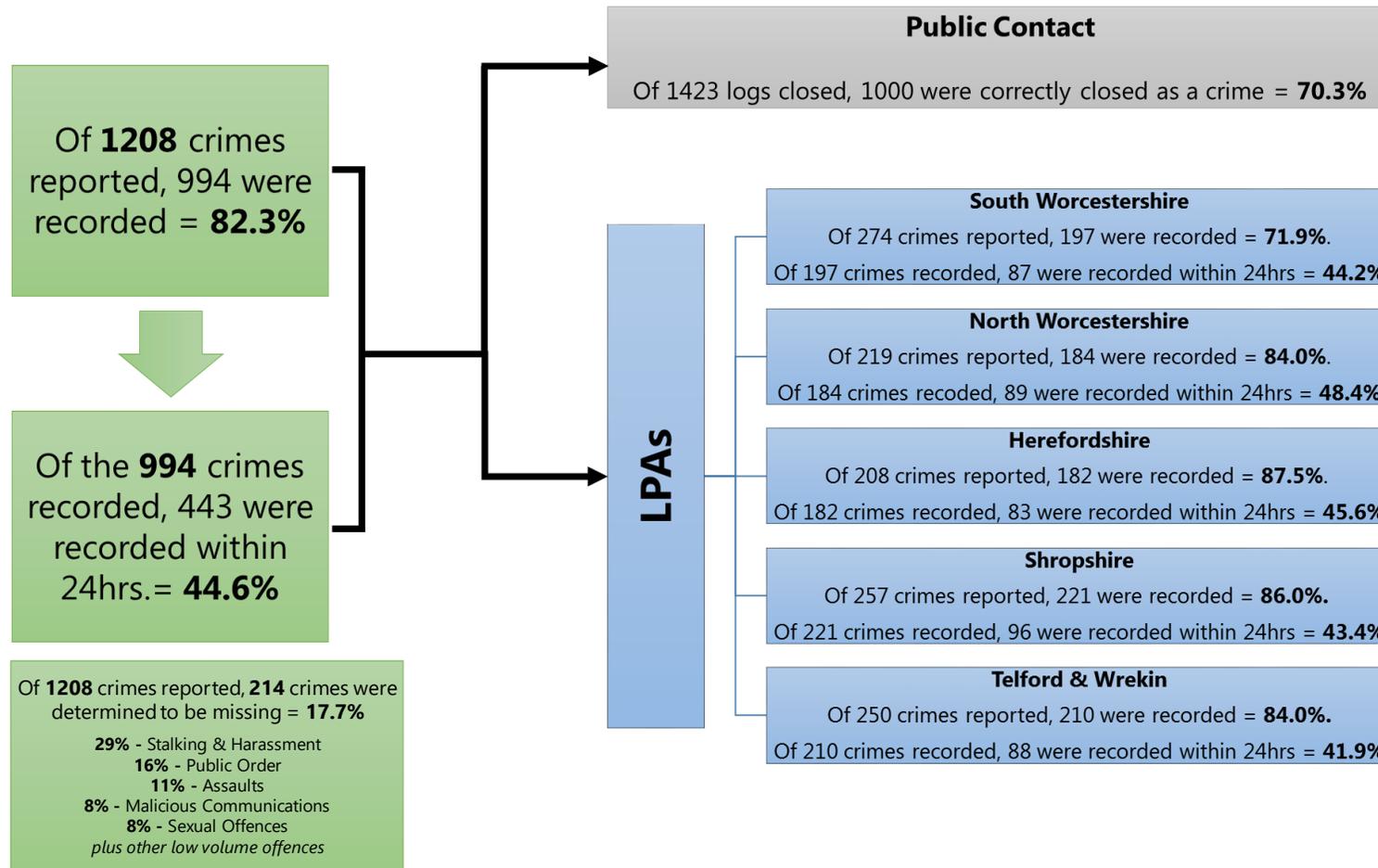
#policingpromise has been set up for use for any relevant social media content

Neighbourhood Matters went live at the end of June. Training underway.

3. Delivering an ethical service
3.1 Delivering our service legally and within regulations

Audit, Risk & Compliance

CDI audits - 01/04/20 to 31/03/21



Key Points

- Of 1208 crimes reported, **17.7%** (214) crimes were determined to be **missing**.
- If this was an HMIC inspection this **compliance rate may result** in a grading of **inadequate or requires improvement**.
- Crime Data Integrity (CDI) **training** is **made available** to all officers and crime recording staff.

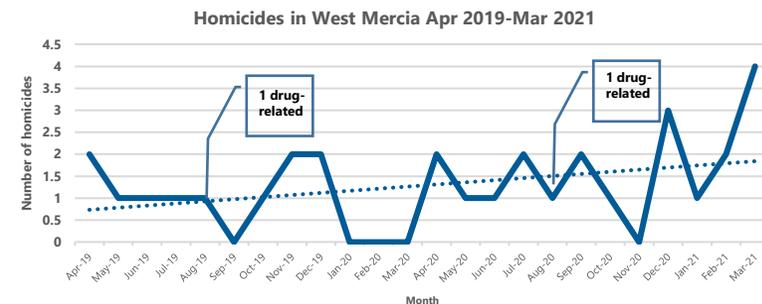
4. Delivering innovative, problem-solving practices and processes

4.1 Delivering effective core practices

Delivering strategic requirements

National Crime and Policing Measures

Key priorities: murder, serious violence, domestic abuse, neighbourhood crime and drug supply/county lines
 Not numerical targets but key indicators to show improvement against; expectation of significant improvements within 3 years



Measure	Source	Change	Comment	Lead
Reduce murder and homicide	Police Recorded Crime	↑	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasing volumes 	ACC C&V
Reduce serious violence	National Health Service and PRC	↔	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 8 offences involving discharge of a firearm in 2020-21 (most 2 a month) Hospital admissions for assault with a sharp object are fewer than 8 each month – only detail shared. Six of these months have had none (last 2 years) 	ACC C&V
Disrupt drug supply and county lines	PRC and Public Health England		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 drug-related homicides in last two years 	ACC C&V
Reduce neighbourhood crime	Crime Survey England and Wales	↓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All crimes are reducing in last two years (burglary - domestic and commercial, robbery, vehicle crime, theft from person) Data is currently from PRC as the CSEW data does not offer enough detail 	ACC LP
Improve satisfaction among victims, with a particular focus on victims of domestic abuse	CSEW	↑	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whole experience satisfaction is improving 	ACC LP
Tackle cyber crime	DDCMS	↔	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The data from the Dept. for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport is not available. Further police held proxy measures are being developed 	ACC C&V

4. Delivering innovative, problem-solving practices and processes

4.1 Delivering effective core practices

Delivering strategic requirements

Strategic Policing Requirement

The Strategic Policing Requirement sets out the threats that require a co-ordinated national policing response. The delivery of our response to this requirement to work collaboratively, and with other partners, to ensure such threats are tackled effectively, is collated and summarised below.

		Capacity and Contribution	Capability	Connectivity
National Threats	Terrorism	Staffing gaps are minor as possible losses are projected and planned for. Small issues with security of supply due to time taken for vetting and training, however projection of vacancies and supply of assets from region help reduce impact.	Optimum training levels with surge capability if required.	Collaboration with partners is vital to enable West Mercia to deliver under the four P's detailed in the CONTEST Strategy and Action Plan. Relationships are maintained through regular contact, meetings and sharing of information.
	Serious and Organised Crime	Some concerns surrounding the levels of staffing and time taken to train individuals, particularly within SOCU however, this impact is often limited due to the provision of the ROCU and the forces ability to prioritise resource.	Issues exist with limited surveillance capability.	With offenders active across borders it is vital West Mercia continue communications with partners/agencies not just across the UK but overseas as well. The force works closely with a number of agencies such as Gain, HMRC, airlines and Border Force to ensure intelligence and information is shared accordingly. The Force has an embedded Serious and Organised Crime Joint Action Group (SOCJAG) structure which brings together a host of partners on a regular basis to work to tackle Serious and Organised Crime collectively. The CPS is also a crucial partner who the force work closely with on a regular basis.
	National Cyber Security Incident	The Cyber Crime Unit (CCU) has optimum staffing levels to enable response to cyber security incidents.	The CCU is fit for purpose and capability is constantly improving within the team to maintain good standards. Additional vehicles however are required.	The force work closely with the West Midlands regional Cyber Crime Unit along with all of the regional Cyber Crime Units. Also linked into the National Cyber Security Centre and the National Cyber Crime Unit to enable partnership working across the UK. Regular contact is established with National Fraud Intelligence Bureau (NFIB), Action Fraud and Get Safe Online.
	Threat to Public Order and Public Safety	Optimum levels of staff with well above the nationally-specified number of trained officers.	Some issues may exist in the accreditation of roles in 2020, however officers are currently trained in line with national requirements.	For events, the force works with a variety of partners depending on the event taking place. For example, frequently events planners and coordinators will be in contact with safety advisory groups, local councils, sporting clubs and other event organisers.
	Civil Emergencies	Number of resources are sufficient to maintain business as usual and respond to major emergencies, however in the event of a significant incident some BAU demand is disrupted due to low staffing levels.	Issues with equipment exist which limits capability when connecting and sharing information with partners.	Local Resilience Forums (LRFs) ensure collaborative working and are an integral part of the process in ensuring the production of contingency plans and individual agency plans for mitigation and response. The LRFs are a significant and vital element of working in partnership and taking a multi-agency approach to action.
	Child Sexual Abuse (CSA)	Due to a recent uplift in resources there are optimum staffing levels available for contribution.	Issues exist with some interview locations and medical facilities not being fit for purpose. There are a limited number of fully trained and accredited investigators.	Problem Solving Hubs and Harm Assessment Units aim to support colleagues and external partners in reducing harm and risk through problem solving. The officers engage in partnership working using innovative and child-centred policing to proactively provide early intervention.

4. Delivering innovative, problem-solving practices and processes
4.1 Delivering effective core practices

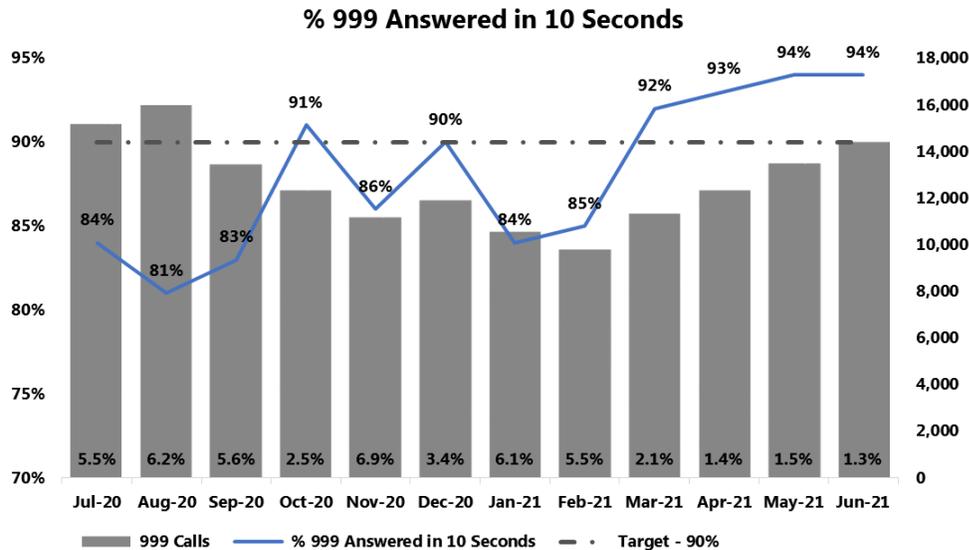
Response to calls for service

999 Performance

999 demand **increased 27%** when compared to the previous quarter, and **increased 42%** compared to the same quarter last year.

Despite the increase in demand, the **statutory 999 target was met in April (93%), May (94%) and June (94%)**. 999 performance has now **consistently stabilised** as a result of improved staffing levels.

This has resulted in a further **decline in 999 abandonment** volumes during the last quarter – ending at 1.26% in June 2021.



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Good looks like:

999 performance: **90% answered within 10 seconds**

999 volumes: **Maintain current levels in light of increasing national levels**

101 wait times: **80% answered within 30 seconds**

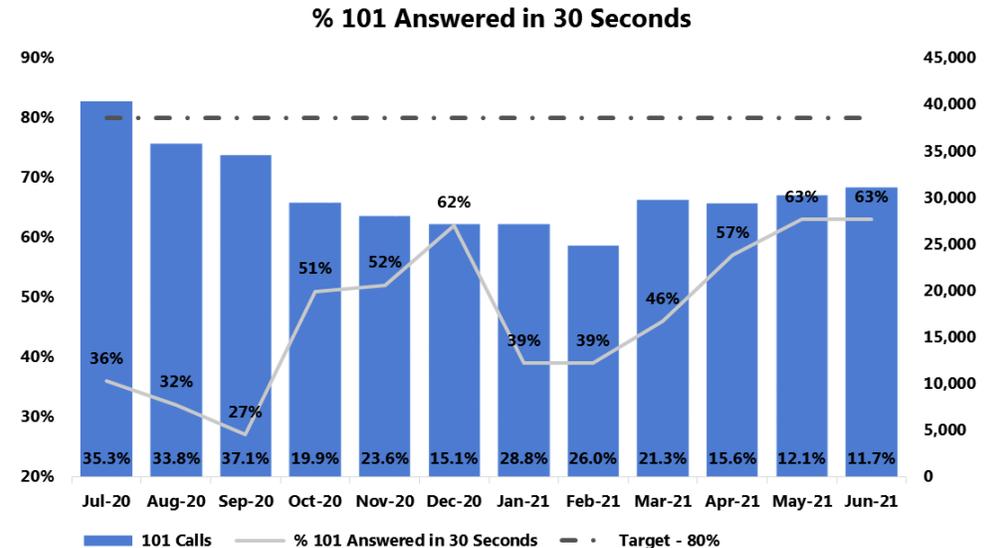
101 volumes: **Continued sustained increase of online reporting on Single Online Home and an increase in website traffic to advice and information**

101 Performance

In the last quarter there has been a **6% reduction** in call **demand** compared to the same quarter last year, but an **11% increase** on the previous quarter. Call demand has continued to be unpredictable.

The OCC presented a substantial increase in performance in **April (57%), May (63%) and June (63%)**.

