



STRATEGIC POLICING AND CRIME BOARD

1ST SEPTEMBER 2015

HIDDEN CRIME – SEPTEMBER 2015

Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of this report is to update the Commissioner and the Strategic Policing and Crime Board on progress towards delivery of the objectives set out in the Police and Crime Plan that relate to "hidden crimes".
2. The Commissioner, in his Police and Crime Plan, defines "hidden crimes" as:
 - Domestic abuse
 - Child abuse
 - Child sexual exploitation
 - Female genital mutilation
 - Forced marriage
 - Honour based violence
3. This report will outline West Midlands Police (WMP) response to the above listed areas of business.
 - Vulnerable adult abuse
 - Modern slavery
 - Human trafficking
 - Hate crimes
 - Gender selective abortion
4. The remaining areas will be addressed in Strategic Policing and Crime Board paper in January 2016.
5. The Chief Officer is ACC Carl Foulkes is the force lead for both the Public Protection and the Crime portfolios and is responsible for the governance and strategic oversight of all the above areas of business.
6. Detective Chief Superintendent Claire Bell is the head of Public Protection and is supported by three Detective Superintendents namely: D/Supt Angie Whitaker strategic business lead for Domestic Abuse, D/Supt Tim Bacon strategic business lead for Child Abuse and CSE, and D/Supt Nick Walton strategic business lead for Sex Offender Management (SOM) and the Sexual Offences Team (SOT).

Hidden Crime.

7. West Midlands Police and partner agencies recognise the need to work jointly to raise awareness of 'hidden crime' across the region and in particular with those who are most vulnerable and from new and emerging communities as well as recognising the need for increased collaborative working to protect communities from harm.
8. Over the last 12 months we have seen an increase in reporting from victims of all hidden crime which illustrates that the steps put in place to improve the trust and confidence of our most vulnerable victims are working.
9. When considering domestic violence alone there has been a 25% rise in reported crime and an increase in non-crime referral of 14% over the same period.
10. Since the implementation of the service transformation team recommendations in June 2014, there has been a significant investment of staff into the public protection arena and new ways of working effecting all departments and geographic locations.
11. This includes separate teams of domestic abuse and child abuse investigators across each of the seven local authority areas and the establishment of a specialist central referral unit (CRU). In addition, three multi-agency safeguarding hubs (MASH) for Coventry, Sandwell and Birmingham have been established with a plan to roll out further MASH in the remaining local authority areas over the next 12 months.
12. There has also been renewed effective engagement with both statutory and non-statutory partners including, CPS, Local Safeguarding Children Boards, Local Safeguarding Adult Boards, Health, Education, Local Authorities and respective Strategic Safer Partnership Boards, and Health & Well Being Boards which has enhanced the performance and working practices of all involved.

Operation Sentinel.

13. The 'hidden crime' policing mission continues to gather pace, ensuring Operation Sentinel objectives become second nature for both police and our partners. To date there have been two phases to Operation Sentinel which have included a wide range of training inputs and seminars to ensure a collective raised awareness amongst both police, partners, communities, and victims.
14. The Operation Sentinel objectives include:
 - Increased organisational understanding of 'vulnerability', improving our ability to assess threat and risk, and take proportionate action
 - Increased reporting amongst vulnerable people, improving their confidence in the police response and an enhanced understanding of the issues that prevent vulnerable people to come forward
 - Improving our knowledge, understanding and response to safeguarding and to recognise the increased risk of those who do not support a criminal prosecution
 - Sustained and improved partnership working in support of vulnerable people
 - The Encouragement of our communities to come forward and work with the West Midlands Police to achieve the Sentinel objectives
 - Ensuring that the force is fit to identify and respond to hidden crime, and is able to evaluate its own performance in this critical area of business
15. Phase three of Operation Sentinel is about to start and the focus for this phase will be the learning from recent HMIC inspections and recent domestic homicide review recommendations.

Preventing Violence against Vulnerable People Board

16. There is also a substantial commitment from the seven Local Authorities to address 'hidden crime' in partnership bringing together the knowledge, experience and resources across the region to combat crime committed against the vulnerable.
17. The PVVB has a "collective responsibility" to protect those who are most vulnerable in our society. The aim of the PVVB is to transform the delivery of core public services within the WMP region. The PVVB has a delivery plan which includes reviewing governance and capacity, and is considering the best ways to improve services to 'hidden crime' victims, to influence offender management and develop a new police operating model to tackle vulnerability.
18. The board has been extremely influential in bringing partner agencies together to achieve a shared objective and vision and valuable dialogue between parties. In October 2015, the current strategic lead, Stephen Rimmer, will be replaced by a co- chair partnership of ACC Carl Foulkes and Nick Page, Chief Executive of Solihull Borough Council.

