



**Police and Crime Plan Priority: Protecting from Harm**

**Title: Reducing Crime and Harm**

**Presented by: ACC Murray**

**Purpose of paper**

1. The purpose of this paper is to describe the performance of West Midlands Police (WMP) against the Police and Crime Plan priority 'Protecting from Harm: Reducing crime and harm'. The paper provides:
  - An overview of Recorded Crime trends in the West Midlands and compares this with the national picture
  - An overview of activity WMP are undertaking to tackle volume crime
  - Identifies emerging threats, trends, opportunities, issues and key risks for the coming year.
2. This paper focuses on volume crimes such as violence, vehicle offences, robberies and burglaries. It will be complemented by separate papers provided at Board meetings throughout 2018, such as those on hidden crimes, violence prevention and responding to national threats.

**Background**

3. The Force Tactical Priorities are identified at the monthly Force Tactical Delivery Board (FTDB) chaired by DCC Rolfe and are currently:
  - Reducing theft of motor vehicles and burglary
  - Increasing Crime Outcomes
  - Violence
  - Firearms

## Key points

4. Total Record Crime (TRC) has increased in the West Midlands, which is similar to the national trend across England and Wales. The West Midlands crime rate is below the national average and the lowest compared to our most similar forces (known as Most Similar Group – MSG).<sup>1</sup>
5. Increases in violence, vehicle crime, theft and burglary have driven the increase in TRC, although much of the increase in residential burglary is due to the reclassification of burglary (to include out buildings and sheds).
6. Firearms discharges have increased in the past 12 months, with most occurring in Birmingham.

## Recorded Crime

### National Picture

7. Total Recorded Crime has steadily increased in recent years. Whilst crime across the West Midlands is at its highest level since 2011, this mirrors the national trend with all Forces other than Cumbria and North Yorkshire recording increases.

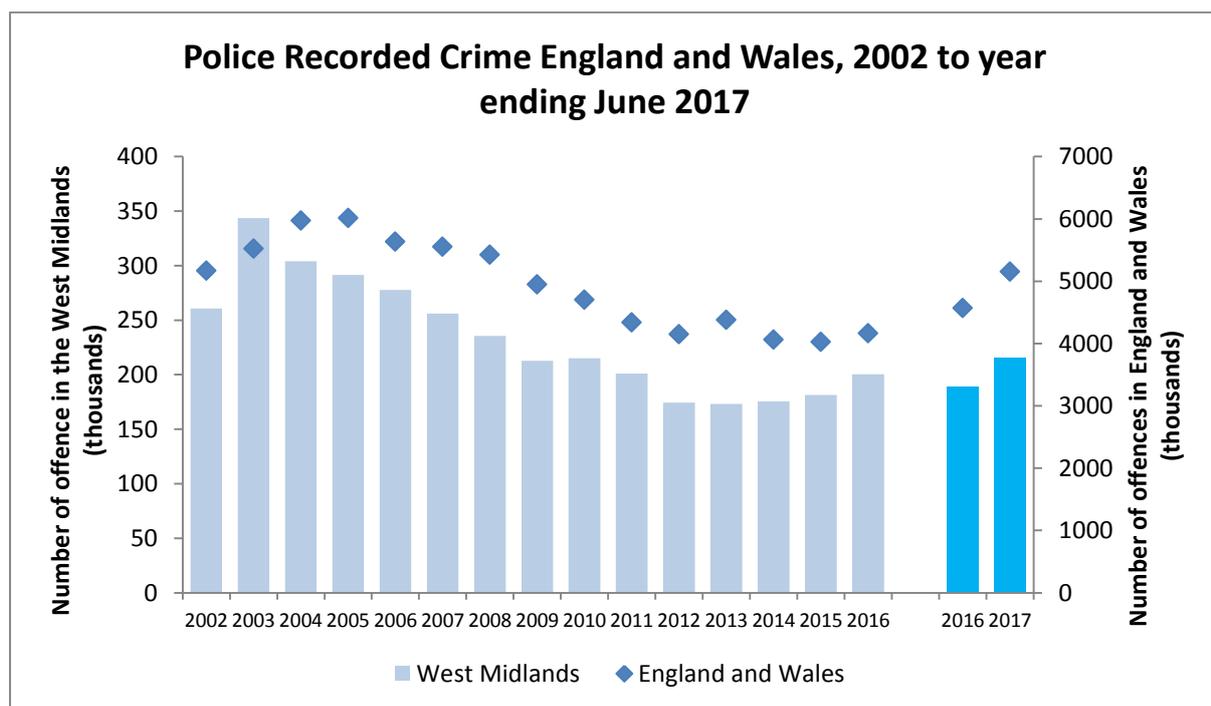


Figure 1: A comparison of Crime levels across England and Wales and the West Midlands.

8. The crime rate in the West Midlands is 75 crimes per 1000 population, which is below the national average of 88 per 1000 population. This is also the lowest crime rate of any metropolitan police force and lowest compared to our MSG.
9. Rises in reports of domestic abuse, sexual offences and acquisitive crime are also reflected across England and Wales<sup>2</sup>. Some of the volume increase is thought to result

<sup>1</sup> MSG for West Midlands Police are: Greater Manchester, Merseyside and West Yorkshire.

<sup>2</sup> Crime in England and Wales: year ending June 2017. Office of National Statistics. 19<sup>th</sup> October 2017

from improved recording practices and increased reporting of ‘hidden crimes’ (for example, domestic abuse, child abuse, human trafficking, forced marriage), but it is likely that rises in the most serious categories reflect genuine increases in violent crime.

10. A number of factors may have led to an increase in crime in the UK. The most obvious being the impact of austerity<sup>3</sup> and reduction of public services budgets including police and health services. The accelerating rise in crime comes as Home Office figures show a further fall of 924 police officers in the past year to 123,142 in England and Wales. This is the fewest officers in England and Wales since 1985. Police numbers have fallen by 20,592 since 2010<sup>4</sup>.
11. Changes in technology also contribute towards increases in crime, such as the emergence of keyless entry vehicles being targeted due to model specific security vulnerabilities. High value vehicles are being targeted by criminals for use in other offending such as ATM raids or are ending up in chop shops.

WMP

12. Since 2014, recorded crime has continued to rise, now averaging 18755 offences per month. The increase has been driven by increases in a number of volume offences, including vehicle crime, violence and theft.