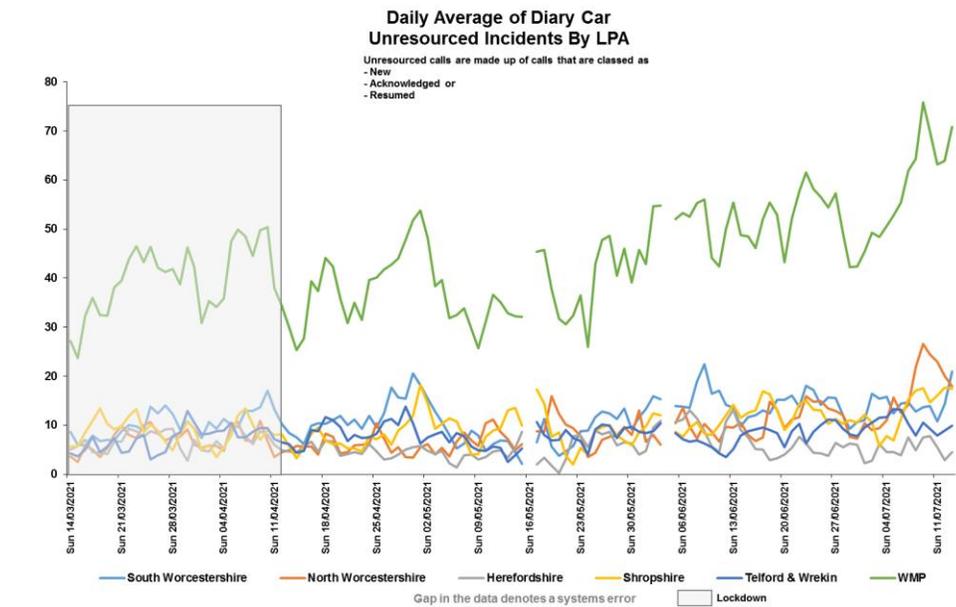
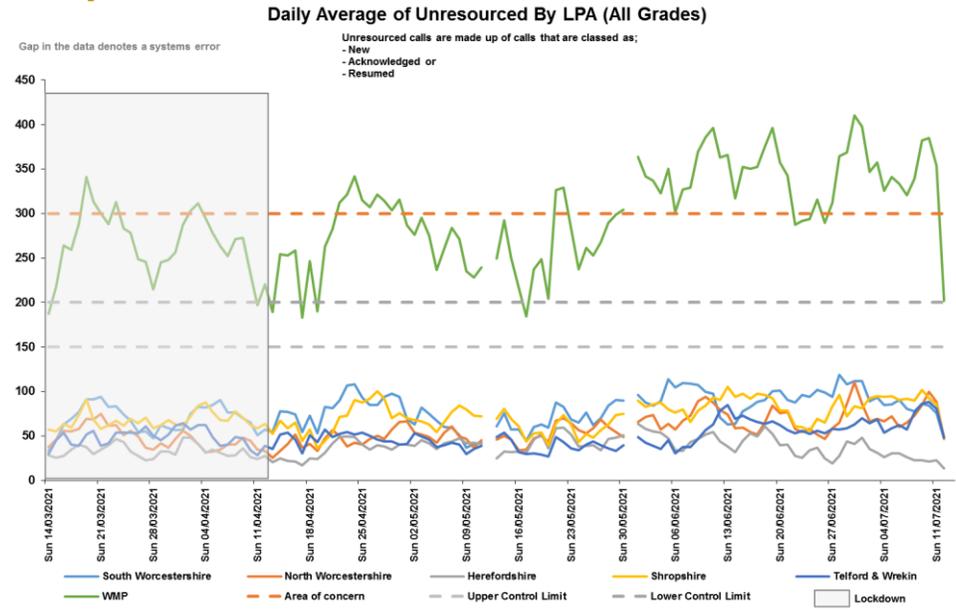
101 abandoned rates have decreased further, to **11.7% in June**.



4. Delivering innovative, problem-solving practices and processes

4.1 Delivering effective core practices

Response to calls for service



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Good looks like:

Unresourced: *between 150-200 unresourced calls*

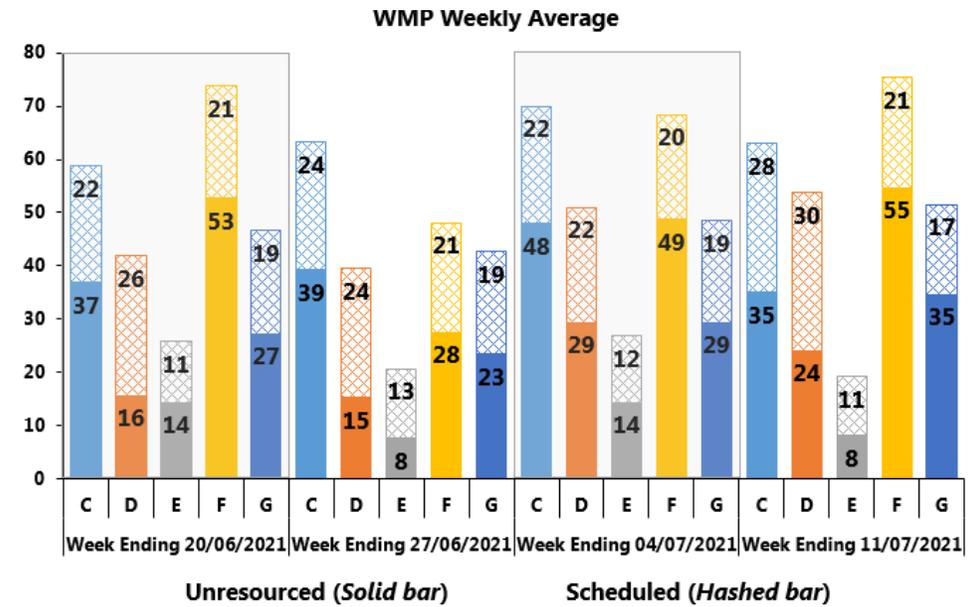
As anticipated as we have moved further out of lockdown, experienced some seasonal good weather along with the Euro's and several high resource intensive incidents unresourced levels are high.

It **highly probable** that volumes will **rise** further in the coming months across all **policing areas** due to progression through the 'Road Map' laid out by the Government.

The way that this data is reported on is under review and we are currently in the process of moving to a new style of reporting as is currently shown in the Weekly Briefing Assessment, below.

As more data is collated we will review how this data is presented as well as 'What Good Looks Like'.

A plan around Emergency Response times is being progressed.



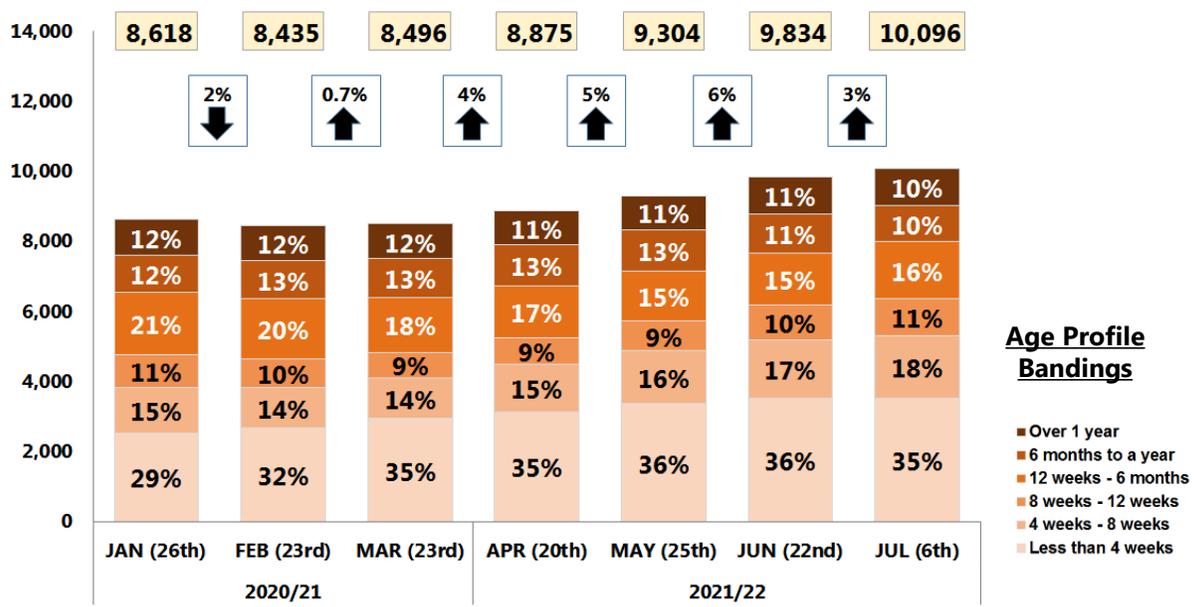
4. Delivering innovative, problem-solving practices and processes
4.1 Delivering effective core practices

Crime Management

Key Points

- Open investigations increased by 14% compared to the previous point in time.
- Drivers are new recording practises and turnover of staff in key roles.

Open Investigations – Age Profile (point-in-time view)



Age Profile Bandings

- Over 1 year
- 6 months to a year
- 12 weeks - 6 months
- 8 weeks - 12 weeks
- 4 weeks - 8 weeks
- Less than 4 weeks

10,096 Open Investigations (O.I.s) consisting of notifiable offences, fraud offences and crimed incident investigations sit within 1,798 OIC crime baskets.

- 14% increase compared to the previous point-in-time in April (8,875). 35% (3,575) of O.I.s consist of violence with/without injury, stalking and harassment offences.

Key drivers behind increase in O.I.s.

- Continuous month-on-month increases in crime recording since March 2021.
- Increase in crime recording is partially linked to the reinforced recording practice of 'Course of Conduct offences' in relation to domestic abuse for recording both an harassment and a stalking offence - Two crimes per investigation with different requirements to prove and outcome.
 - Out of 494 'course of conduct' O.I stalking/ harassment offences, 398 (81%) were recorded within the last 3 months.
- From 1st April 2021, CPS started enforcing the new disclosure guidelines leading to significant amount of additional work for most files, even on patrol. During this quarter, a reduction in Action Taken outcomes is expected due to returns from CPS for not abiding by the new legislation.
- More PCDA student officers at the front end and a turnover in Sergeants/newly promoted also impacts on investigations and outcome timeliness. New officers will tend to over investigate if not confident to outcome in a proportionate manner and new Sergeants may also feel less comfortable and may require additional work being completed before they will authorise filing.

Good looks like: In development. An 'optimum' band is thought to be around 8,000-10,000 open investigations at current recording volumes. However, to avoid an incentive simply to close crime this marker would need to be hidden until further work is done to filter out:

1. 'Normal' volume of open investigations awaiting closure with the Designated Decision Makers (DDMs) (currently 5-600)
2. Complex crime types with long average timeliness

A better "temperature gauge" of force crime is anticipated to come from combining some metrics: Open crime/ Volume in "baskets"/ Suspects outstanding/ "attrition" rates to some outcomes. This is to avoid over-focus on timeliness at the expense of quality investigations.

4. Delivering innovative, problem-solving practices and processes

4.1 Delivering effective core practices

Crime Management

Key Points

- Work is in place to address key issues.
- Despite this it is probable that Open Investigations volumes will increase in the coming months due to an increase in crimes being recorded

Activity underway since April 2021

- Continued to drive and embed the **Suspect Management process** to ensure **fully and consistent application**.
- At present compliance rates are;
 - South Worcestershire - 97%
 - Herefordshire - 96%
 - Shropshire - 89%
 - North Worcestershire - 85%
 - Telford & Wrekin - 85%
- All **Wanted Suspects** to **PNC** are now managed through Athena. Through PNSB weekly, this new process ensures better scrutiny around attached files and their supervision with old Wanted files being quality checked and STEPS packages being closed down, managed or transferred into the new process.
- **Only 4%** of our **Current Wanted** have yet to make it to **PNC** and these are around administration issues.
- **Reviews** on our investigations **not being completed** or **direction given** has again been picked up by HMICFRS. This is linked to new T/Sgt's in role and their understanding of what is needed.
- Work is underway with **L&D** to capture all requirements into a **training package before commencement of acting/temp duties**.
- It is **highly probable** that Open Investigations volumes will **increase** in the coming months due to an increase in crime recording, set against the backdrop of the removal of Covid restrictions and the warmer Summer weather encouraging outdoor socialising.

4. Delivering innovative, problem-solving practices and processes
4.1 Delivering effective core practices

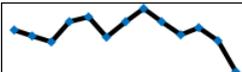
Outcomes



Good looks like:
In development.
However, thought needs to be given around the balance of which outcomes are being applied and if applied appropriately in the circumstance

Total Outcomed offences regardless of when recorded:

'Action Taken':

		Apr 19 - Jun 19		Apr 21 - Jun 21		Comparison between Time periods		Proportion Rate - Monthly View - 13mths	
		Outcomed Offences	% Outcomed	Outcomed Offences	% Outcomed	% Change	Difference (No. of offences)	Jun 21	
Total Offences Outcomed		20,891	100.0%	19,170	100.0%	-8%	-1,721		
Action Taken - (Charge/Summons, Out of Court Disposals & TICs)	OC1 Charge/summons	1,915	9.2%	1,145	6.0%	-40%	-770		3.9%
	OC1A Charge/Summons - alternate offence	417	2.0%	285	1.5%	-32%	-132		1.1%
	OC2 Caution - youths	96	0.5%	22	0.1%	-77%	-74		0.1%
	OC2A Caution - Youth - alternate offence	13	0.1%	6	0.0%	-54%	-7		0.0%
	OC3 Caution - adults	324	1.6%	177	0.9%	-45%	-147		0.5%
	OC3A Caution - Adult - alternate offence	48	0.2%	43	0.2%	-10%	-5		0.1%
	OC4 Taken into consideration	23	0.1%	10	0.1%	-57%	-13		0.1%
	OC6 Penalty Notice for Disorder	37	0.2%	17	0.1%	-54%	-20		0.1%
	OC7 Cannabis/Khat warning	101	0.5%	101	0.5%	0%	0		0.1%
OC8 Community Resolution	249	1.2%	106	0.6%	-57%	-143		0.4%	

Key Points

- **41% reduction** in offences assigned **Action Taken Outcome**
- From 1st April 2021, CPS started enforcing the new disclosure guidelines leading to significant amount of additional work for most files. A reduction in 'Action Taken' outcomes was anticipated.
- Due to the higher percentage of student officers in the force, there is less experience and knowledge of how to investigate crime proportionately, set against a backdrop of an increase in volume and complexity of incident and crime recording levels as Covid-19 restrictions continue to ease.
- A turnover in Sergeants/newly promoted also impacts on investigations and outcome timeliness.
- Factor in force staff attrition through training, annual leave and sickness.

4. Delivering innovative, problem-solving practices and processes

4.1 Delivering effective core practices

Outcomes

		Apr 19 - Jun 19		Apr 21 - Jun 21		Comparison between Time periods		Proportion Rate - Monthly View - 13mths Jun 21	
		Outcomed Offences	% Outcomed	Outcomed Offences	% Outcomed	% Change (in offences)	Difference (No. of offences)		
Total Offences Outcomed		20,891	100.0%	19,170	100.0%	-8%	-1,721		
Evidential Difficulties (suspect identified; victim supports action):	OC15 Named Suspect identified: victim supports but evidential difficulties prevent further action	2,337	11.2%	2,811	14.7%	20%	474		14.6%
	OC14 Suspect not identified – victim declines to identify the offender	1,745	8.4%	1,775	9.3%	2%	30		11%
Evidential Difficulties (victim does not support action):	OC16 Named Suspect identified: evidential difficulties prevent further action; victim does not support police action	5,985	28.6%	6,881	35.9%	15%	896		37%
	OC18 Investigation Complete: No suspect identified.	6,814	32.6%	5,202	27.1%	-24%	-1,612		28.4%
'Other' Outcome results:	OC20 Transferred to external agency	383	1.8%	154	0.8%	-60%	-229		0.6%
	OC21 Further investigation to prosecute - not in public interest	50	0.2%	55	0.3%	10%	5		0.1%
	OC22 Not in public interest to prosecute - diversionary, educational or intervention activity undertaken	66	0.3%	71	0.4%	8%	5		0.2%

Key Points

Outcome 16 represents **36%** of all outcomed offences in the last 3 months.

15% increase on the same period two years ago despite educational material sent out.