Domestic Abuse.

19. The current mechanism to review risk, threat and harm in relation to Domestic Abuse incidents falls within Local, PPU and Force Daily Management Meetings. These processes allow for high risk DA matters to be discussed, so that a local assessment can be made by the chair to ensure that an appropriate response is provided and resources deployed.
20. Domestic Abuse teams have an effective relationship with both statutory and non-statutory partners. Multi-agency partnership engagement includes using the Barnardo's Screening Tool, the integration in multi-agency safeguarding hubs (MASH), the completion of multi-agency risk assessment (MARAC), multi-agency public protection arrangement (MAPPA), strategy meetings (Children and Adult Social Services), case conferences and Professionals' meetings.
21. At this time there is a drive to reduce the number of outstanding domestic abuse suspects across the force. Reviews have been completed to improve performance across departments to reduce the same and ensure there is an improvement of the management of volume in the future.
22. Domestic abuse teams are also striving to improve services and support for victims by ensuring a consistent and effective police response to every reported incident of domestic violence. The initial risk assessment tool used by frontline officers, the Domestic Abuse Stalking harassment and Honour Based Violence model (DASH), is being reviewed and it is hoped that this will address a number of current risk management issues.
23. Other initiatives to reduce offending and increase the confidence in policing and thus encourage reporting includes on-going public awareness campaigns and community development work to promote good practice and increase awareness of where and how to get help and support.
24. Attention is also being given to long term strategies to reduce harm. This includes initiatives being developed to prevent inter-generational harm by delivering preventative work with children and young people and promoting healthy relationships.
25. Performance over the past 12 months shows that there has been a significant increase in the reporting of domestic abuse. Between July 2014 and July 2015 there have been 19,828 incidents recorded, an average of 1525 per month and is equates to an overall increase of 25%.

Child Abuse

26. The HMIC visited in June 2014 and identified 12 specific areas for development for WMP, including improving the consistency with which officers recognise the risk to children from child sexual exploitation and domestic abuse, sharing information with children's services, better understanding and management of risk and how we safeguard children in custody. Work is on-going to address the issues raised and HMIC have recently returned to complete further reviews of current practice.
27. The new local child abuse investigation teams manage all investigations into sexual abuse of a child under 18, all neglect, physical and emotional abuse of a child under 18 where offender is inter familial, in a position of trust or by someone with responsibility for the child, all HBV, FGM, FM on a child under 18. In addition all sudden, unanticipated death of an infant under 2 years of age (SUDI) and all sudden, unexplained death of a child aged 2- 18 (SUDC) are investigated by the child abuse teams.
28. They also manage all CSE investigations with the exception of the most critical, complex and voluminous CSE investigations which are managed by the Central CSE team and allocated via force tasking processes.
29. The current key areas of development for the child abuse teams are the delivery of the remaining 4 multi-agency safeguarding hubs (MASH) and the integration of the troubled family piece into normal business.
30. Other initiatives include embracing the 'voice of a child' campaign both internally and with our partners and the overall improvement of our service to children and ensuring all police and all departments engage.
31. Lessons learnt from serious case reviews and domestic homicide reviews are also key and need to be more readily shared and acted upon. They also need to be stored in the organisations memory so mistakes are not repeated over time.
32. Performance over the past 12 months has illustrated another significant step change from July 2014. Between July 2014 and July 2015 there have been 4442 recorded child abuse offences recorded. On average 342 incidents have been recorded which is an overall increase of 18% which is putting a strain of both police and partnership resources.

Female Genital Mutilation – (FGM)

33. Detective Constable Gill Squires remains the subject matter expert for FGM and is supported by 29 leads based locally on LPU and force departments who have received bespoke specialist training in FGM. In addition there are further individuals on each child abuse team who provide single point of contact advice.
34. Operation Sentinel has provided a unique platform for raising the awareness of this form of 'hidden crime'. WMP have communication strategy around internal and external messaging for FGM which includes posters, Newsbeat articles, newsletters and top ten signs messaging. WMP also utilise a Twitter account @wmpsentinel to raise awareness externally.
35. This initiative has ensured that there has been an increase in referrals from 25 being made in 2012 to 135 FGM referrals being made in 2014. However, although there has been significant investment both to raise awareness and make potential victims more confident in reporting, there are still serious concerns with regard to the lack reporting.
36. On a positive note, whilst nationally there have been no successful prosecutions specifically under the new FGM legislation, WMP have brought one charge for a father threatening to send his daughters abroad for FGM. This was recorded as a crime within the category of 'Putting people in

fear of violence'. He was sentenced to 8 months imprisonment and an indefinite restraining order was granted.