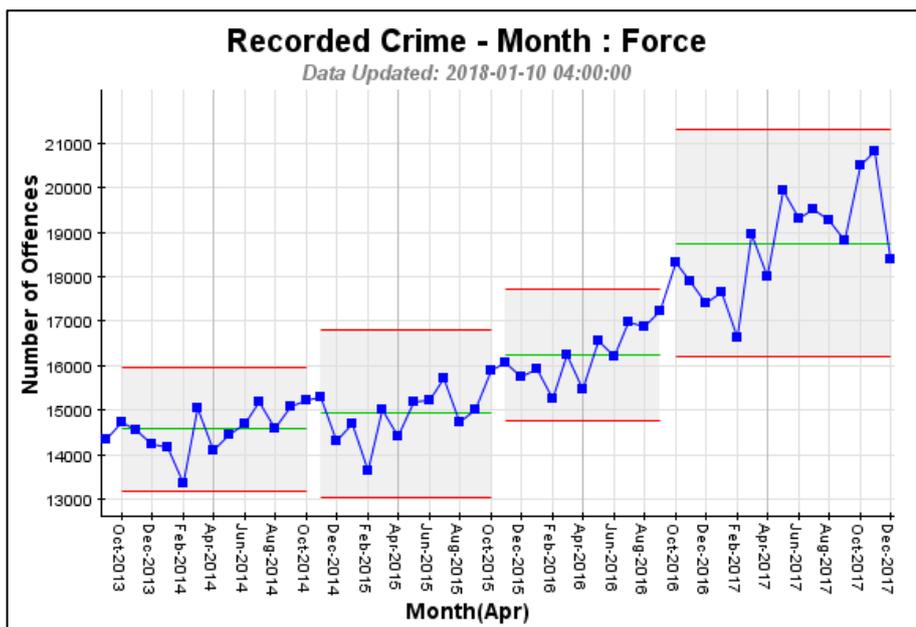


Figure 2: Process chart displaying monthly recorded crime for the West Midlands

13. Increases in crime are occurring across the country and this is replicated across all Neighbourhood Policing Units (NPU’s) within the West Midlands. Birmingham West

<sup>3</sup> Identifying the Effect of Unemployment on Crime. Raphael & Winter-Ebmer (2001). The Journal of Law and Economics. The University of Chicago Press Journals, April 2001.

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2017/jul/20/official-figures-show-biggest-rise-crime-in-a-decade>.

(BW) remains the largest contributor, with Solihull and Sandwell seeing the largest percentage increases in the last 12 month period.

NPU	2017	2016	% change	Direction
SH	15256	12841	15.83%	↑
SW	25861	22178	14.24%	↑
WS	21220	18337	13.59%	↑
BW	59129	51330	13.19%	↑
DY	20700	18219	11.99%	↑
CV	25043	22130	11.63%	↑
BE	39542	35634	9.88%	↑
WV	20552	18777	8.64%	↑
<b>Total</b>	<b>227303</b>	<b>199446</b>	<b>12.37%</b>	<b>↑</b>

Figure 3: Benchmark chart displaying a comparison of recorded crime across NPUs

What is driving the increase in the West Midlands?

- Increases in a number of large volume offences have contributed to the overall increase in crime. Most notably, violence (including domestic abuse), theft from motor vehicle, and shop theft.

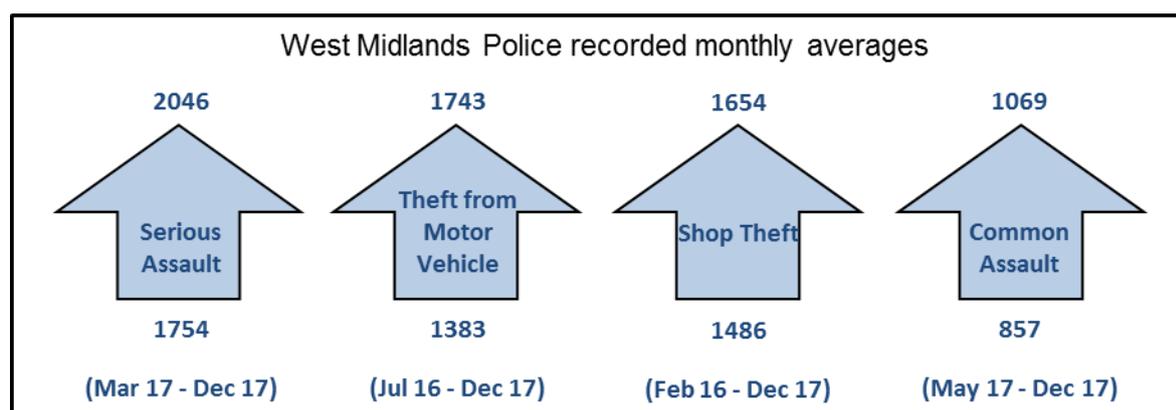


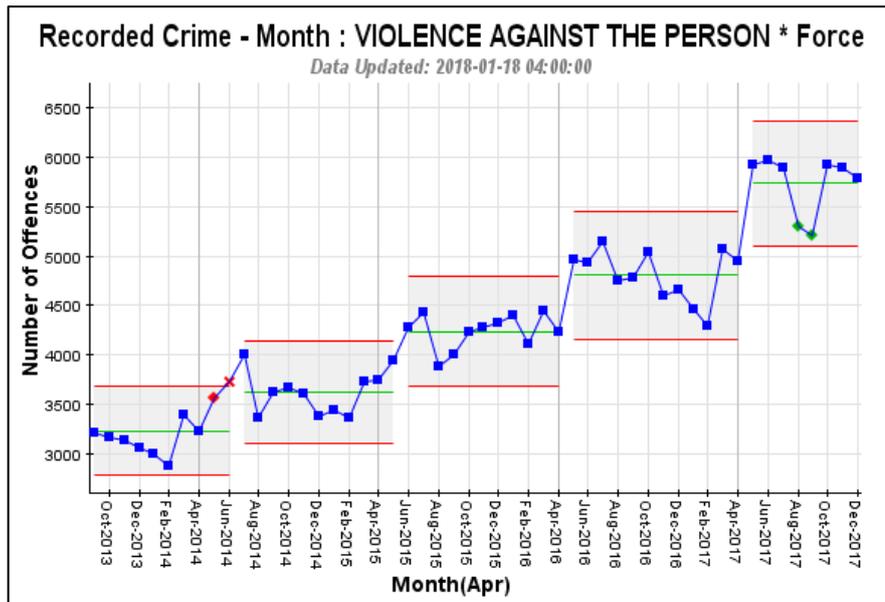
Figure 4: Diagram displaying increases in the monthly average of volume crime offences.

Violent Crime

- Violence (serious and common assaults) are key drivers of recorded crime, contributing a combined 16 per cent of offences. Both have recorded significantly higher volumes since April 2017, averaging 2046 and 1069 offences per month respectively. One third (32 per cent) of victims were young people (under 25 years).

Compared to the MSG the West Midlands is well below average for Violence against the Person crimes at 18.8 offences per 1000 population. In Sept 2017, the YTD national average was 22.1 per 1000 population<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>5</sup> MSG = WMP, Merseyside, GMP, West Yorkshire (Provisional unpublished data 12 months 01 Dec 2016 – 30 Nov 2017). National crime figures: ONS published data (year ending Sept 2017) using data for England & Wales.