- **Minor growth** encountered with **'Prosecution prevented or not in the Public interest'** outcome grouping (+21 offences), with the **increase driven** by **Outcome 17 - Prosecution time limit expired: Suspect identified**.
- Despite communication messages and educational material, **36% (6,881)** of all outcomed offences have been assigned **Outcome 16**, with a **15% increase** in the last 3 months compared to the same period two years ago (29%, 5,985).
 - This increase is also seen with domestic abuse outcomed offences and is possibly linked to the reinforced recording initiative around **'Course of Conduct'** offences.
 - This is to be raised within the new **Outcomes meeting** for targeted exploration amongst stakeholder representatives.
- It is **highly probable** that **'high volume/ low harm'** crime recording will **increase** which will then influence and **dampen outcoming levels** based on **observations seen so far**, as lockdown restrictions continue to ease, the full return of the night time economy and the holiday season (local and foreign travel) coupled with good seasonal weather.

4. Delivering innovative, problem-solving practices and processes
 4.1 Delivering effective core practices

Outcomes

Outcome 14 – *Evidential Difficulties Victim Based – Named suspect not identified: Victim either declines/ or is unable to support further police investigation*

Outcome 16 – *Victim does not support action*

Outcome 14

The **proportion rate** of **Outcome 14** offences in Apr 21 – Jun 21 that have a Victim linked to the offence, has **exceeded 80%** for the first time since reporting began and is **an improvement** against the two previous 3 month time periods.

Outcome 16

A **gradual improvement** in the **proportion rate** of **Outcome 16** offences in Apr 21 – Jun 21 (**92%**) that have a Victim linked to the offence, has been seen when compared to the two previous 3 month time periods.



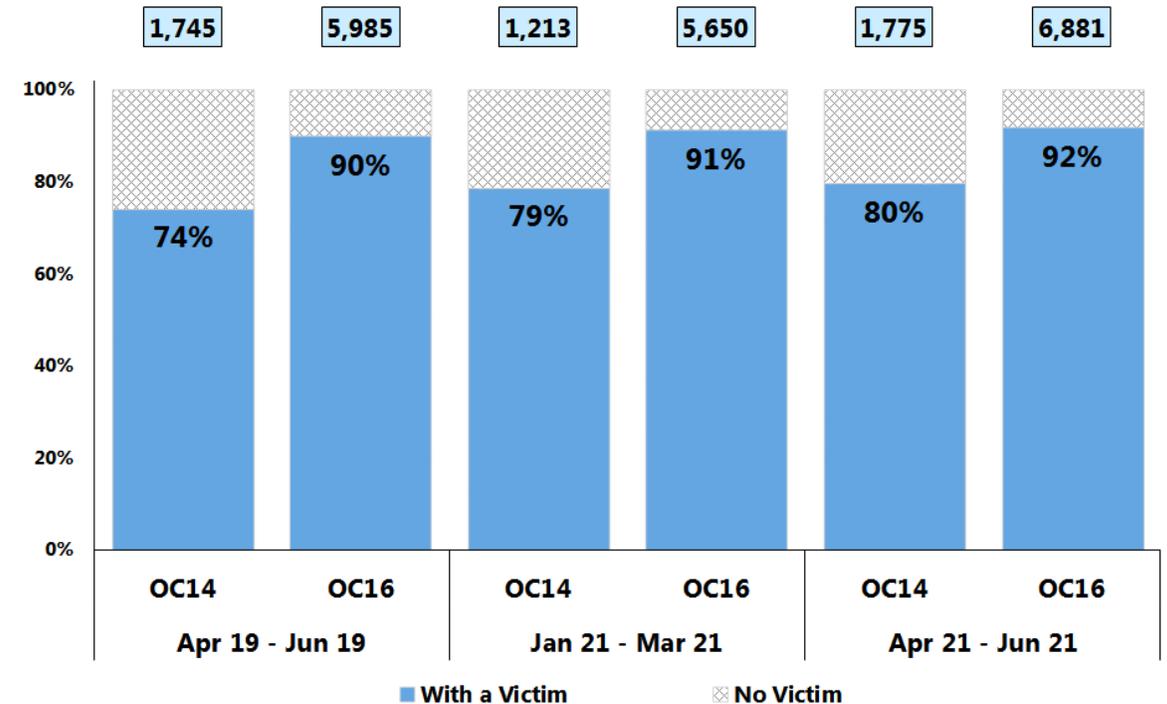
Good looks like:

100% of Outcome 14 and 16 offences should have a victim linked to the offence.

Key Points

Whilst there is a slight improvement, neither outcome 14 or 16 offences have a victim assigned 100% of the time.

Based on Offences outcomed during the 3 month periods regardless of when they were recorded



Higher % is better

4. Delivering innovative, problem-solving practices and processes
4.2 Managing demand – policing priorities

All Crime

Key Points

Crime types whose volumes are shown in a grey box have exceeded the upper control limit and will feature later in the report.

		Qtr 1 21/22	Qtr 1 19/20	Trend Previous 12 Months	YTD % Change	Does not directly relate to crime recorded in the quarter		
						Total Outcomed Qtr 1 21/22	Action Taken Prop. Rate Qtr 1 21/22	Outcome 16 Prop. Rate Qtr 1 21/22
Total Recorded Crime	24419 19164	21009	21497		-2%	19170	10%	36%
Violence With Injury	3295 2279	2641	2775		-5%	2305	12%	50%
Violence Without Injury	6666 5005	6613	5373		23%	6119	6%	58%
Rape	351 262	378	320		18%	280	3%	43%
Other Sexual Offences	563 520	655	552		19%	597	11%	35%
Personal Robbery*	157 140	114	144		-21%	125	10%	27%
Business Robbery*	19 11	9	13		-31%	7	0%	0%
Residential Burglary* Dwelling	759 600	469	662		-29%	427	4%	10%
Burglary - Business & Community*	1004 926	518	951		-46%	521	5%	3%
Vehicle Offences*	1388 1252	849	1325		-36%	832	3%	5%
Theft from Person*	255 110	101	170		-41%	82	1%	28%
Bicycle Theft	274 138	160	229		-30%	156	6%	4%

		Qtr 1 21/22	Qtr 1 19/20	Trend Previous 12 Months	YTD % Change	Does not directly relate to crime recorded in the quarter		
						Total Outcomed Qtr 1 21/22	Action Taken Prop. Rate Qtr 1 21/22	Outcome 16 Prop. Rate Qtr 1 21/22
Shoplifting	2173 1633	1410	2011		-30%	1250	21%	7%
All Other Theft Offences	2482 1505	1648	2116		-22%	1579	3%	17%
Criminal Damage & Arson	2598 2201	2222	2386		-7%	2066	7%	19%
Drug Offences	683 464	642	527		22%	557	61%	8%
Possession of Weapons	268 207	226	260		-13%	177	36%	18%
Public Order	1735 971	1929	1353		43%	1752	12%	45%
Misc. Crimes Against Society	365 323	425	330		29%	338	17%	25%
Cyber	1065 323	1421	804		77%			
Alcohol Related	2183 1072	1475	1694		-13%			

Incidents	84806 66504	70553	76485		-8%			
Anti Social Behaviour	12433 6997	11995	10290		17%			

* National Crime and Policing Measures

The upper and lower control limits are derived by calculating 2 points of Standard Deviation from the mean. The mean is fixed for the year and is based on volumes recorded in 2019/2020 to counter act the impact of Covid on volumes in 2020/2021.

denotes above the upper control limit. denotes below the lower control limit

NB. It is possible for the previous Qtr. to be coloured differently from the Qtr. previous year even if volumes are similar. This is due to the upper and lower control limits changing annually based on the previous years volumes.

4. Delivering innovative, problem-solving practices and processes
 4.2 Managing demand – policing priorities

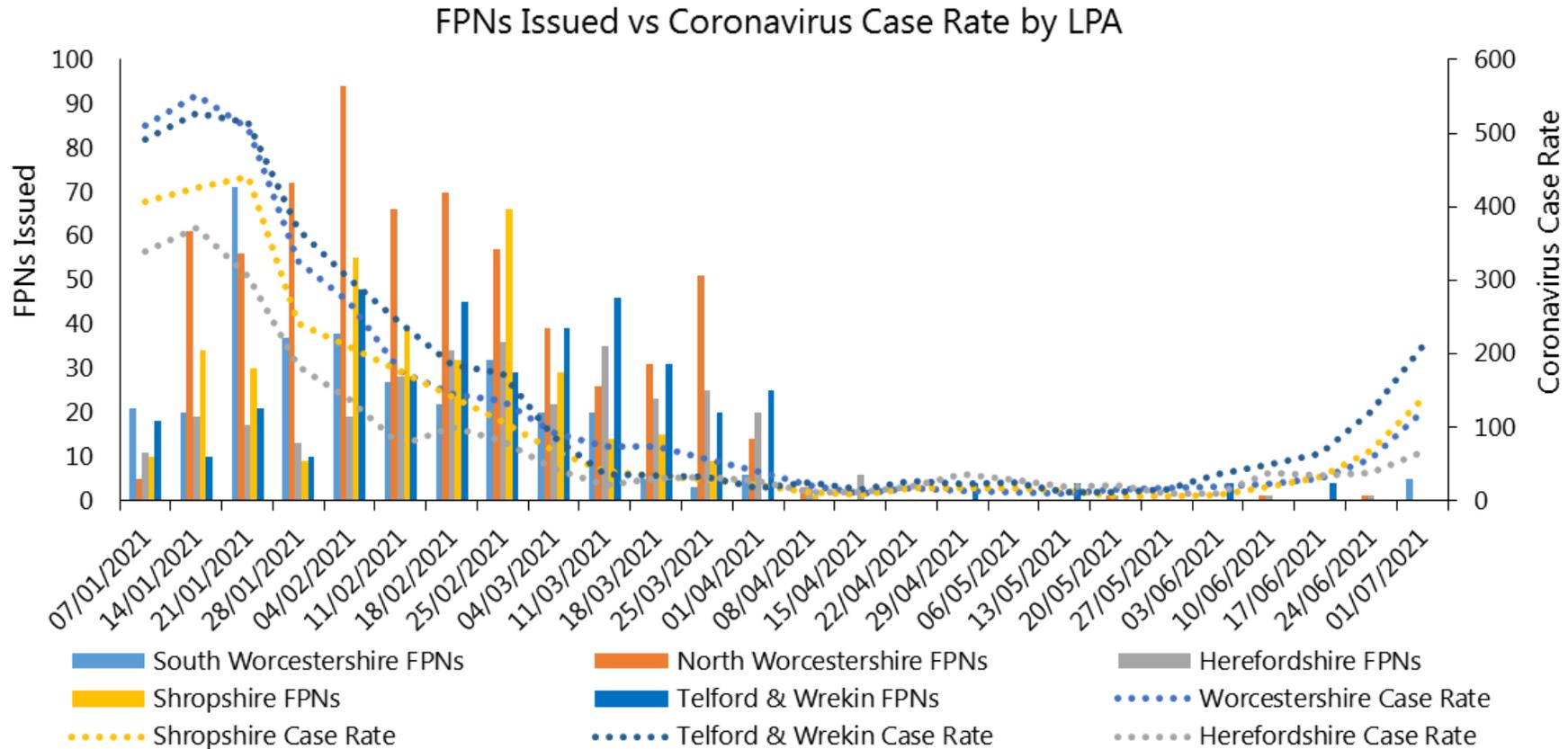
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COVID-19 Related Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs)

Key Points

Given the low numbers of FPN’s issued the last quarter and the move to the final phase of unlocking it is proposed that this will not feature in future reports.

“FPNs issued vs Coronavirus Case Rate by LPA” gives an indication of the activity of each LPA while considering the prevalence of coronavirus within each area. Following a period of low case rates as a result of lockdown and the vaccination programme, **case rates have increased significantly in every LPA. FPNs issued have not increased substantially in response**, however **risk to public health is now significantly lower** than in previous waves due to the vaccination program.

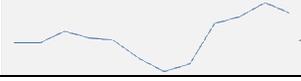
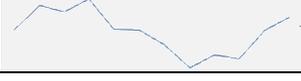


4. Delivering innovative, problem-solving practices and processes

4.2 Managing demand – policing priorities

Key Points

The Policing Priorities are reported on as standard each month and quarter. They are reported on in further detail on following slides.

		 Good Looks Like	Control Limits	Qtr 1 21/22	Qtr 1 19/20	Trend Previous 12 Months	YTD % Change
	Hate Crime	Increased reporting	607 307	708	453		56%
	Vulnerable Adult	Increased reporting	3904 3163	4378	3511		25%
	Child At Risk	Increased reporting	5742 5007	6447	5391		20%
	Child Sexual Exploitation	Increased reporting	212 74	137	179		-23%
	KSI	A sustained 20% reduction		117	124		-6%
Due to systems it is possible for volumes to change up to 30 days after the end of the month.							
	Domestic Abuse	Increased reporting; A reduction in DA repeat victims	7959 6061	6883	6705		3%
	Residential Burglary	25% reduction in a post-COVID operating environment	759 600	469	662		-29%

Overall most **crime volumes increased** as anticipated moving further out of lockdown.

It is **probable** that **volumes** in the next month and quarter will **increase** further due to the **national lockdown** easing and improved seasonal weather.

The upper and lower control limits are derived by calculating 2 points of Standard Deviation from the mean. The mean is fixed for the year and is based on volumes recorded in the previous financial year.

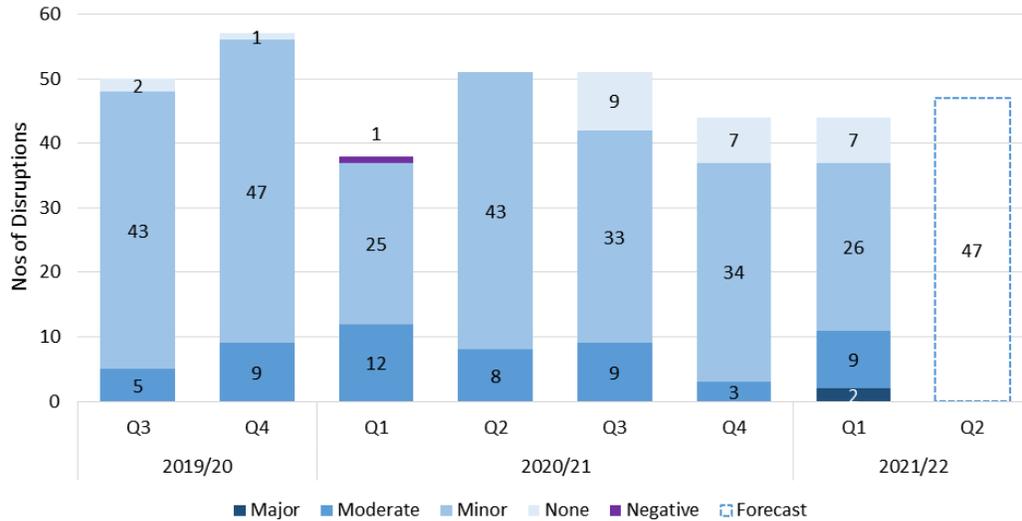
 denotes above the upper control limit.  denotes below the lower control limit.

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4.2 Managing demand – policing priorities

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Serious Organised Crime

OCG Disruptions by Impact (Inc Forecast for Q2 2021/22)



Breakdown of disruption activity by events involved (For Positive Disruptions Only) Q1 2021/22



Key Points

Q1 2021/22 - 44 Disruptions. Please note that the figures claimed this quarter were impacted by a change in recording practice by the ROCTA meaning that disruptions for Q1 were cut off on the 25th June.