37. Other initiatives are taking place to address lack of reporting which includes a quarterly audit regime with CPS to ensure no opportunities for prosecution are missed, and to ensure that investigations are thorough.
38. WMP are also actively involved with Operation Limelight, an initiative at Birmingham Airport which involves intercepting passengers on incoming and outgoing flights which are bound or returning from areas of the world where FGM is conducted. The operation is in its second year and has proved extremely informative for police, partners and the public with regard to prevention and raising awareness.
39. Work also continues with the Home Office to establish further ways of protecting victims from FGM and safeguarding those who have already been subject to the practice and said abuse via the National Stakeholder Group.

Honour Based Violence & Forced Marriage (HBV & FM)

40. There has been no significant increase in the reporting of Honour Based Violence and Forced Marriage over the last 12 months and this illustrates the difficulties faced by both police and its partners to address the issues related to the 'hidden crime' type.
41. The force has developed a range of guidance documents such as the HBV/FM toolkit to inform and support staff dealing with incidents of this nature, which includes legislation and tactical options and guidance on risk management. And in addition, response and investigative officers are trained in the use the DASH and the Karma Nirvana risk assessment tool and are issued HBV/FM aide memoire.
42. The force lead is active locally and nationally, at forums such as the national Forced Marriage Unit Partnership Board and a collaborative agreement with Avon and Somerset Constabulary, Greater Manchester Police and the Metropolitan Police Service ensures that WMP receives and shares examples of both good and bad practice regionally and nationally.
43. A strategic assessment for HBV/FM in the form of a force problem profile is due to be published in the near future which should focus intervention and activity further.
44. There are work streams in place to ensure there is restricted access to police systems in relation to HBV/FM and the implementation of flagging or markers for HBV/FM (and FGM) on the crimes portal.
45. In May 2015, a thematic review of 36 HBV/FM cases was completed and it was discovered that there had been only one offender charged with a HBV related offence over the past 12 months.
46. The review also concluded that 80% of honour based violence victims did not support a prosecution. Work is continuing to explore the reasons behind such findings but the evidence to date suggests that alternative outcomes should be explored including forced marriage protections orders (FMPO) and other civil interventions.
47. It should also be noted that along with other 'hidden crime' types, a great deal of work being done to safeguard and protect victims once police and partners are made aware of their plight. However, once identified there is a tremendous amount of work to be done to build the trust and confidence of victims before they begin to disclose any information about their journey and experiences.

CSE (Child Sexual Exploitation).

48. The Home office recently raised CSE to the status of a national threat in the strategic policing requirement so that it is prioritised by every police force.
49. At this time there is a set co-ordination process which involves established meeting processes and a tasking structure to ensure that there is a joined up and consistent model used both across all WMP LPU's and the seven local authority areas. The process links key forums together and allows the identification of risk and escalation of incidents to the most appropriate tasking meeting for further support, intelligence analysis and additional support and resources.
50. WMP adhere in full to the regional framework for CSE. It begins with a multi-agency sexual exploitation (MASE) meeting, where each local authority reviews and manages individual cases of children and young people at risk of or being sexually exploited. Cases which require escalation are reviewed at CMOG (CSE and Missing from home Operational Group) which receives regular updates from the CSE lead officer on victims, offenders and locations.
51. High risk cases are then reviewed at CSE co-ordination group for review and will direct medium and long term actions to safeguard, disrupt, pursue and reduce opportunity for children to be harmed through sexual exploitation and missing episodes.
52. The new perpetrator team has been set up and includes a Chief Inspector, Detective Inspector, three Sergeants and nine Detectives made up of a mixture of child abuse detectives and serious organised crime unit members. There is also support being given by the Force Priorities Team who are tasked accordingly.
53. The primary element of any investigation of this nature is the safeguarding of the victims and their subsequent management. This remains the priority throughout and the specially trained officers within local child abuse investigation teams are the most appropriate individuals in partnership with local authority children's services practitioners and third sector partners to offer this support.
54. Once a rapport is established and disclosures are made the investigation is then forwarded to the CSE perpetrator team to focus on the pursue element of the investigation to then arrest, disrupt and deter offenders identified as part of the investigation.
55. To date they are managing four major investigations and are in the process of evaluating their capability and workload to establish how many cases they can investigate simultaneously.
56. Due to the complex nature of CSE cases and the problems faced with getting disclosures from victims, civil interventions will be more widely used due to the burden of proof required. Plans are in place to increase the usage of the said interventions and their subsequent management locally by neighbourhood teams responsible for the areas in which the perpetrators prey or reside.

RECOMMENDATIONS

57. None

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

58. None

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

59. Section 11 of the Children's Act 2004 places on the Commissioner the duty that "their functions are discharged having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children". This report is requested in support of this duty.

ACC Carl Foulkes (Public Protection, Crime, Intelligence).