**Figure 5: Process chart displaying monthly recorded Violence against the Person for the West Midlands**

16. All NPUs have recorded increases in violent crime over the last six months. These increases are noticeable in Birmingham and the Western NPUs.

NPU	2017	2016	% change	Direction
WS	5801	4864	16.15%	↑
DY	5578	4716	15.45%	↑
SW	7210	6240	13.45%	↑
BW	16086	14226	11.56%	↑
BE	11957	10613	11.24%	↑
SH	3237	2880	11.03%	↑
WV	6669	6017	9.78%	↑
CV	6497	6079	6.43%	↑
<b>Total</b>	<b>63035</b>	<b>55635</b>	<b>11.89%</b>	<b>↑</b>

**Figure 6: Table displaying a yearly comparison of recorded violence against the person by NPU**

17. Domestic abuse offences recorded an increase alongside total recorded crime, but now contributes a larger proportion (11 %). The Crime Survey for England and Wales shows that domestic abuse is under-reported<sup>6</sup>, which is why WMP have invested heavily in initiatives like ‘Sentinel’, which have made significant progress in improving both the reporting and accurate recording of vulnerable crime such as domestic abuse. Further information around domestic abuse will be covered in the ‘Hidden Crimes’ paper scheduled for September 2018.

### Vehicle Crime

18. Vehicle crime is the second largest contributor to recorded crime, having recorded the largest increase in monthly average of any volume offence. Although, December 2017

<sup>6</sup><https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/bulletins/crimeinenglandandwales/june2017>

recorded a low number of motor vehicle thefts, most likely a result of the heavy snowfall experienced across the region.

The West Midlands records the highest rate of Vehicle Crime at 12.6 offences per 1000 population, compared to the MSG average.<sup>7</sup>

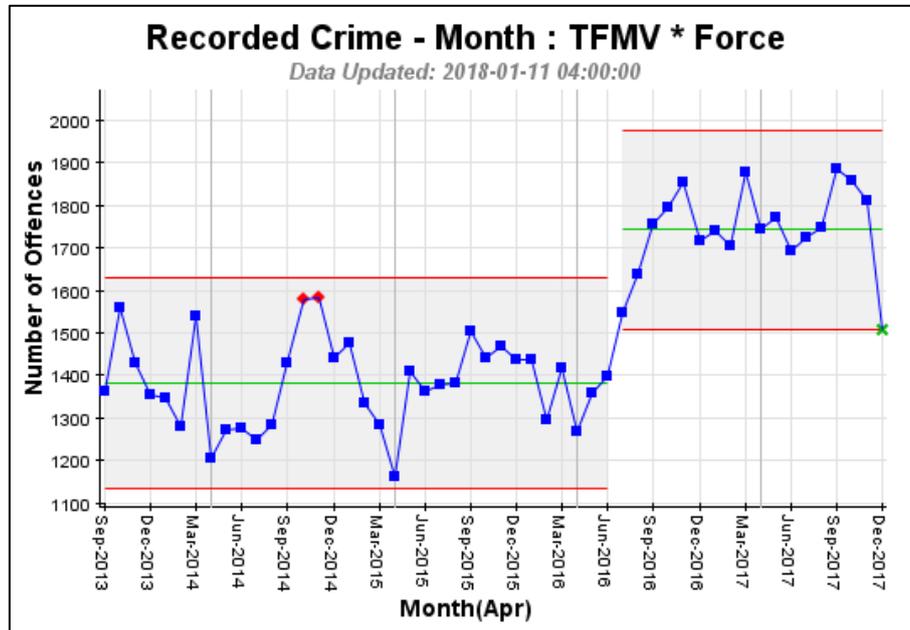


Figure 7: Process chart displaying monthly levels of recorded Theft from Motor Vehicle

NPU	2017	2016	% change	Direction
WS	2103	1687	19.78%	↑
WV	1534	1245	18.84%	↑
DY	1969	1666	15.39%	↑
SH	1703	1472	13.56%	↑
CV	2333	2044	12.39%	↑
BW	5599	5001	10.68%	↑
BE	3429	3103	9.51%	↑
SW	2422	2240	7.51%	↑
<b>Total</b>	<b>21092</b>	<b>18458</b>	<b>13.46%</b>	<b>↑</b>

Figure 8: Table displaying a yearly comparison of recorded theft from motor vehicle by NPU

19. Birmingham West NPU contributes the largest volume of theft from motor vehicle offences, but has recorded a reduction in the last few months October – December 2017. Walsall NPU has experienced elevated monthly levels since August 2017.
20. Theft of motor vehicle has also recorded an increase in the monthly average over the past 10 months. Currently, 814 vehicles are stolen per month.
21. WMP is working with the OPCC identifying prevention opportunities with the industry around the key vehicles types, with a summit being organised in the near future.

<sup>7</sup> MSG = WMP, Merseyside, GMP, West Yorkshire (Provisional unpublished data 12 months 01 Dec 2016 – 30 Nov 2017). National crime figures: ONS published data (year ending Sept 2017) using data for England & Wales.

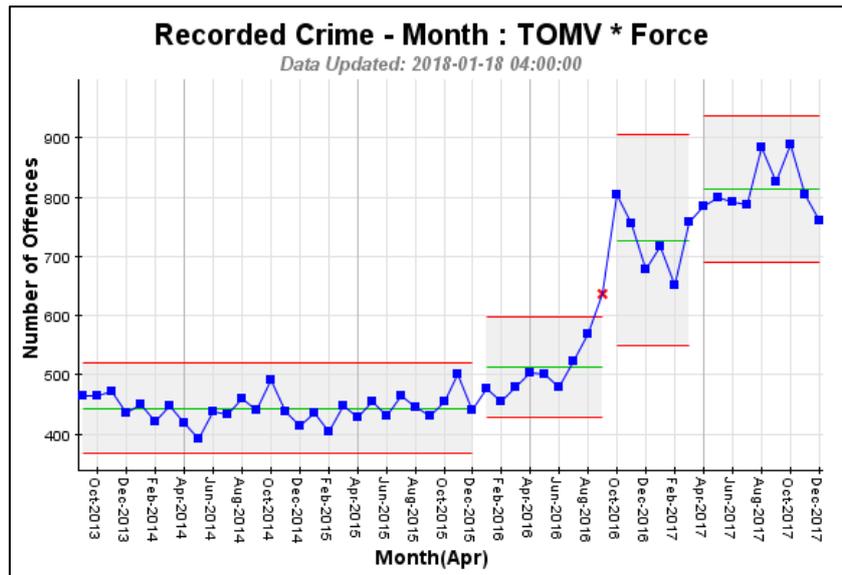


Figure 9: Process chart displaying monthly levels of recorded Theft of Motor Vehicle

22. Birmingham has been particularly affected by increases in Theft of Motor Vehicle. Solihull has seen largest percentage increase over last 12 months.