84% Positive disruptions – Of note, two MAJOR disruptions recorded.

Disruptions for Q1 2021/22 have **driven** in the main by activity occurring in **Telford & Wrekin** and **South Worcestershire**.

Safeguarding

8 Adults Safeguarded
3 Children Safeguarded

Criminal Justice / Offender Management

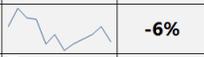
24 Arrests
2 Charges
6 Convictions (Totalling 15 yrs)
0 SCPOs obtained
6 Other ancillary orders obtained

4. Delivering innovative, problem-solving practices and processes
4.2 Managing demand – policing priorities

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 **Good looks like:** KSI: A sustained **20% reduction on 19/20**

Safer Roads

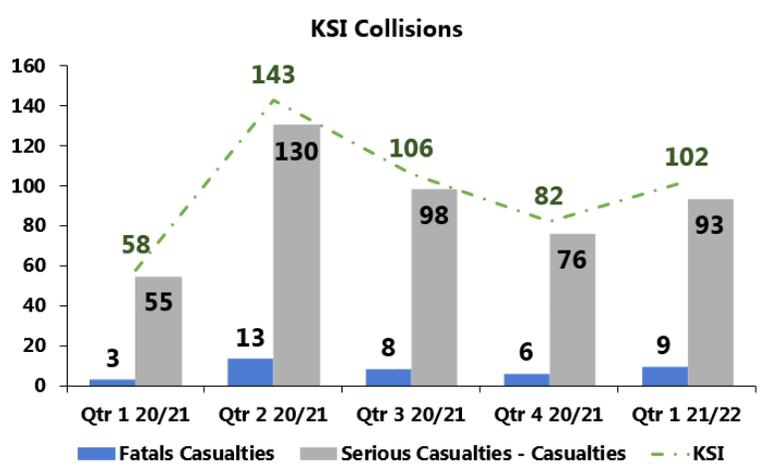
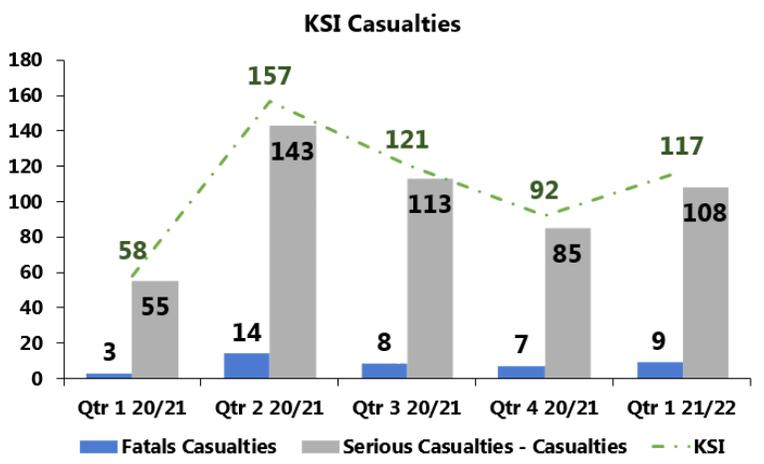
	Qtr 1 21/22	Qtr 1 19/20	Trend Previous 12 Months	YTD % Change
KSI	117	124		-6%
Fatals Casualties	9	11		-18%
Serious Casualties - Casualties	108	113		-4%

Due to systems it is possible for volumes to change up to 30 days after the end of the month.

Death and injury on our roads
We're going to continue to work hard to reduce this.

Safer roads
Traveling responsibly





Key Points

- In the last quarter, Killed or Seriously Injured (KSI) casualties saw a **6% (7) decrease** compared to the previous **quarter two years ago**.
- However, it is **highly probable** that KSI volumes will **increase over the coming months**
- Pedal cyclist casualties continue to remain an area of concern due to an increase in new/inexperienced cyclists in the last 16 months and potentially in to the summer. It is expected that as new cyclists gain more experience, there will be a decline in collisions.
- Op Close Pass and will continue to engage with cyclists to press home safety messages with them.

Upcoming Campaigns: July – August 2021

National NPCC campaigns
Time period covering communications and enforcement



July

- National Speed Operation:- 19th July – 8th August

August

- Drug Driving Week:- 16th – 29th August

West Mercia Initiatives



Education & Training

- **Green Light** – recommencing with physical delivery for June.
- **Year 6** - completion of 'Safe Zone' website with H&W Fire & Rescue to replace Year 6 delivery.
- **Powered 2 Wheels** – continue physical courses for Biker Down and Bike Safe. Take Control training.

Operations

- **Op Close Pass** and **Op Snap** - ongoing support.
- **A449 Communications** roll out.
- **Public Access System** roll out.

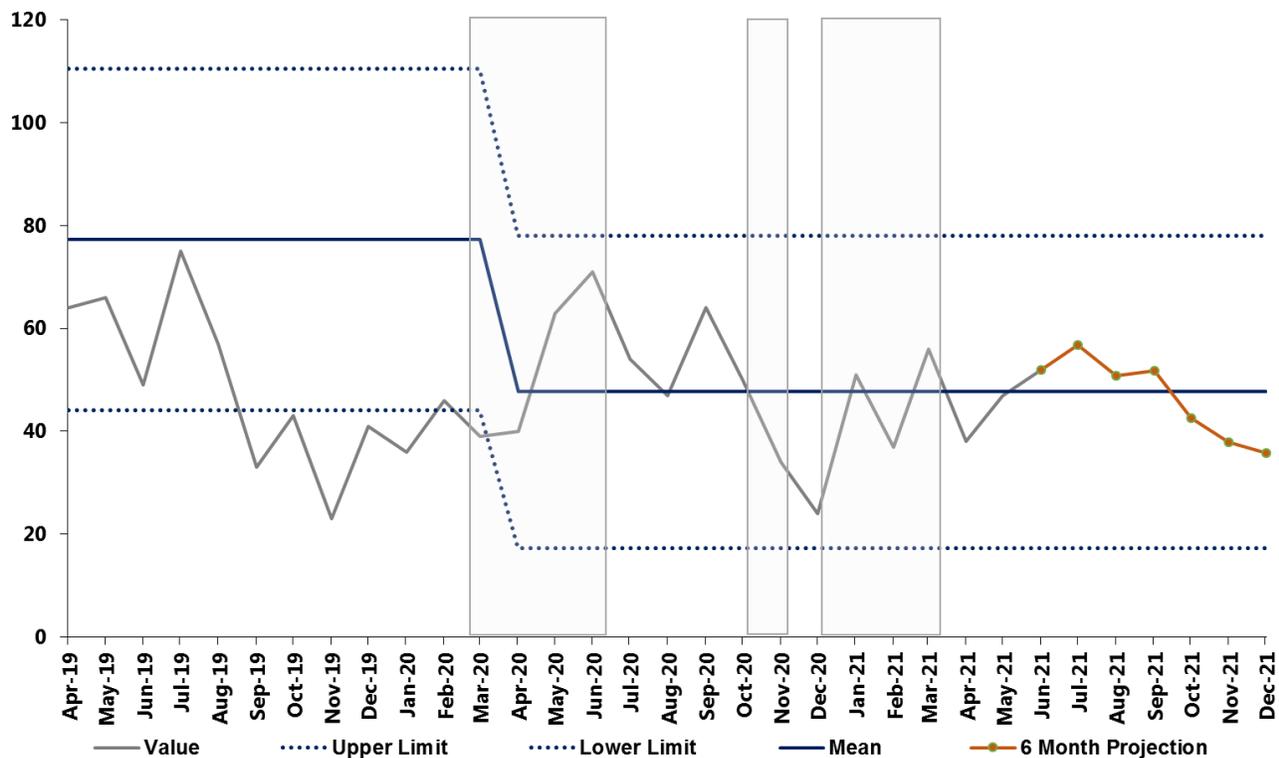
4. Delivering innovative, problem-solving practices and processes

4.2 Managing demand – policing priorities

Child Sexual Exploitation

This data is generated from Athena where a 'CSE' crime keyword has been applied.

Following the **relaxation of lockdown** restrictions and the **introduction of the government NSPCC helpline** on 1st April, **volumes were expected to increase** – month on month marginal increases in volumes have been observed since this date. It is anticipated that **volumes will continue to increase in the coming months.**



Note: Projections are unable to factor in current impact of Covid . Mean and limits are based on 19/20 data

The upper and lower control limits are derived by calculating 2 points of Standard Deviation from the mean.

Key Points

Overall there was a **7% (9) increase** in CSE related offences and crimed incidents compared to the **previous quarter** and an **23% (42) decrease** on the same quarter two years prior.

	Qtr 1 21/22	Qtr 1 19/20	Trend Previous 12 Months	YTD % Change
Child Sexual Exploitation	212	137		-23%



Good looks like:

CSE: Increased reporting*

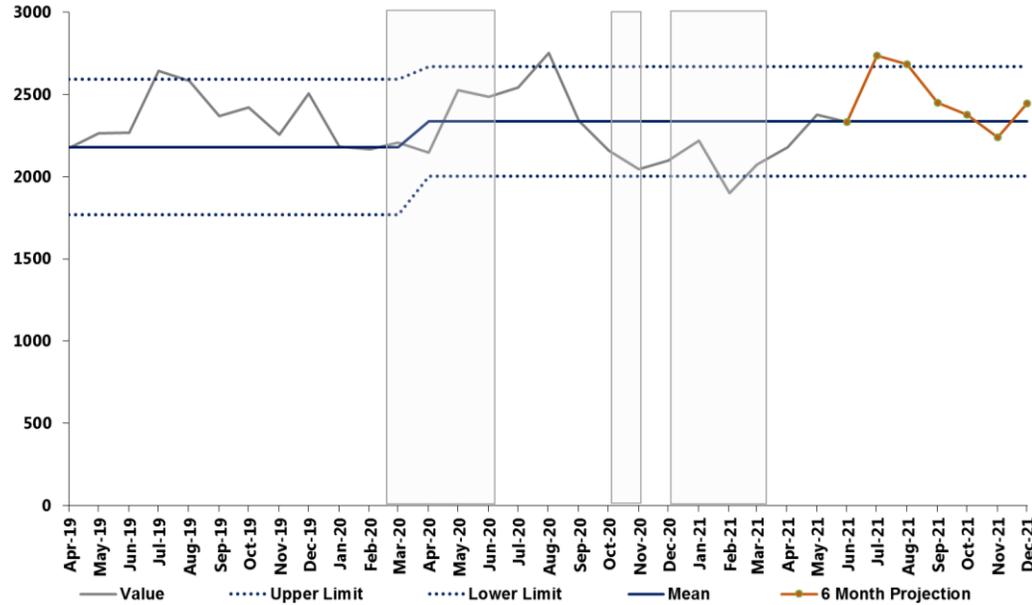
We also need to use the **correct markers** to ensure the right people are directed to these jobs and so dealt with appropriately

The ongoing **exploitation training** should continue to see an increased **recognition and reporting of CSE by all partners and agencies** who have undertaken this training.

*Note: with the change in use of CSE marker (end of 2019), it is not possible to make valid comparisons between the previous 12 months.

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4.2 Managing demand – policing priorities

Domestic Abuse



Note: Projections are unable to factor in current impact of Covid . Mean and limits are based on 19/20 data

It is **highly probable** that volumes have **increased** as a result of further easing of Covid restrictions specifically, with outdoor hospitality re-opening on 12th April. **Increased alcohol consumption** is likely to have contributed to an increase in incidents.

The start of **Euro 2020** in June will also have contributed to increased volumes. Going forward into **Q2 2021/22**, it is anticipated that figures will **increase further** in response to:

- Relaxation of Covid restrictions - full lifting of the majority of restrictions on **19th July**.
- Warm Summer weather
- Continued recovery of night time economy
- School holidays beginning in Mid July.

This data is generated from Athena where a 'Domestic Abuse' crime keyword has been applied.

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Good looks like:

Domestic Abuse:

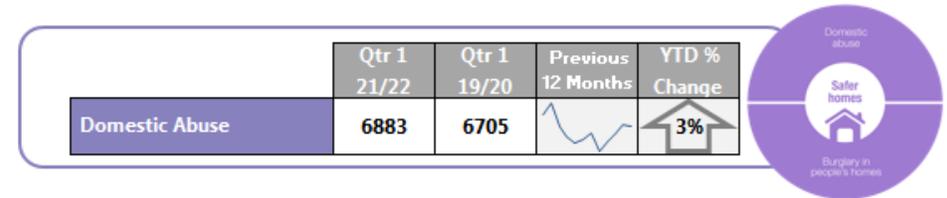
Increased reporting; A reduction in DA repeat victims
Provide a timely response to all reports of DA.

"Good" is better protection from harm, coupled with the best service we are able to achieve for victims of DA. Therefore, every DA report must be encouraged.

We will monitor repeat DA and, through intervening quickly, making proactive arrests as often as possible, using stringent bail and charge rather than DVPNs, should see a reduction in this metric.

Key Points

Domestic abuse crimes and crimed incidents saw a **3% (178) increase** on the same quarter two years prior and a **11% (700) increase** on the previous quarter.



Domestic Abuse Delivery Group (DADG) continues to drive the response to the DA Delivery Plan which is linked to the **National Vulnerability Action Plan (NVAP)** perennial issues. The overarching approach to NVAP will sit and report to Crime and Vulnerability and escalate to SIB to drive whole system approaches.

Strategic Vulnerability and Safeguarding maintain oversight of DA performance following **Domestic Abuse Reality Testing (DART)**, via the **DADG**.

Performance will be assessed through **policy compliance, practice** and in the developing the **culture of positive action** through the **local policing delivery**.