NPU	2017	2016	% change	Direction
SH	869	526	39.47%	↑
BW	2528	1707	32.48%	↑
DY	915	660	27.87%	↑
CV	766	557	27.28%	↑
SW	1170	882	24.62%	↑
WS	797	615	22.84%	↑
BE	1851	1449	21.72%	↑
WV	554	461	16.79%	↑
<b>Total</b>	<b>9450</b>	<b>6857</b>	<b>26.63%</b>	<b>↑</b>

Figure 10: Table displaying a yearly comparison of recorded theft of motor vehicle by NPU

**Burglary**

23. Whilst there has been a recent seasonal increase in total burglary (November 2017) which was higher than expected, there has not been a significant increase in the monthly average. Recorded figures have been affected by recent changes to the categorisation of domestic and non-domestic burglary in the Home Office Counting Rules<sup>8</sup> for recorded crime introduced in April 2017. New categories of residential and non-residential have replaced domestic and non-domestic burglary respectively, but with the distinction that the classification of residential burglary now includes buildings or parts of buildings that are within the boundary of, or form part of, a dwelling (such as sheds and detached garages).

<sup>8</sup> [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/602803/count-burglary-apr-2017.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/602803/count-burglary-apr-2017.pdf)

Compared to the MSG the West Midlands is below average for Burglary at 9.6 offences per 1000 population<sup>9</sup>.

24. The newly classified residential burglary is not easily compared to its previous classification of burglary dwelling (although figures for total burglary are comparable).

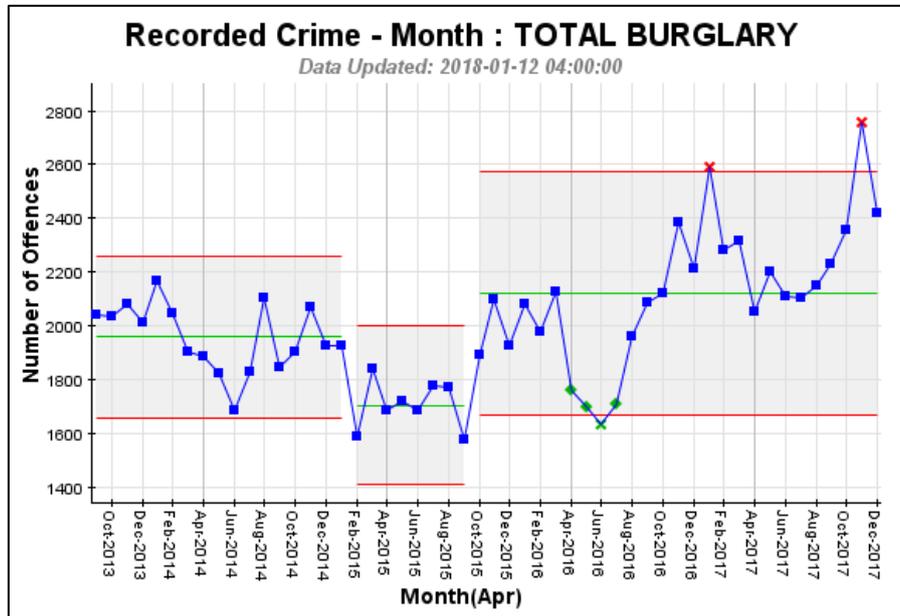


Figure 11: Process chart displaying monthly levels of burglary

25. Whilst Birmingham West contributes the largest volume, Coventry and Solihull have recorded a significant increase October – December 2017.

NPU	2017	2016	% change	Direction
SH	2276	1632	28.30%	↑
CV	3456	2709	21.61%	↑
BW	6376	5082	20.29%	↑
WS	2929	2532	13.55%	↑
SW	3013	2621	13.01%	↑
BE	4717	4338	8.03%	↑
WV	2184	2101	3.80%	↑
DY	2532	2622	-3.55%	↓
<b>Total</b>	<b>27483</b>	<b>23637</b>	<b>13.13%</b>	<b>↑</b>

Figure 12: Table displaying a yearly comparison of recorded burglaries by NPU

<sup>9</sup> MSG = WMP, Merseyside, GMP, West Yorkshire (Provisional unpublished data 12 months 01 Dec 2016 – 30 Nov 2017). National crime figures: ONS published data (year ending Sept 2017) using data for England & Wales.

## Robbery

26. Recorded robberies have increased by 140 offences per month, now averaging 589. The West Midlands records the highest rate of Robbery at 2.5 offences per 1000 population, compared to the MSG average<sup>10</sup>.
27. Despite the increase in robbery there is no evidence of increased use of weapons to commit offences.

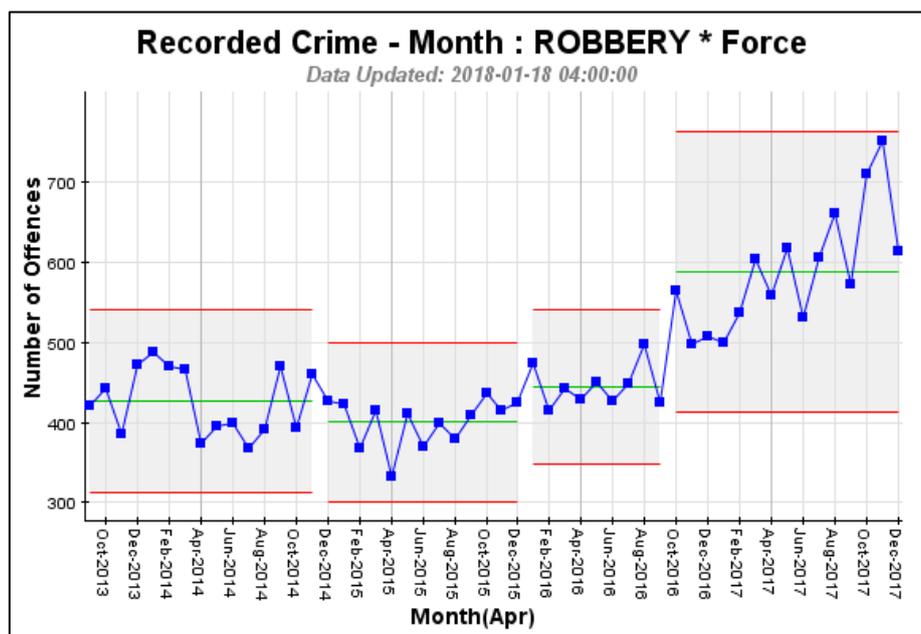


Figure 13: Process chart displaying monthly levels of robbery

28. Increases have been recorded across all NPUs with Birmingham West the largest contributor. Large increases have also been seen in Coventry.

NPU	2017	2016	% change	Direction
CV	791	470	40.58%	↑
SH	407	292	28.26%	↑
BW	2549	1847	27.54%	↑
BE	1432	1078	24.72%	↑
WS	493	382	22.52%	↑
SW	745	691	7.25%	↑
DY	424	399	5.90%	↑
WV	402	401	0.25%	↑
<b>Total</b>	<b>7243</b>	<b>5560</b>	<b>19.63%</b>	<b>↑</b>

Figure 14: Table displaying a yearly comparison of recorded robberies by NPU

## Analysis of ONS crime severity score as applied to WMP recorded crime data

<sup>10</sup> MSG = WMP, Merseyside, GMP, West Yorkshire (Provisional unpublished data 12 months 01 Dec 2016 – 30 Nov 2017). National crime figures: ONS published data (year ending Sept 2017) using data for England & Wales.

29. Currently crime analysis focuses on volume of crime with all offences counted as equal. Even though an offence of murder is more serious than an offence of shoplifting, they would both be counted as a single offence regardless of the disparity between them.
30. The Office for National Statistics has created a Crime Severity Score (CSS) for use by UK Police Forces. It is built on the principle that different offences should carry different weights which are based on their determined severity. More serious crimes (e.g. arson, rape) carry greater weight than less serious crimes (e.g. common assault, shoplifting). Measuring crime based on severity scores can give a different picture than volume of crime alone.
31. An internal WMP focus group has looked at alternative options for measuring harm / severity and concluded that the ONS CSS was the best approach for the force to take.
32. The initial findings have shown that when looking at severity, whilst there aren't significant changes in terms of priority areas, there can be some areas that will be in need of greater focus.

### **WMP activities – Key activities WMP are undertaking to tackle volume crime.**

#### Operation Vibrant

33. Operation Vibrant is the force response to tackling increases in volume crime, led by Assistant Chief Constable (ACC) Sarah Boycott. The key objectives are to maximise opportunities to prevent offences of acquisitive crime, with a particular focus on burglary residential and vehicle crime. This will include the reduction of associated harm through the delivery of a wide ranging and proactive prevention approach to identify opportunities to deliver sustained reduction in offending.
34. Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) from NPUs and force departments have developed operational plans to focus on the early arrest of those suspected of committing burglary, robbery or vehicle crime offences, specifically where forensic evidence is available. Each SME has designed a toolkit of options to help reduce volume crime offences. Focusing on the relationship between *Offender, Victim and Location*, the toolkit offers a range of short, medium and long term tactical options to reduce volume crime for use on NPUs and force departments.
35. Control strategy and crime prevention plans have been developed that focus on repeat patterns for victims, offenders and locations, and use a wide range of investigative and intelligence tools to achieve positive outcomes and enhance public trust and confidence across WMP by seeking to involve the public more and drive activity to activate citizens.
36. Operation Vibrant is also seeking to identify and progress opportunities to work in partnership with business and partner agencies, and ensure there is an effective public communication plan to deliver clear messages and highlight opportunities to reduce crime.

37. West Midlands Police averages just under 500 arrests a month for burglary, robbery and vehicle crime.

#### Vehicle Crime

38. Project Treasurer is a regional approach to tackle handlers and chop shops, focussing on the identification and targeting of those premises used to dismantle stolen cars. Several locations have already been subject of enforcement activity in 2017, resulting in a large number of stolen car parts recovered and large amounts of documentation, phones and computers seized for examination. A number of separate investigations have commenced targeting key individuals involved in this type of offending with support from the Regional Organised Crime Unit (ROCU). Links have been identified to existing Organised Crime Groups across the region. The overarching aim is to dismantle the networks that operate in key locations.
39. Operation Link related to a single shipping container where approximately £120,000 worth of property stolen from a number of theft from motor vehicle offences were recovered. Seven persons have been arrested to date as part of this investigation.
40. Operation Transmission relates to the organised criminality around keyless theft of high value vehicles. Work continues with the motor industry to identify vulnerabilities with specific vehicles around keyless thefts.

#### Daily Threat & Risk Management (TRM)

41. The force TRM (chaired by the Mission Support Superintendent) highlights key issues around acquisitive crime, firearm incidents, and emerging trends, identified crime series and heightened geographic hot spots. All items are raised for scrutiny and the force response will be based on these main areas of threat, risk and harm. This will be reviewed throughout the day and where necessary resources diverted to meet the operational and tactical requirements.
42. Mission Support review all requests for Warrants, NPU arrests and Op Vibrant arrests from across the force and allocate resources based on the likely threat, risk and harm, tactical and strategic priorities. Enhanced intelligence research is conducted where necessary, to ensure the mission set for officers is as current and viable as possible.
43. All available force resources (including Force Support, OSU, CMPG and Force Response) are assessed on an ongoing basis and tasks allocated, balanced against on-going demand. Every 24 hour period, missions are allocated and reported on the following day at the TRM meeting for review and to inform future activity.
44. So far in 2018, 375 curfew requests have been made, with 60 breaches identified. A total of 830 arrest missions have also been coordinated by Mission Support/CTAC. Every one of these has been evaluated and reviewed so as to meet with force priorities and has had some enhanced level of Intelligence to maximise outcomes.
45. The Force has identified Hot Grids for patrol and crime reduction suppression based on tactical analysis and agreement at Force Tactical Delivery Board (FTDB). These patrol areas for the NPUs clearly identify locations and time for patrols that are

relevant for crime trends that are considered a force priority. Again at each TRM the allocation of resources are discussed to ensure that NPUs have covered the patrol areas at the relevant times and if not whether force resources are being requested to support any gaps or for any additionality. These are reviewed for each 24 hour period to ensure the resourcing needs are being met.

#### Forensic Opportunities

46. Forensic Investigators are informed of every residential burglary offence and other volume crime offences where there is a likelihood of a forensic retrieval. For example in relation to burglaries where the offenders 'snap' the lock in order to gain entry, Operation Luca has commenced which ensures the barrels from the snapped locks are recovered for forensic analysis. It also sees the use of swabbing door handles on the presumption that offenders will sweat through gloves during the commission of the offences, which provides the investigator with a line of enquiry not previously available. In order to enhance forensic opportunities, all volume crime suspects (in custody) have a footwear impression taken from them for comparison with crime scenes. The Police and Criminal Evidence Act (PACE) also allows for the taking of fingerprints and DNA for persons arrested, which is checked against the national database.
47. Forensic evidence recovered at crime scenes offers some of the best opportunities to bring offenders to justice. New forensic 'hits' are monitored on a daily basis, with the presumption that when a volume crime suspect is identified through this method, they are placed onto the CORVUS briefing system for arrest within 48 hours.