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4.2 Managing demand – policing priorities

Domestic Abuse Crime offences - Arrest Rates

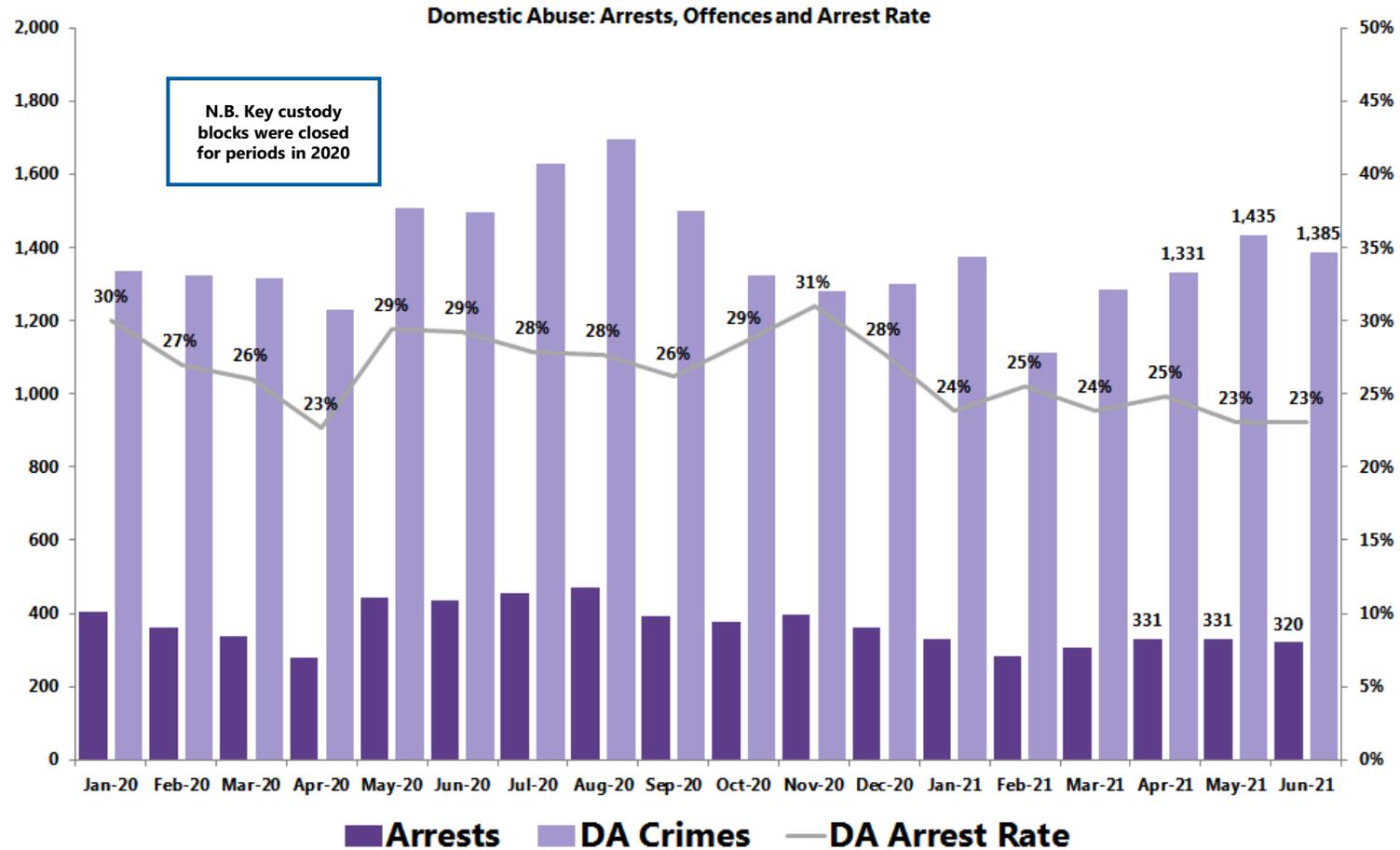
Key Points

Increase on DA offences in the last quarter however a stable proportion when looking at arrest rates.

There has been **3 months of upward trend growth** in DA offences, with volumes **increasing** at a **sharper rate** than the number of DA arrests reported. However, the **DA arrest rate** has been on a **downward trend** since November 2020.

This is an area of concern and was raised at the recent **Quarterly Performance Reviews**.

As Covid restrictions relax further, warm summer weather, continued recovery of night time economy and School holidays beginning in Mid July, it is **highly probable** that DA crime recording will increase which will then **increase** DA arrest rates.



This data is generated from Athena where a 'Domestic Abuse' crime keyword has been applied.

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4.2 Managing demand – policing priorities

Domestic Abuse Outcomes

Key Points

- **47% reduction** in offences assigned **Action Taken** Outcome results
- Downward monthly trend for Charge/Summons outcomes

Volume and Proportion of total outcomed DA offences by Outcome result

(regardless of when they were recorded)

	Apr 19 - Jun 19		Apr 21 - Jun 21	
	Outcomed Offences	% Outcomed	Outcomed Offences	% Outcomed
Total DA Offences Outcomed	3,667	100.0%	3,837	100.0%

Comparison between Time periods	
% Change	Difference (No. of offences)
5%	170

Proportion Rate - Monthly View - 13mths	
Jun 21	

'Action Taken':

Action Taken - (Charge/Summons, Out of Court Disposals & TICs)	OC	Description	Apr 19 - Jun 19		Apr 21 - Jun 21		% Change	Difference (No. of offences)	Proportion Rate - Monthly View - 13mths	Jun 21
			Outcomed Offences	% Outcomed	Outcomed Offences	% Outcomed				
Action Taken - (Charge/Summons, Out of Court Disposals & TICs)	OC1	Charge/summons	303	8.3%	158	4.1%	-48%	-145		3.0%
	OC1A	Charge/Summons - alternate offence	124	3.4%	86	2.2%	-31%	-38		1.4%
	OC2	Caution - youths	6	0.2%	0	0.0%	-100%	-6		0.0%
	OC2A	Caution - Youth - alternate offence	1	0.0%	0	0.0%	-100%	-1		0.0%
	OC3	Caution - adults	58	1.6%	26	0.7%	-55%	-32		0.3%
	OC3A	Caution - Adult - alternate offence	21	0.6%	6	0.2%	-71%	-15		0.0%
	OC8	Community Resolution	7	0.2%	1	0.0%	-86%	-6		0.0%

Key Issues raised:

- From **1st April 2021**, CPS started enforcing the new **disclosure guidelines** leading to significant amount of additional work for most files. A **reduction in 'Action Taken'** DA outcomes was **anticipated**.
- Due to the **higher percentage** of student officers in the force, there is **less experience** and **knowledge** of how to investigate crime proportionately, set against a backdrop of an **increase in volume** and **complexity of incident** and **crime recording levels** as Covid-19 restrictions continue to ease.
- A **turnover in Sergeants/newly promoted** also impacts on DA investigations and DA outcome timeliness.
- Factor in **force staff attrition** through training, annual leave and sickness.

This data is generated from Athena where a 'Domestic Abuse' crime keyword has been applied.

4. Delivering innovative, problem-solving practices and processes
4.2 Managing demand – policing priorities

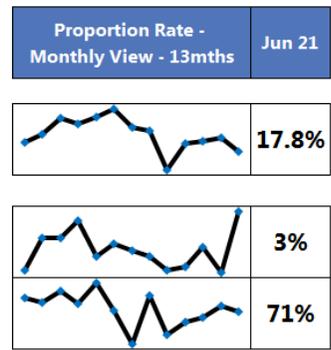
Domestic Abuse Outcomes

Key Points

- Outcome 16 represents **69%** of all outcomed DA offences in the last 3 months (**up 5 percentage points**).
- **12% increase** on the same period two years ago.

Volume and Proportion of total outcomed DA offences by Outcome result
(regardless of when they were recorded)

		Apr 19 - Jun 19		Apr 21 - Jun 21		Comparison between Time periods	
		Outcomed Offences	% Outcomed	Outcomed Offences	% Outcomed	% Change (in offences)	Difference (No. of offences)
Total DA Offences Outcomed		3,667	100.0%	3,837	100.0%	5%	170
Evidential Difficulties (suspect identified; victim supports action):	OC15 Named Suspect identified: victim supports but evidential difficulties prevent further action	521	14.2%	703	18.3%	35%	182
Evidential Difficulties (victim does not support action):	OC14 Suspect not identified – victim declines to identify the offender	97	2.6%	72	1.9%	-26%	-25
	OC16 Named Suspect identified: evidential difficulties prevent further action; victim does not support police action	2,356	64.2%	2,643	68.9%	12%	287



- **Minor growth** encountered with 'Prosecution prevented or not in the Public interest' outcome grouping (+26 offences), with the **increase driven by Outcome 17 - Prosecution time limit expired: Suspect identified.**
- **Sustained reduction in Outcome 20** – Transferred to External Agency as a consequence of Covid-19 pandemic.
- Despite communication messages and educational material, **69% (2,643)** of all outcomed offences have been assigned **Outcome 16**, with a **12% increase** in the last 3 months compared to the same period two years ago (64%, 2,356).
- **Key Issue** - The reinforced recording initiative of 'Course of conduct' offences will cause **multiple DA offences** as leads to the recording of both an **harassment** and a **stalking** offence - **Two crimes per investigation** with different requirements to prove and outcome. The SP&I Performance team to spend time with **Crime Bureau** to understand this issue.
- With the full return of the night time economy, the holiday season and approaching the **end of the furlough scheme** there is likely to be **financial** and **economic implications** for people. It is **probable** that **DA crime recording** will **increase** however, we are likely to see a **reduction in outcome rates** based on observations seen so far.

This data is generated from Athena where a 'Domestic Abuse' crime keyword has been applied.

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 4.2 Managing demand – policing priorities

Domestic Abuse – Repeat Victimization

Key Points

- As anticipated, repeat victim volumes for total recorded crime and domestic abuse have show an **upward growth trend** during Q1 2021/22 following the end of full lockdown restrictions.
- It is **highly probable** that the easing of restrictions, reopening of the Night time economy and major events such as Euro 2020 **have increased** repeat victimisation volumes.
- DA repeat rate** - 40% to 43%.
- TRC repeat rate** – 32% to 34%

These repeat victims have generally been linked Assault with or without Injury, Stalking & Harassment, Criminal Damage & Arson and Public order offences.

It is **highly probable** that repeat volumes will **increase** in the coming months due to the easing of Covid restrictions driving up crime reporting committed during the lockdown period.

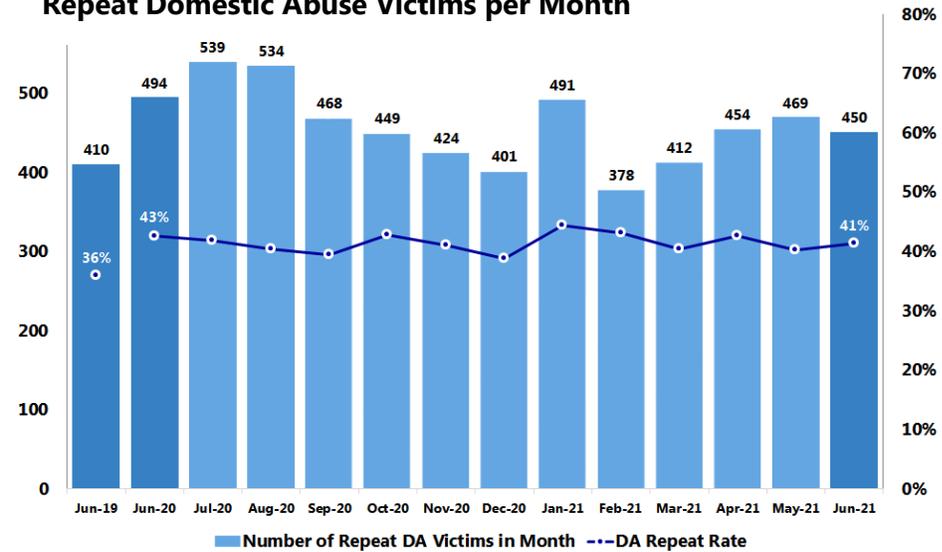
The **reinforced recording** of 'Course of conduct' offences will cause **multiple offences** for repeat nominals, as leads to the recording of **both an harassment** and a **stalking** offence - **Two crimes per investigation**. The **SP&I Performance team** to spend time with **Crime Bureau** to understand this issue.

Good looks like: Repeat TRC & DA Victims: A reduction in 'high frequency/ high severity' repeat victims and a decrease in repeat rates

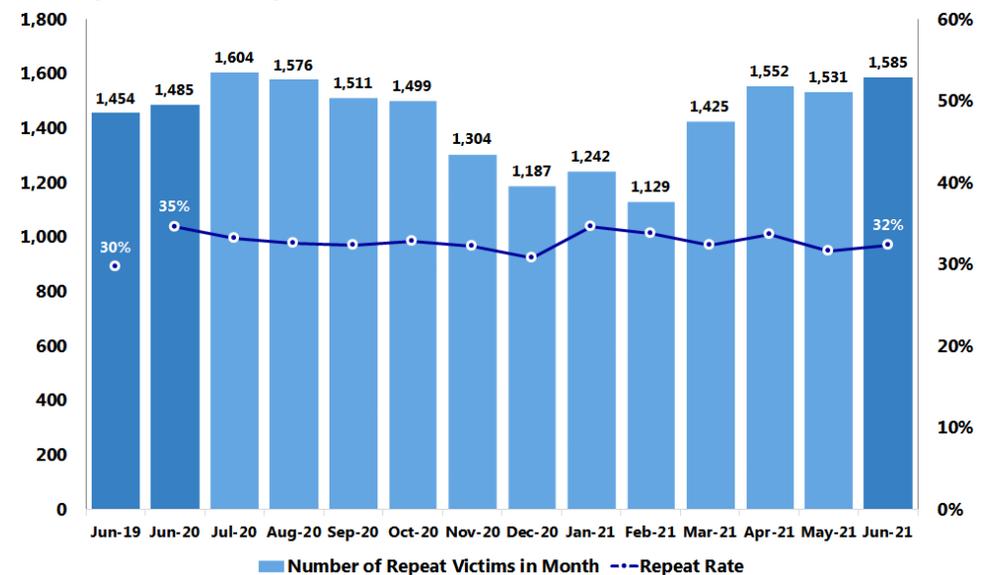
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A repeat victim is defined as an individual recorded as a victim in the **current reporting month** that has had at least one other offence in the **preceding 12 months**.

Repeat Domestic Abuse Victims per Month



Repeat Victims per Month



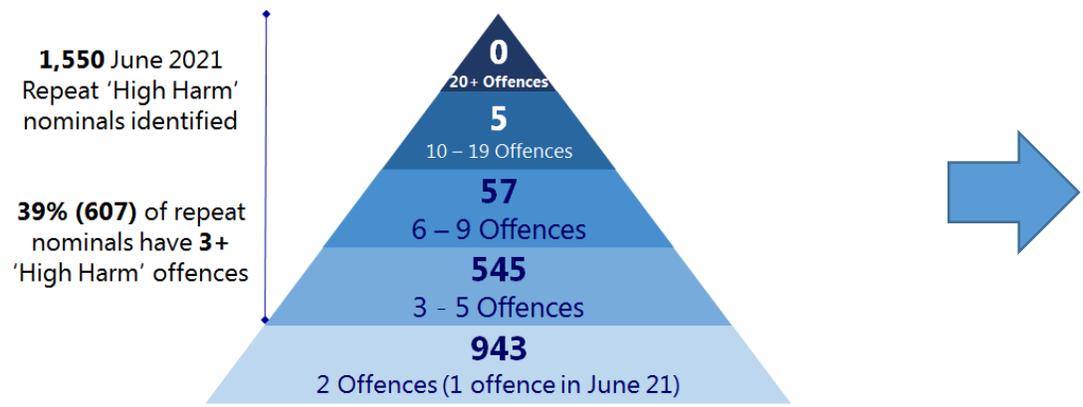
This data is generated from Athena where a 'Domestic Abuse' crime keyword has been applied.

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4.2 Managing demand – policing priorities

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Domestic Abuse – Recidivism

- A monthly breakdown of repeat nominal of **high harm** offences, with/ without a domestic abuse indicator, across a **three month** rolling time period.
- This information is circulated across **Problem solving teams** and **Local Policing commanders**.
- **High harm offences** include: violence against the person, with or without injury, rape and other sexual offences, homicide, malicious communication and stalking and harassment.



Good looks like:
 Repeat TRC & DA Suspects:
 Less serial/ repeat DA offenders.
 Decrease in 'recurring' repeat TRC suspects
 Decrease in repeat rates



Key Points

- **607 repeat** nominals (3+ high harm offences) identified in the June 21 cohort, **13% increase** on last month's figure, n= 539, with a 14% increase in repeat nominals (+3) with '10-19 high harm offences' each.
- **67%** of June 2021's 3+ high harm offence repeat nominals have been **linked to DA offences** over the last three months.
- It is **highly probable** that 'high harm' repeat volumes will **increase** over the coming months due to an increase in crime recording.