#### High Harm and Vulnerability Teams

48. The High Harm and Vulnerability Teams (HHVT) are responsible for investigating burglary and robbery offences. The HHVTs meet weekly with Force Intelligence to review recent crimes and intelligence.
49. HHVTs are able to concentrate resources on linked series where an individual (or group) are committing high numbers of offences or offences which are causing the most harm to the community. Where a number of offences are charged together, the offender is more likely to receive a lengthy custodial sentence, removing them from the community and providing a deterrence for others. A recent example of this is where 4 offenders were brought to justice for committing a series of robbery offences in Birmingham against 17 victims, several of which were attacked in their own homes. They received a combined total of 42 years in custody
50. HHVTs are able to work across NPU areas and with other forces to identify linked offences that span larger geographical areas. An example of this is an offender charged with nine burglaries and nine robberies following an investigation by the HHVT. The offences spanned two NPUs and a neighbouring force. The offender was linked via his mobile phone, forensic evidence and data from the ANPR system (Automatic Number Plate Recognition system).
51. HHVTs work with Neighbourhood Teams (NHTs) who have local knowledge of the community and vulnerable areas. An example is in South Birmingham, where the NHT

assisted with extensive CCTV trawls and identified an offender in distinctive clothing responsible for a number of burglaries. The offender was charged with nine burglaries and was later produced from prison where he later admitted a further six offences.

### Knife Crime

52. National figures identify that recorded offences involving a knife or sharp instrument increased by 26% in 2017 compared with the previous year. WMP and the PCC are working with partners to halt the rise in violent crime and will be participating in Operation Sceptre, a coordinated knife crime week of action commencing 12th February 2018. Operation Sceptre has a number of tactics which will be utilised from engaging with children off school for half term, to more targeted activity in transport hubs and town centre/retail areas.
53. To further support activity during the week of Operation Sceptre, WMP has identified the top three knife point robbery hotspots, top 10 knife/weapon robbery outstanding suspects and the top 3 offenders for each NPU to coordinate enforcement and patrols to intensify the initiative. Other tactics will include weapons sweeps at identified locations, proactive offender management and Safer Travel initiatives.

### Night Time Economy

54. The focus to address violence associated to the Night Time Economy (NTE) has been to ensure we have the right staff, in the right place, doing the right thing. The force approach is led by a Chief Superintendent and the policing style has been shaped through joint working with other metropolitan areas such as Belfast, Cardiff and Liverpool. It identified that policing in numbers can be effective, however, once people reach a certain point of intoxication the presence of staff, does not prevent violence.
55. WMP is working with the Combined Authority and academic institutions to influence the behaviour of public in the NTE, by adopting a pilot that has operated in Liverpool called "Drink Less, Enjoy More"<sup>11</sup>, which aims to support pubs and clubs to comply with the law and refuse service of alcohol to people who are excessively drunk. Education and advice is also provided to the public.
56. WMP licensing officer's work together with businesses, partners, industry colleagues and local officers ensuring a more cohesive approach to prevention both before, during and after events, ensuring a sharing of knowledge and experience.

## **Harm and risks – Emerging threats, trends, key risks, opportunities or issues for the coming year**

### Rape and Serious Sexual Offences (RASSO).

57. Investigations are spread across each of the Public Protection specialisms. RASSO continues to escalate (both historic and current). Changes to crime recording practice have had an impact, but the national profile of sexual offending has also contributed to a higher volume of reporting. Compared to the MSG the West Midlands is well below

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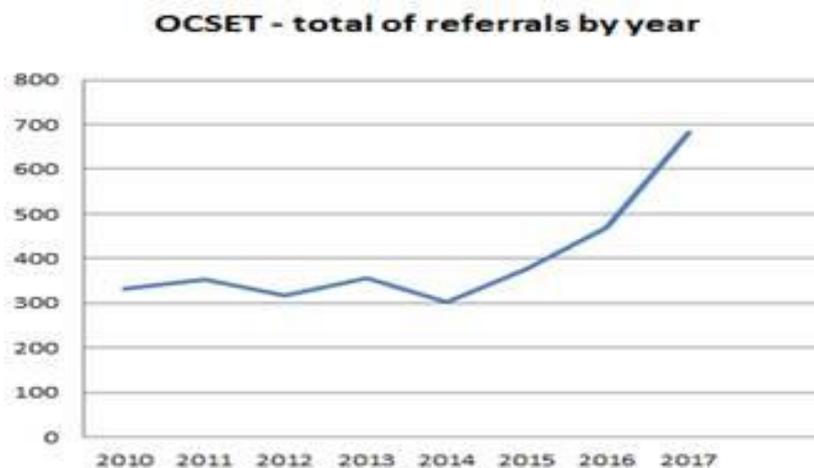
<sup>11</sup> <http://drinklessenjoymore.co.uk/>

average for total Sexual Offences at 2.1 offences per 1000 population. This trend is also true for Serious Sexual Offences and for Rape<sup>12</sup>.

58. Adult RASSO has increased by 121% since 2013, with rape showing an increase of 198%. RASSO within a child setting has also seen increasing levels of demand.
59. The SME continues to oversee developments aligned to SARC (Sexual Assault Referral Centres) and FME (Force Medical Examiner) provision. There has also been the introduction of a pre-charge Scrutiny Panel, which allows CPS and other interested parties (ISVA providers) to scrutinise police investigations and decision making.

#### Online Child Sexual Exploitation Team (OCSET) investigations – Online Paedophilia

60. Within WMP OCSET is the dedicated team of specialist officers responsible for dealing with online child sexual exploitation matters. This includes the investigation in to the possession, making of and distribution online of indecent images of children where no known victim has been identified and/or no contact was made with the victim. The team is the force single point of contact for the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP) now part of the National Crime Agency (NCA). OCSET retain their own intelligence resource in order to prioritise their workload, targeting offenders who sexually abuse and groom children online.



61. The volume of referrals dealt with by OCSET has continued to see year on year increases with the development and refinement of techniques in identification.
62. Also of note is the upward trend of online vigilantism with 95 separate self-identified groups operating nationally; 15 of them having made referrals in the West Midlands. These groups commonly live stream suspect confrontations and sometimes generate public order issues.

#### Modern Slavery/Human Trafficking.

63. There are currently 250 separate slavery investigations within force, together with 15 larger scale operations. Since late 2016, WMP has seen a steady rise in the volume of

<sup>12</sup> MSG = WMP, Merseyside, GMP, West Yorkshire (Provisional unpublished data 12 months 01 Dec 2016 – 30 Nov 2017). National crime figures: ONS published data (year ending Sept 2017) using data for England & Wales.

referrals into the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) concerning modern slavery and human trafficking. The Force is now the second highest national volume generator.

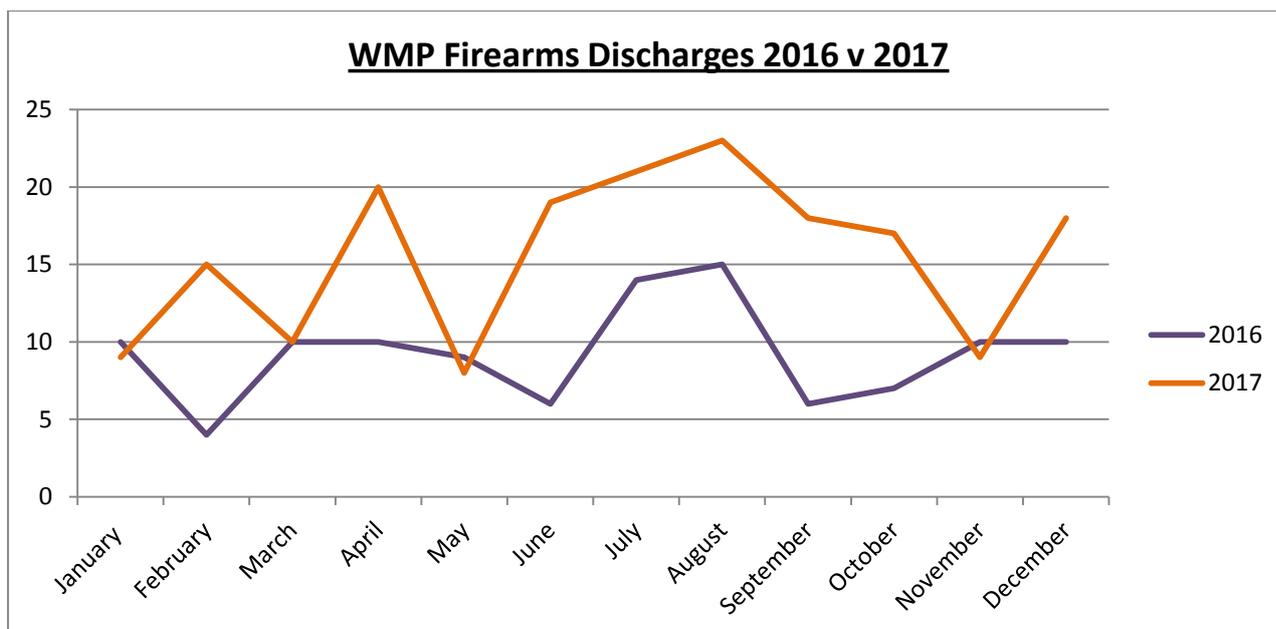
64. Court outcome rates remain low in line with the national picture. Reasons for this include evidential difficulties and sometimes a victim will just want to go home, which will affect judicial outcomes. The latter is somewhat exacerbated by a lack of victim pathways (support services to safeguard the victim) and issues aligned to the NRM. These are being looked at nationally by the Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner.
65. The West Midlands currently sees more demand associated with labour exploitation. Polish and Romanian nationals are the largest cohort of victims and exploiters. The demand picture is at odds with the national narrative, where sexual exploitation slightly outweighs labour exploitation, with Albanian nationals prominent in this area.
66. The Force was one of 10 forces subject to a HMICFRS inspection in February 2017, which made a number of recommendations. These included the need for better outcome rates, improved investigation and intelligence exchange. The recommendations are now incorporated into the Force Liberate Plan.
67. Finally, the partnership landscape is evolving at pace. Each Local Authority has or is scoping a multi-agency forum to look at issues associated with the crime type. The Force SME chairs a Strategic Partnership which is accountable to the PVVP Board (Preventing Violence against Vulnerable People) and on 26<sup>th</sup> January 2018, Regional Guidelines were launched at an event supported by the OPCC.

#### County Lines

68. County lines is a term used to describe gangs, groups or drug networks that supply drugs from urban to suburban areas across the country, including market and coastal towns, using dedicated mobile phone lines or “deal lines”. They exploit children and vulnerable adults to move the drugs and money to and from the urban area, and to store the drugs in local markets. They will often use intimidation, violence and weapons, including knives, corrosives and firearms.

#### Criminal Use of Firearms

69. Tackling the criminal use of firearms is a priority for WMP. The force is currently experiencing an increase in the number of recorded firearms discharges, of which 67% of discharges in 2017 occurred in Birmingham.

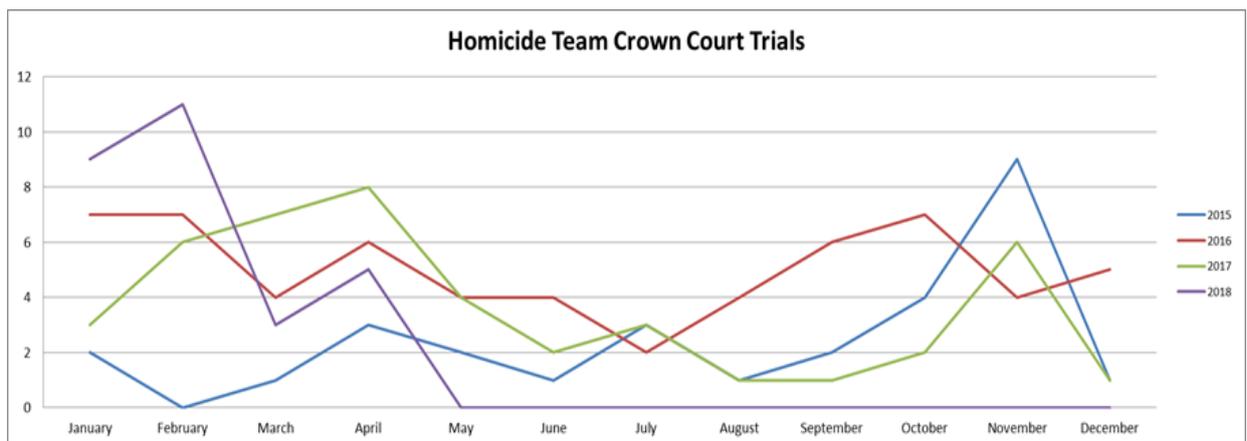


70. ACC Cann has commissioned activity to understand the force response to the current firearms threat, the drivers for the increase and to identify immediate activity to address the rise. Armed Response Vehicle (ARV) capability has increased from three to ten, as has the supporting Tactical Firearms Commander resilience.
71. Recent activity against *lawful to unlawful* firearms supply (the movement of lawfully held firearms to an unlawful purpose) has provided further insight for the assessment of OCG's ability to source and adapt firearms. It was concluded that the main drivers for the increase in discharges were;
- Possession to maintain control locals drugs lines
  - Possession to maintain territory by a gang
  - Possession for protection / as a show of strength

### Homicide

72. In 2017 there has been an increase in homicides. The greatest increase was during the summer period with 8 murders being recorded in August 2017. There have been 35 homicides during the 2017/18 calendar year to date, whereby 34 and 31 were recorded in the 2016/17 and 2015/16 years respectively. Compared to the MSG the West Midlands is below average for Homicides at 0.014 offences per 1000 population<sup>13</sup>.
73. 93% of homicides in the West Midlands result in an offender being identified. As a result of this, over 20 trials have been listed for January and February 2018. There are no specific trends in relation to victim/location/offender that have been identified from analysis of these crimes.