Force View

	May-21		Jun-21		Direction of Travel
Repeat Victims only	96	18%	111	18%	↑
Repeat Suspects only	175	32%	193	32%	↑
Repeat 'Victim/ Suspects' Nominals	268	50%	303	50%	↑
	539	100%	607	100%	↑

It is **highly probable** that 'high harm' repeat volumes will **increase** over the coming months due to an increase in crime recording, set against the backdrop of:

- Continued easing of Covid restrictions, with potential full lifting of the majority of restrictions on **19th July**.
- Warmer Summer weather encouraging outdoor socialising.
- School Summer holidays beginning in **Mid/Late July**.
- Approaching the **end of the Furlough scheme** – with **financial** and **economic implications** for businesses and employees.

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4.2 Managing demand – policing priorities

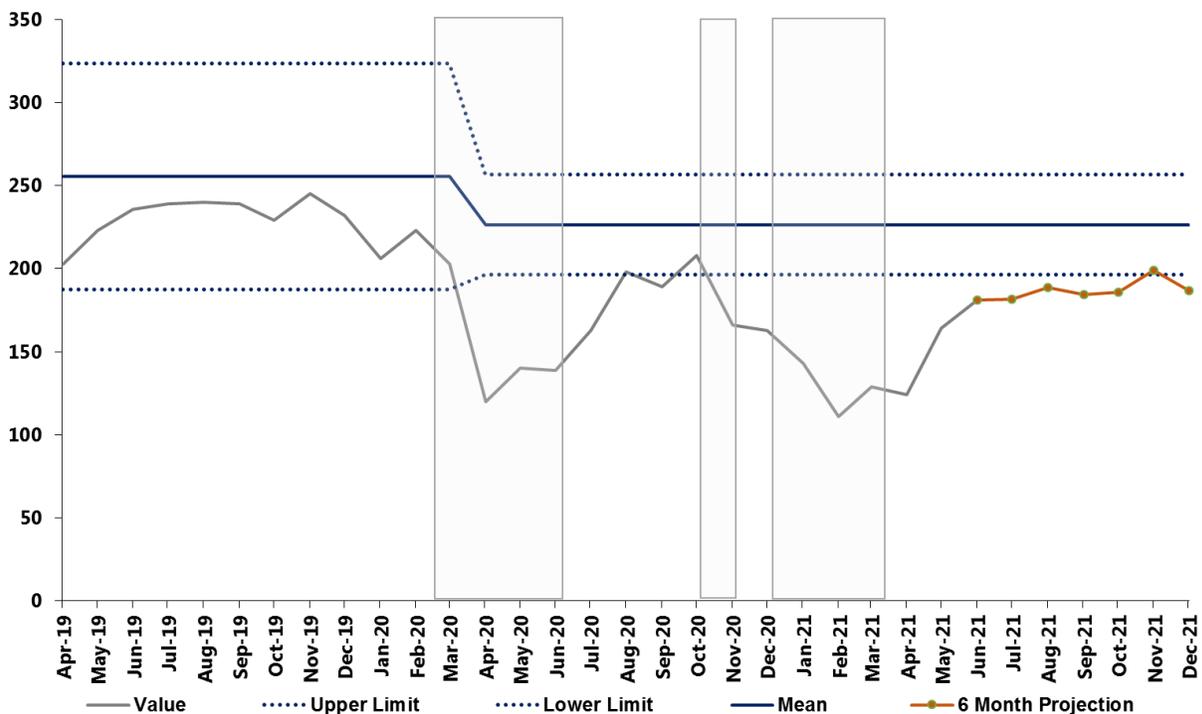
Residential Burglary (Dwelling)

	Qtr 1 21/22	Qtr 1 19/20	Previous 12 Months	YTD % Change
Residential Burglary Dwelling	469	662		-29%



Key Points

- Residential Burglary Dwelling features despite being below the lower control limit due to being a Policing Priority.
- Volumes in Residential Burglary – (Dwelling) **increased by 27% (101)** compared to the previous quarter but remains **29% (193) lower** than the same quarter **two years ago**.
- It is **probable** that an increase in volumes will be observed in during Q2 2021/2022 due to many returning to the office, alongside continued working from home.



Note: Projections are unable to factor in current impact of Covid . Mean and limits are based on 19/20 data
The upper and lower control limits are derived by calculating 2 points of Standard Deviation from the mean.



Good looks like:



Residential Burglary Dwelling: 25% reduction in a post-Covid operating environment

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4.2 Managing demand – policing priorities

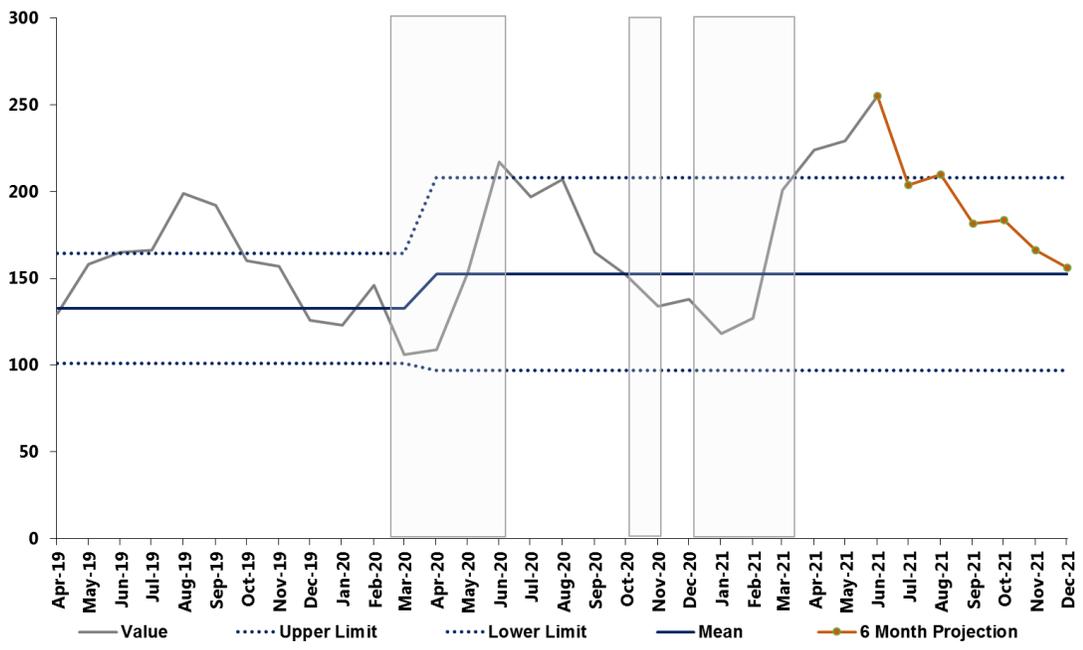
Hate Crime & Crimed Incidents

		Qtr 1 21/22	Qtr 1 19/20	Previous 12 Months	YTD % Change
Hate Crime	607	708	453		56%
	307				

Other Crimes & Incidents

Key Points

- Volumes of Hate Crime and Crimed Incidents saw a **57% (257) increase** on the previous quarter and a **56% (255) increase** on the same quarter two years prior, **exceeding the upper control limit**.
- **June** represented a **high volume month**, likely as a result of two factors mentioned in the May Monthly Report– **Euro 2020 starting** in early June, and the impact of the Delta (previously “Indian”) variant in furthering restrictions.
- It is **highly probable** that as the impact of these factors subside, a **reduction in volumes** will be observed.



Note: Projections are unable to factor in current impact of Covid . Mean and limits are based on 19/20 data

The upper and lower control limits are derived by calculating 2 points of Standard Deviation from the mean.

Good looks like:

Hate Crimes & Crimed Incidents: Increased reporting

We also need to use the correct markers to ensure the right people are directed to these jobs and so dealt with appropriately

This data is generated from Athena where a hate crime keyword has been applied.

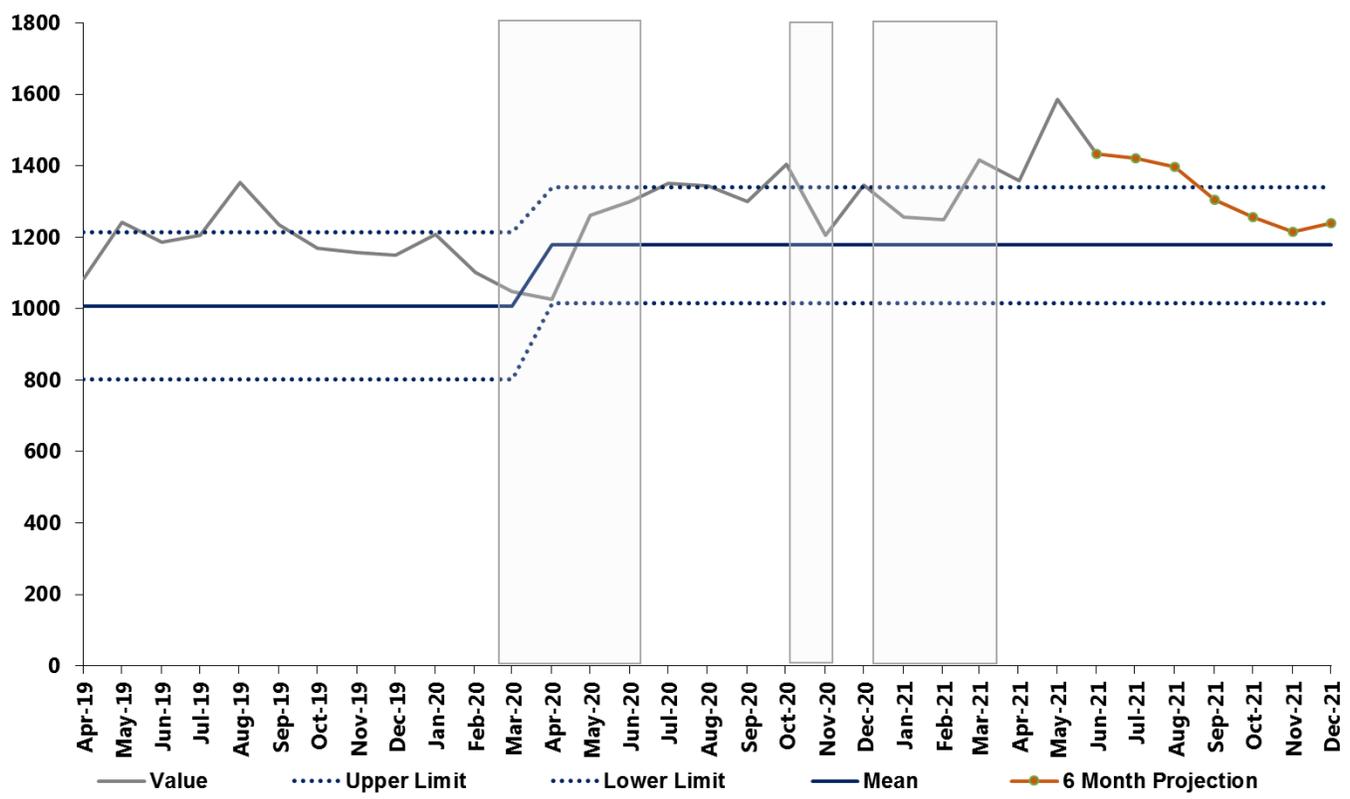
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4.2 Managing demand – policing priorities

Vulnerable Adult Crimes & Crimed Incidents

		Qtr 1 21/22	Qtr 1 19/20	Previous 12 Months	YTD % Change
Vulnerable Adult	3904 3163	4378	3511		25%



- Key Points**
- Vulnerable Adult crimes and crimed incidents saw an **11%** (450) **increase** on the previous quarter and a **25%** (867) increase on the same quarter 2 years prior and exceed the upper control limit.
 - Projections indicate a **decrease** in coming months, however it is probable that volumes will remain above the mean.



Note: Projections are unable to factor in current impact of Covid . Mean and limits are based on 19/20 data
The upper and lower control limits are derived by calculating 2 points of Standard Deviation from the mean.



Good looks like:

Vulnerable Adult Crimes & Crimed Incidents: Increased reporting

We also need to use the *correct markers* to ensure the right people are directed to these jobs and so dealt with appropriately.
Demand work and significant efforts to manage partners and other professional bodies who create demand, alongside *problem solving hubs*, a *centre of excellence* and *greater emphasis and resources put into tackling mispers and mental health issues* will all contribute towards a *reduction in incidents and demand*.
However, a move towards *dynamic and immediately accessible social media platforms by June 2021*, on which contact can be made, will likely see a *rise in demand*.

This data is generated from Athena where a "vulnerable" keyword has been applied.

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Child At Risk Crimes & Crimed Incidents

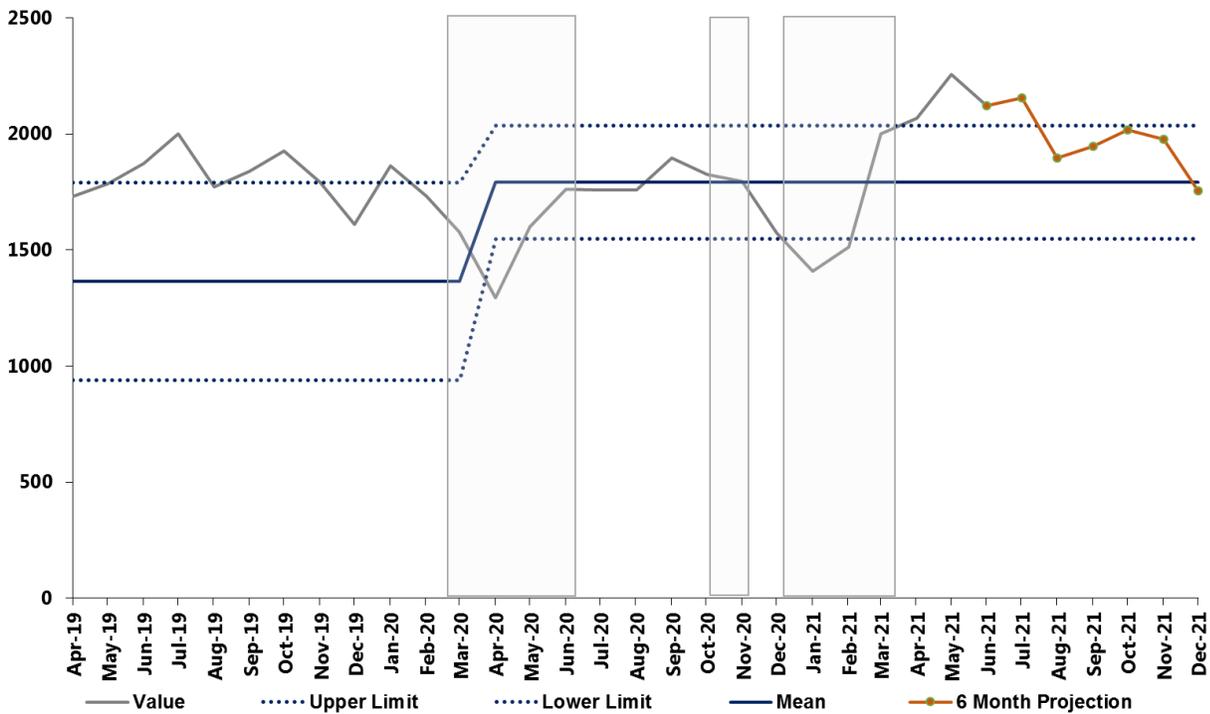
		Qtr 1 21/22	Qtr 1 19/20	Previous 12 Months	YTD % Change
Child At Risk	5742	6447	5391		20%
	5007				



Key Points

Volumes have increased **20%** (1056) compared to the same period two years prior, as anticipated as a result of coming out of lockdown. They currently exceed the upper control limit. **Shropshire** makes up **22% (1406)** of total crimes and crimed incidents, and **South Worcestershire** is also responsible for **22% (1387)**, while **North Worcestershire** and **Telford & Wrekin** are responsible for **21% (1372)** and **20% (1320)** respectively. **Herefordshire** makes up **15% (960)**.

Leading offence category descriptions are Assault without Injury, Assault With Injury and Malicious Communications. **15%** (980) offences were classified as non-recent. It is probable that volumes will decrease in the coming months as restrictions are lifted and the school holidays.



Note: Projections are unable to factor in current impact of Covid . Mean and limits are based on 19/20 data

The upper and lower control limits are derived by calculating 2 points of Standard Deviation from the mean.



Good looks like:

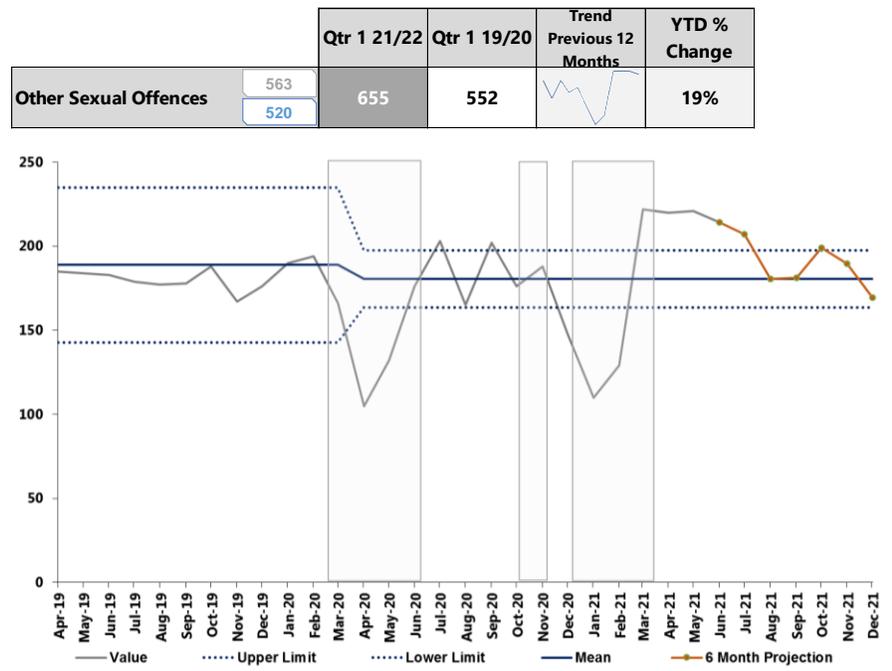
Child At Risk Crimes & Crimed Incidents: Increased reporting

We also need to use the correct markers to ensure the right people are directed to these jobs and so dealt with appropriately

This data is generated from Athena where a keyword marker has been applied. This can relate to any crime type where a child is present

4. Delivering innovative, problem-solving practices and processes
4.2 Managing demand

Other Sexual Offences



Note: Projections are unable to factor in current impact of Covid . Mean and limits are based on 19/20 data

32% (212) of all offences relate to **Sexual Assault on a Female Aged 13 and Over**, with a further 19% (124) related to **Sexual Activity Involving a Child Under 13**.

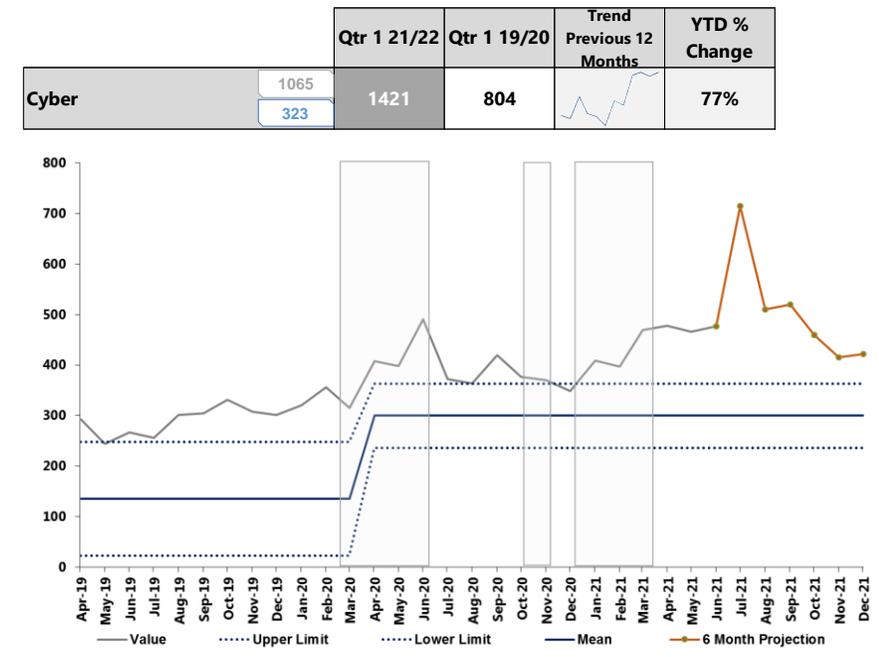
A significant proportion of offences at 44% (285) of all OSO are **non-recent**. This was anticipated in previous monthly and quarterly reports, and is likely to be a result of **historic offences over the lockdown periods** being reported.

As restrictions continue to be removed, it is **likely that offences will be sustained at current levels above exceptional** as historic offences continue to be reported at high rates as well as the full opening of the night time economy.

The upper and lower control limits are derived by calculating 2 points of Standard Deviation from the mean.

This data is generated from Athena where the keyword "cyber-enabled" has been applied. We saw a significant increase in 2019/20 compared to 2018/19, and this trend continues.

Cyber Crimes and Crimed Incidents Offences



Note: Projections are unable to factor in current impact of Covid . Mean and limits are based on 19/20 data

71% (1013) of all offences relate to **violence without injury**, in line with the previous 2 quarters.

This is driven by **malicious communication** which account for 63% (634) of Violence without Injury Cyber Crimes and Crimed Incidents offences, and 45% of overall Cyber offences. This is consistent with reporting in previous quarters.

As restrictions are removed in the coming months it is **highly probable** that **volumes will increase**. As reported previously, the National Crime Agency advises that "Cyber Criminal are likely to look to exploit the lifting of lockdown restrictions..."

The appropriate application of markers is being reviewed along with how this data is reported on moving forward. This will be reported on at FDG.

4. Delivering innovative, problem-solving practices and processes
4.2 Managing demand

Miscellaneous Crimes Against Society

Volumes saw a **13% (48) increase** last quarter and a **29% (95) increase** compared to the same period two years prior.

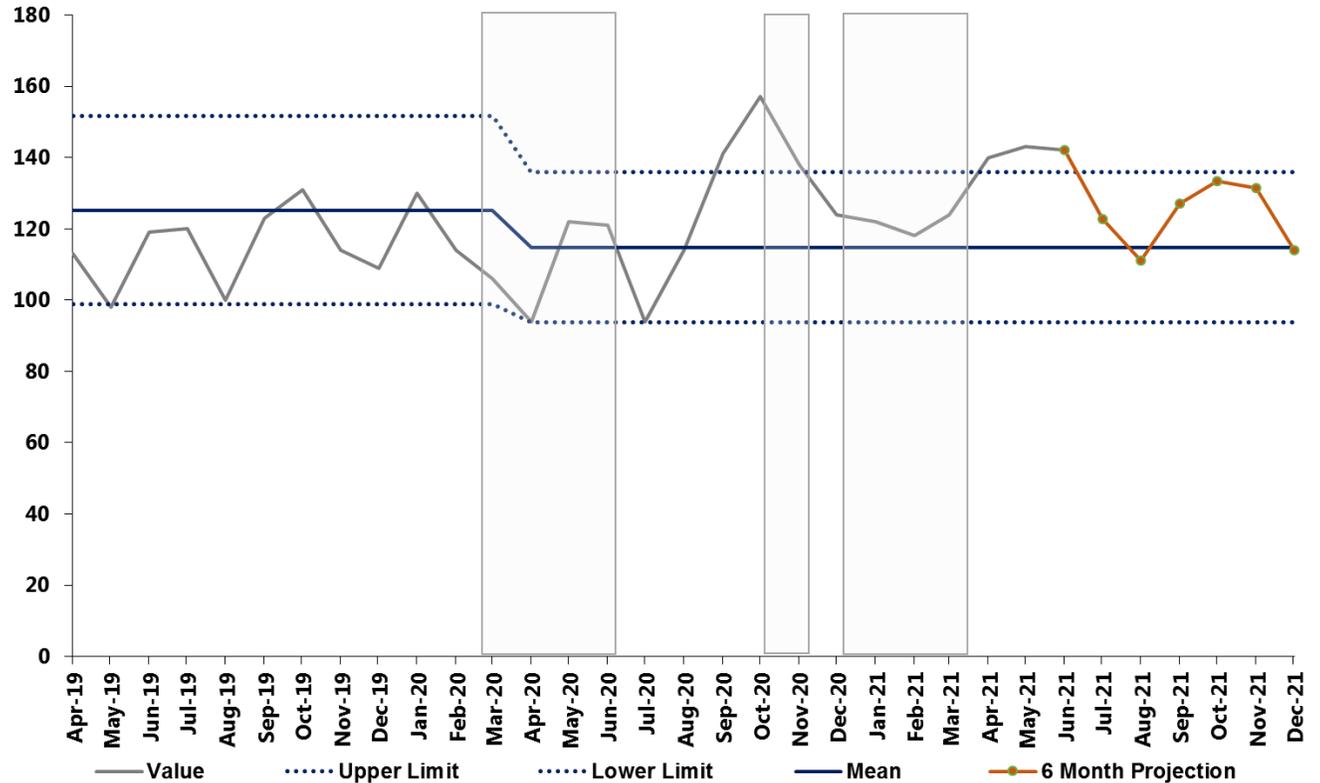
Obscene Publications, Etc. And Protected Sexual Material offences remain the main driver in this crime category and account for **48% (200)** of the offences.

Attempting to Pervert the Course of Justice accounts for the second largest category accounting for **13% (53)** of the offences.

Misc. Crimes Against Society is made up of 21 sub categories

Absconding From Lawful Custody	Going Equipped For Stealing Etc.
Aiding And Abetting Suicide	Handling Stolen Goods
Attempting To Pervert The Course Of Public Justice	Making, Supplying or Possessing Articles For Use In Fraud
Bail Offences	Obscene Publications, Etc. And Protected Sexual Material
Bigamy	Offender Management Act
Dangerous Driving	Other Forgery Etc.
Disclosure, Obstruction, False Or Misleading Statements Etc	Other Indictable Or Triable Either Way Offences
Exploitation Of Prostitution	Possession Of False Documents
Forgery Etc. Of Drug Prescription	Profiting From or Concealing Knowledge of the Proceeds of Crime
Fraud, Forgery Etc. Associated With Vehicle Or Driver Records	Threat Or Possession With Intent To Commit Criminal Damage
	Wildlife Crime

		Qtr 1 21/22	Qtr 1 19/20	Trend Previous 12 Months	YTD % Change
Misc. Crimes Against Society	365	425	330		29%
	323				



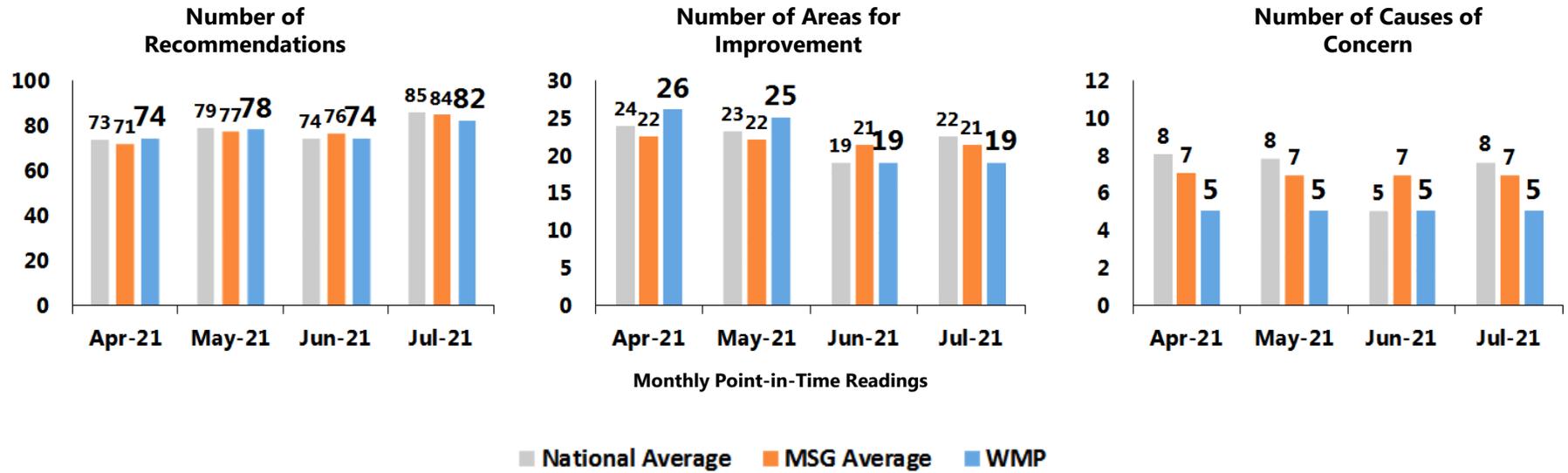
Note: Projections are unable to factor in current impact of Covid . Mean and limits are based on 19/20 data

The upper and lower control limits are derived by calculating 2 points of Standard Deviation from the mean.

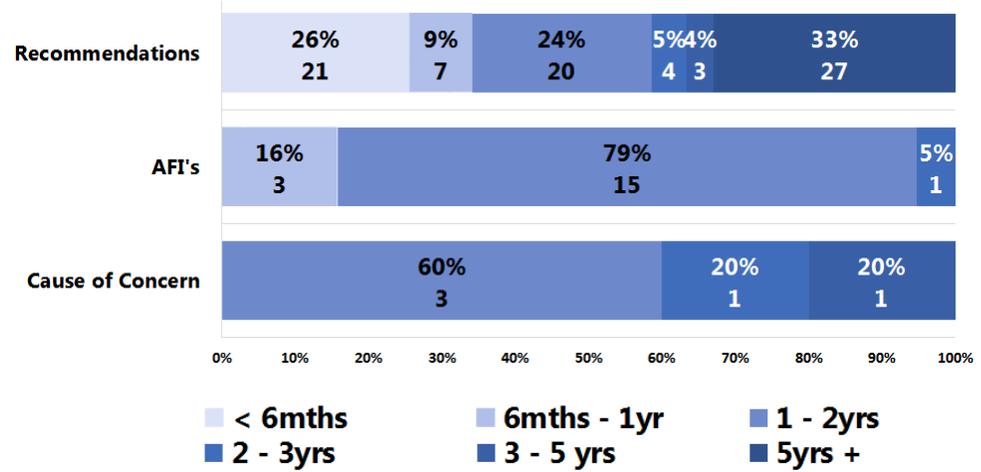
4. Delivering innovative, problem-solving practices and processes
4.3 Innovating and improving

OFFICIAL

HMICFRS Inspections



Age of West Mercia's Recommendations, AFIs and Causes of Concern (Mar 21)



Key Points

This month has seen an **increase** in the number of open **Recommendations** for the force.