<sup>13</sup> MSG = WMP, Merseyside, GMP, West Yorkshire (Provisional unpublished data 12 months 01 Dec 2016 – 30 Nov 2017). National crime figures: ONS published data (year ending Sept 2017) using data for England & Wales.



74. The Homicide Investigation Team also provide support and lead on critical incidents (18 in 2017/18) and suspicious deaths (23 in 2017/18) where an investigation and file of evidence is required for HM Coroner. Examples in 2017 include the joint investigation with the Health and Safety Executive into the death of Tawanda Chamwandayita who died in an industrial accident in Perry Barr in October 2017.

#### Cyber Dependent Crime

75. Cybercrime presents an emerging risk to West Midlands Police, with all UK police forces likely to experience increases in volume over the next 12 months. Cybercrime falls into two categories:

- Cyber enabled crimes: Traditional crimes that can be increased in their scale or reach by use of computers, computer networks or other forms of information communications technology (ICT). Unlike cyber-dependent crimes, they can be committed without the use of ICT. Two of the most widely published instances of cyber-enabled crime relate to fraud and theft.
- Cyber dependent crimes: Crimes that can only be committed through the use of ICT devices, where the devices are both the tool for committing the crime, and the target of the crime. The two broad categories are: illicit intrusions into computer networks, such as hacking and the disruption or downgrading of computer functionality and network space, such as malware and Denial of Service (DOS) or Distributed Denial of Service (DDOS) attacks.

76. Reports of cyber dependent crime are recorded nationally by the National Fraud & Cyber Crime Reporting Centre who provide practical advice to victims about online safety in addition to offering a central triage assessment and allocation function. Crimes are then disseminated to local police forces and ROCU.
77. Understanding the threat of cyber dependent crime and delivering an appropriate response remains a key objective for WMP. Awareness sessions and training will be delivered to ensure staff are aware of the main issues and specialist training will identify the most significant threats. This has been captured as part of the New Ways of Investigating Cyber Crime Project led by Detective Supt Darren Walsh. The top identified threats in relation to this crime type are Ransomware, Distributed Denial of Service (DDoS, Phishing and Data Breaches.
78. A cyber security training program is being rolled out, which seeks to upskill all WMP staff and provide an improved cohesive response to cyber dependent crime.

#### Disclosure

79. Recent high profile court cases in London highlighted an issue with the examination of digital material gathered during investigations and the obligations on officers to reveal material to the prosecutor that could undermine the prosecution or reasonably assist the defence.
80. A key issue is the advancement of technology year by year and the capacity for police to review the data from such material. In 1999 the memory of a mobile phone was 128mb. A full printed download would consist of a maximum of 20 pages. Today an iPhone 6 with 128 GB storage could contain in excess of 30,000 pages of data, an increase of one thousand times in memory status. The Attorney General has commissioned a review into this.

#### **Other challenges**

##### Terrorism and Violent Extremism

80. 2017 saw five attacks in the UK, and we continue to see a sustained, serious and challenging threat from international terrorism. The evidenced increase in successful attacks carried out by either by individuals or small groups, coupled with a wide range of attack methodologies remains challenging. Considerable police assets are committed to protecting the communities in the West Midlands with this increased threat.

##### Vulnerable adults

81. A 2017 Age Dependency report published in the Lancet predicts that an ageing population will require in excess of 70k care home places nationally by 2025 (and an additional 353k older people with substantial dependencies)<sup>14</sup>. Whilst the report

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<sup>14</sup> *Is late-life dependency increasing or not? A comparison of the Cognitive Function and Ageing Studies (CFAS)* Kingston, Andrew Green, E et al. *The Lancet*, Volume 390, Issue 10103, 1676 - 1684

focuses on healthcare implications, there are likely further demand implications for policing, including the potential criminal opportunities that could be exploited (such as “cuckooing”, organised crime’s involvement in care homes, distraction burglaries). Separately, it has been reported that the number of crimes in care homes has significantly increased, including thefts and assaults.

#### Vulnerable children

82. Action for Children has estimated that 140,000 children who are referred to social services nationally over issues like drugs, alcoholism, domestic violence and neglect are not getting the help they need. This is placing them at risk of harm and additionally has rather obvious demand implications for policing and safeguarding. Aside from the immediate threats, the lack of early, appropriate intervention raises the very real possibility of increased policing demand further downstream. Separately, the NSPCC states that reports of child neglect in the UK have risen by more than 60% in the last five years and that a growing number of callers were concerned about children, some under the age of five, being left at home unsupervised by parents struggling with alcohol and drug use.

#### Substance misuse/homelessness

83. Whilst overall drug use remains stable, there are signs that drug use amongst young people is rising. The proliferation of available drugs (including new psychoactive substances) coupled with reductions in drug treatment services may point towards the potential for further increases in acquisitive crime.
84. The proliferation of psychoactive substances has already generated substantial media attention throughout 2017. Police, ambulance services and local authorities are experiencing significant increases in demand relating to this, particularly in homeless hotspots (including Birmingham). The base chemicals are extremely cheap, meaning that profit for dealers is substantial. Additionally, the chemistry involved in manufacture is relatively simple, which risks the possibility of introducing domestic production in place of importing from China/India.
85. Crisis, the homeless charity, is predicting that the number of people sleeping rough will increase by 76% over the next 10 years to 16,000; with poverty and accommodation cost/availability being the main drivers. This combined with an increase in drug use, exacerbates the potential risks to vulnerable homeless people as well as the potential for increased levels of acquisitive crime to fund drug habits, aggressive begging and other associated issues which will drive up demand for police and partner agencies.

#### Mental Health

86. Over the last few years there has been a significant rise in the awareness of mental health across the both the public and public service spheres. The rise in awareness has seen a shift in the volume of referrals to the police for persons at times of crisis. Of the 9000 people seen by the Street Triage Teams (combined police, ambulance and MH response) in 2016/2017, 40% were known or open cases to mental health services where the individual’s crisis should be seen as a health service demand failure. There

is a growing gap between primary and secondary care where an increasing number of people come to notice in times of crisis where access to service may have prevented the police intervention.

87. There have also been challenges with offences of assault by inpatients in mental health units. The national statistics identified approximately 65,000 assaults against NHS staff in 2016 of which 45,000 were against mental health staff. Work has been undertaken with a number of the Mental Health Trusts in the West Midlands as part of Operation Stonethwaite to improve the investigation and outcome process seeing a shift from a 2% outcome rate to just under 30% in the key high demand locations in the last twelve months.
88. It is evident that poor mental health and the police requirement to respond to persons in crisis remains a significant challenge. Work is continuing across the region to review the acute care pathway and crisis intervention process which will seek to review the changing landscape we have seen over the last few years. Work is ongoing which supports the drive towards the Force intervention and prevention model; Liaison and diversion from custody; Mental health Treatment orders as a court community sentencing option, as well as a Mental Health Test Bed programme seeking to work in the crisis space by developing a predictive analytics toolkit which will support a health led intervention at the earliest opportunity.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

None

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