The result of the **publication of reports** on the policing of **domestic abuse during the pandemic** and an interim report on **how the police engage with women and girls**.

However, these are **thematic reports**, as the increases have been **mirrored** at a national and MSG level and the force remains **below the average** for both across all areas.

17 Recommendations originate from the **2014 Inspection of Undercover Policing report**. An independent undercover policing enquiry was established to look at these findings and as such they are **awaiting review** and **do not require any force action**.

5. Delivering a skilled, sustainable workforce in a constantly learning and improving environment

5.1 Establishing a skilled, flexible workforce

Officer and Staff Demographics

West Mercia female representation **exceeds the national average** (31%) with **33.3%** female police Officers.

The Ranks of Constable, Superintendent and Chief superintendent all exceed the national average of female representation at these ranks.

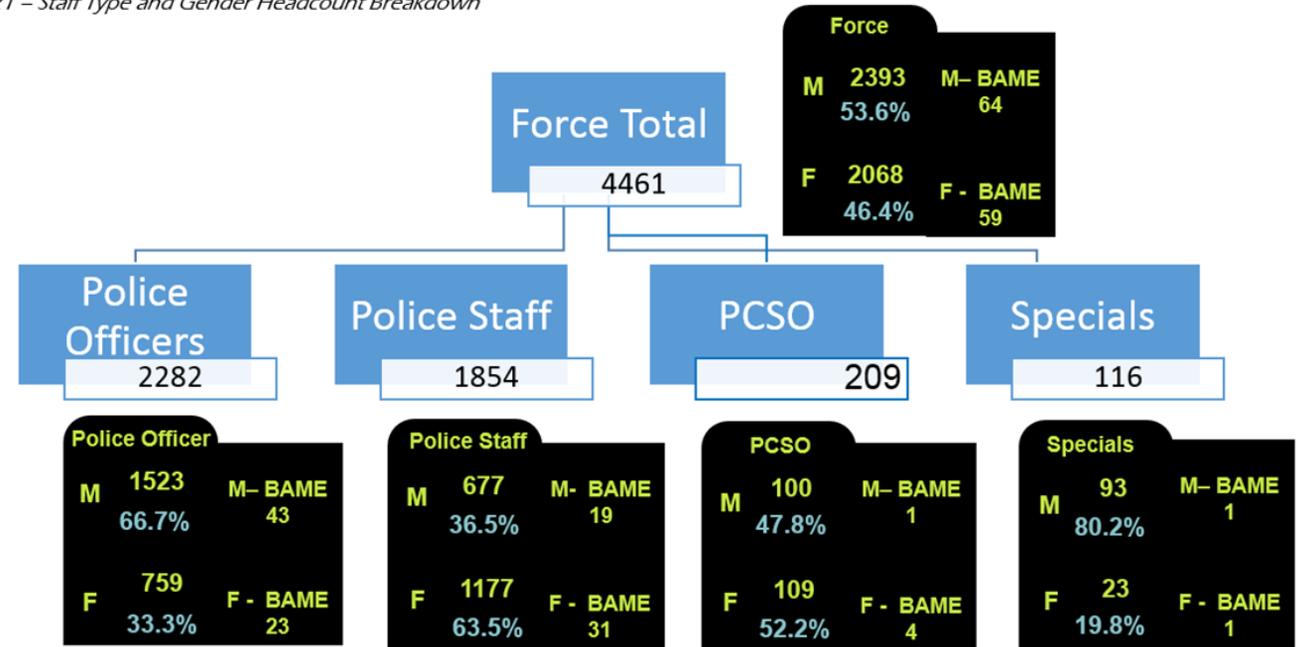
Whilst West Mercia (**2.9%**) has a substantially lower rate the national BAME Police Officer average (7.3%) , but is in line with the MSG (**2.8%**). BAME population % stands at 13% nationally and 3.8% within West Mercia Communities.

West Mercia has a **higher attrition rate** than the national average for Officers;

- **Police Officers** WMP - 6.5% National Ave – 5.8%
- **Police Staff** WMP- 10.0% National Ave- 10.5%

PCSO 12 month attrition rates stands at 9.6%, **substantially lower** than the 16.9% national average.

As at 01.07.2021 – Staff Type and Gender Headcount Breakdown



Key Points

- **19.1%** (437) of all Police Officers have less than **2 Years Service**.



* These Officers will not have policed a full night time economy or without any COVID-19 restrictions

Good looks like: Under national average Under 10% for PCSOs

Police Officer 5.8%	Police Staff 10.5%	PCSO 16.9%
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All figures based on national average

5. Delivering a skilled, sustainable workforce in a constantly learning and improving environment

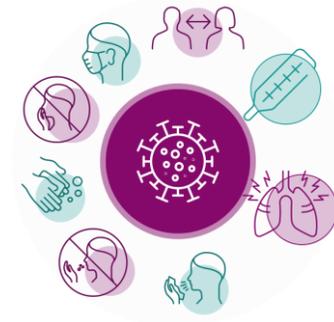
5.1 Establishing a skilled, flexible workforce

Vaccinations recorded as at 6th July 2021

Force Wide	1st Dose % Vaccinated	2nd Dose % Vaccinated
Recorded Vaccination	51.2	20.5

Employee Type	1st Dose % Vaccinated	2nd Dose % Vaccinated
Officer	47.5	16.0
Staff	54.5	26.4
Special	8.8	6.2

Age Band	1st Dose % Vaccinated	2nd Dose % Vaccinated
25 and under	31.8	8.8
26 – 40	41.8	12.3
41 – 55	57	25.2
Over 55	60.1	35.7



Key Points

- As it stands, **20.5%** of all officers and staff will **not be required to** self isolate following contact with somebody who tests positive post **16th August 2021**



Please forward any feedback in relation to this report to SPIPerformance@westmercia.pnn.police.uk

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WEST MERCIA POLICE AND CRIME PANEL 15 SEPTEMBER 2021

COMPLAINTS 2020-21 ANNUAL REPORT

Recommendation

1. Members of the West Mercia Police and Crime Panel (PCP) are asked to note the contents of this update report.

Background

2. One of the Panel's functions under the Elected Local Policing Bodies (Complaints and Misconduct) Regulations 2012 is to deal with non-criminal complaints about the conduct of the West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) and his Deputy.
3. Complaints that allege criminality must be referred to the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC). It is open to the IOPC to refer the matter back to the Panel to deal with.
4. The Panel approved a procedure for handling complaints at its meeting in December 2013 (attached at Appendix 1). In this, the Chairman of the Panel considers all complaints initially, supported by the Monitoring Officer for the Panel (the Monitoring Officer for Worcestershire County Council, which is the host authority).
5. The process is for complaints about *conduct*, not about policies which the PCC pursues. A separate procedure exists for complaints about police operational matters.
6. The Chairman of the Panel may refer a complaint for consideration by a Sub-Committee of three members of the PCP appointed by him/her. The Sub-Committee considers whether to take any action in respect of the complaint or to deal with it by informal resolution. The Chairman or Sub-Committee may refer a complaint to the full Police and Crime Panel to deal with.
7. During 2020-21 3 complaints were recorded concerning the conduct of the PCC. All were resolved informally.
8. No complaints were referred to the Sub-Committee.
9. 2 further purported complaints were received but were not recorded as the content did not meet the requirements of the Regulations.

Supporting Information

Appendix 1: Complaints process for the West Mercia Police and Crime Panel agreed December 2013

Specific Contact Points for this Report

Sheena Jones, Democratic, Governance and Scrutiny Manager

Tel: 01905 844871

Email: sjones19@worcestershire.gov.uk

Background Papers

In the opinion of the proper officer (in this case the Assistant Director for Legal and Governance) there are no background papers relating to the subject matter of this report.

[All agendas and minutes are available on the Council's website](#)

Details of the complaints process are provided for the public on the webpage http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/info/20078/community_safety/861/police_and_crime_commissioners

COMPLAINTS ABOUT THE CONDUCT OF THE WEST MERCIA POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER AND HIS DEPUTY

1. Introduction

This procedure sets out how the West Mercia Police and Crime Panel (WMPCP) will deal with complaints about the conduct of the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) and his Deputy (DPCC).

2. Please note that this procedure is for complaints about conduct, not about the Policies the PCC pursues. Complaints about the Chief Constable or police operational matters are not dealt with under this procedure – follow this link www.westmercia.police.uk/contact-us/making-a-complaint.html.

3. Criminal offences

If there is an indication that the PCC/DPCC may have committed a criminal offence, or the conduct complained of appears to involve a criminal offence, the complaint must be passed to the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC). It is open to the IOPC to subsequently refer the matter back for the Panel to deal with.

4. Making a complaint

All complaints about the conduct of PCC/DPCC must be made to Abraham Ezekiel, Assistant Director, Legal and Governance, Worcestershire County Council (WCC) acting for the West Mercia Police and Crime Panel by email AEzekiel@worcestershire.gov.uk or by letter to the Monitoring Officer, County Hall, Spetchley Road, Worcester, WR5 2NP.

5. Complaints about the conduct of the PCC and/or the DPCC will be recorded and classified as necessary for the purposes of the relevant Regulations and outcomes reported to the WMPCP.

6. Filtering Process

A copy of the record of the complaint will be supplied to the PCC or DPCC complained about as well as the complainant. The identity of the complainant may be anonymised before such supply but only for good reason, or a copy of the record may not be provided if it might prejudice any criminal investigation or pending proceedings or otherwise contrary to the public interest.

7. The complaint will be initially considered by the Chairman of the WMPCP, in consultation with the Monitoring Officer from WCC as appropriate. Where it is considered that a complaint requires further information or detail to be properly considered, the complainant will be asked to provide additional detail before the complaint is progressed.
8. The complaint will not be recorded or dealt with if the matter has been or is currently been dealt with through criminal proceedings or if the complaint is withdrawn.

9. If the Chairman considers that a recorded complaint is one in respect of which no action should be taken, or falls within the circumstances below, then the complaint may be handled in whatever way the Chairman considers appropriate.
10. The circumstances are that the complaint is:
- By a member of the office holder staff arising from his/her work;
 - More than 12 months have elapsed since the incident and there is no reason for the delay, or injustice will be caused by it;
 - The matter is already the subject of a complaint;
 - Is anonymous;
 - Is vexatious, oppressive or otherwise an abuse of procedures or a repetitious complaint.
11. **Resolution**
- The Chairman of the WMPCP may refer the complaint for consideration by a Sub-Panel of three members of the WMPCP appointed by the Chairman. This referral to the sub-panel may be either to consider whether to take any action in respect of the complaint or to deal with the complaint by way of informal resolution.
12. The regulations do not allow a formal investigation of the complaint but the PCC/DPCC may be asked to provide documents in relation to the complaints and/or to attend a meeting to answer questions or give evidence. The sub-panel will seek to resolve the complaint through the procedure it considers most appropriate for the circumstances. This may include a face to face meeting between the complainant and the PCC/DPCC mediated as appropriate or further explanatory communication between the complaints and the PCC/DPCC, and may culminate with an apology from the PCC/DPCC if they wish to provide one.
13. Please note that the WMPCP (and those acting on its behalf) have no powers to make formal findings or apply formal sanctions. It may, however, provide its opinion on the conduct of the relevant officeholder having looked into the issue and heard the account of the officeholder.
14. Where a recorded complaint has been resolved informally, a record of the outcome shall be made and a copy that record sent to the complainant and the PCC/DPCC in question. The record will not be published unless the complainant and the PCC/DPCC has been given the opportunity to make any representations, the Chairman has considered any such representations and is of the opinion that publication is in the public interest.
15. A complaint can be withdrawn or discontinued by the complainant.
16. It is open to the Chairman or sub-panel to refer the complaint to the full WMPCP for consideration.
17. This procedure is subject to review and any requirement in legislation or regulations.

SJ

WEST MERCIA POLICE AND CRIME PANEL 15 SEPTEMBER 2021

WORK PROGRAMME

Summary

1. From time to time the West Mercia Police and Crime Panel (PCP) will review its work programme and consider which issues should be investigated as a priority.

Background

2. Under the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 the Panel is responsible for scrutinising the Police and Crime Commissioner's (PCC) exercise of their statutory functions. This includes:

- (a) The power of veto, by a two-thirds majority of the total panel membership, over the level of the PCC's proposed precept;
- (b) The power to review the Police and Crime Plan and make recommendations to the PCC who must have regard to them;
- (c) The power to review the PCC's annual report and make recommendations at a public meeting, which the PCC must attend;
- (d) The power to require the PCC to attend the Panel to answer questions.

3. Some of these functions are carried out at a specific time of year – for example the precept must be considered and a view given to the PCC by 8 February each year.

4. As a Scrutiny body the Panel reviews decisions made by the PCC, performance and issues of concern or interest. It is not possible to carry out all these functions in detail and it the Panel needs to plan its workload and agree its priorities.

5. The enclosed work programme takes into account 'routine' items, items which are required to be considered by the Panel at particular points in the year and topics for which the Panel has asked the PCC to provide a report.

Dates of Future Meetings

- 25 November 2021 (11am)

Purpose of the Meeting

6. The Panel is asked to consider the 2021/22 Work Programme and agree whether it would wish to make any amendments. The Panel will wish to retain the flexibility to take into account any urgent issues which may arise.

Supporting Information

Appendix 1: West Mercia Police and Crime Panel Work Programme

Specific Contact Points for this Report

Sheena Jones, Democratic, Governance and Scrutiny Manager
Tel: 01905 846011 Email: sjones19@worcestershire.gov.uk

Background Papers

In the opinion of the proper officer (in this case the Assistant Director for Legal and Governance) there are no background papers relating to the subject matter of this report.

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West Mercia Police and Crime Panel - Work Programme 2021/22

Meeting Date	Area of scrutiny	Date of Last Report	Notes/Follow-up Action
15 September 2021	Draft Safer West Mercia Police and Crime Plan 2021/22		
	Police & Crime Plan Activity and Performance Monitoring Report		
	Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) Review of policing domestic abuse during the pandemic – 2021		
	Annual Report on Complaints		
	Work Programme		
25 November 2021	Police & Crime Plan Activity and Performance Monitoring Report		
	Diversity and Inclusion – to be confirmed		Added at 31 August 2021 Panel
	Audit and Finance Update		Added at 31 August 2021 Panel
	Work Programme	Every meeting	
Statutory items	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PCC's Proposed Precept (and Medium Term Financial Plan) • Police and Crime Plan (or variation to it) • Annual Report of the PCC • Review the PCC's proposed appointment of a Chief Constable, Chief Executive, Chief Finance Officer and/or the Deputy PCC 	February June	

Regular items	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Police & Crime Plan Activity and Performance Monitoring Report • Work Programme • Annual Report on Complaints • Budget Task Group to look at precept proposals (and Medium Term Financial Plan) 	Every meeting Every meeting	
Potential items	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of the Road Strategy (including road safety) - possible Task Group considering the Shropshire Task Group work in this area • The contribution of the Police in planning applications in respect of road safety 	June 2020	Approach to be discussed at 15 September 2021 Panel