

**Strategic Policing and Crime Board**

**Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> September 2018**

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

**Title:** Protecting vulnerable victims

**Presented by:** Temporary Assistant Chief Constable Rachel Jones

**Purpose of paper**

1. The purpose of this paper is to update the Strategic Policing and Crime Board on work undertaken by West Midlands Police (WMP) to protect vulnerable victims of crime. This paper is for discussion.

**PROTECTING VULNERABLE VICTIMS**

**Definition of Vulnerable Victims of Crime**

2. Protecting vulnerable people is at the centre of WMP's vision to prevent crime, protect the public and help those in need.
3. WMP use the THRIVE+ definition of vulnerability across the organisation which determines that a '*person is vulnerable if as a result of their situation or circumstances, they are unable to take care or protect themselves, or others, from harm or exploitation*'.
4. Whilst the whole organisation is committed to protecting vulnerable victims of crime, WMP has a dedicated unit in the Public Protection Unit (PPU)<sup>1</sup> which is responsible for protecting and safeguarding those who are most vulnerable.

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<sup>1</sup> The PPU comprises of dedicated teams of Domestic Abuse (DA), Sexual Abuse (SA) and Child Abuse (CA) Investigators across each of the seven Local Authority areas, a dedicated Adults at Risk Team (AAR), a specialist Online Child Sexual Exploitation Team (OCSET) and a Central Referral Unit (CRU)

5. The following sections will describe how WMP aims to achieve the mission of protecting vulnerable victims of crime through a variety of strategies and processes.

### **Staff Training and Development**

6. WMP provide vulnerability training for all staff through a variety of Operational Learning and Development outputs including online computer courses (NCALT), classroom sessions with force trainers, guest speakers, subject matter experts, and immersive learning. As well as a significant number of NCALT courses<sup>2</sup> which are mandated for completion by all staff, bespoke training is delivered across the organisation which is focused on specific crime thematics.
7. Examples include bespoke training and awareness inputs to frontline staff on Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking via NCALT and Video boxes as well as future plans with Learning and Development to develop a one day session under the wider header of exploitation. In terms of Honour Based Abuse and Forced Marriage, WMP are also collaborating on the joint national protocol which is incorporated into training throughout WMP departments and includes student officers, investigators, senior leaders and contact staff.
8. Outside of core training, WMP also offers training regarding vulnerability which is role and/or rank specific, as detailed in the following section.

#### *New Police Officers*

9. All new police officers are required to complete the 14 week intensive Student Officer Programme. The programme is mapped against objectives set by the College of Policing (CoP) and includes learning inputs on key areas of vulnerability including domestic abuse, mental health, forced marriage, modern slavery, female genital mutilation (FGM), child abuse and adults at risk. The National Decision Model (NDM) and THRIVE+ model is provided and interwoven throughout the programme. This provides all new police officers with learning inputs across the vulnerability arena which enables a standardised baseline of knowledge to a national policing standard.

#### *Neighbourhood Policing Unit Training*

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<sup>2</sup> NCALT packages include: Public Protection – Initial Response, Public Protection – Abusive Relationship, Public Protection – Family Disturbance, Public Protection – Man in Distress, Public Protection – Missing Daughter, Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme, Mental Health and the Police, Victims Code and Modern Slavery

10. During 2017, over 800 police officers and staff from Neighbourhood Policing Teams across WMP were given awareness training in Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and Early Trauma. The objective of the training was to educate staff in how individual vulnerabilities can draw people into criminality and how early recognition and intervention by the police can prevent the likelihood of this occurring. A training programme combining ACE and Early Trauma is being developed for Force Response officers and investigators across WMP and will be delivered over the next six months.

#### *First Responders*

11. All staff working in Force Response and the Force Support Unit receive a full days training input relating to the police response to incidents involving people who have mental health vulnerabilities or a learning disability. The programme includes legislation updates to ensure that officers are fully aware of the powers available to them<sup>3</sup>.
12. WMP is also seeking to commission the nationally approved 'DA Matters' training for all frontline response officers, which incorporates the victim's perspective. The delivery of this training will form part of the continuous professional development for all new recruits and transfers into the response department.

#### *Investigators*

13. As part of the Initial Crime Investigators Development Programme (ICIDP), police officers undertake a 25-day modular based programme which is mapped against learning objectives set by the CoP.
14. In 2016, the course was redeveloped to a modular based programme and now includes a Public Protection module with inputs on Modern Slavery, Domestic Abuse, Child Abuse, Forced Marriage and FGM. This combined learning enables the identification of vulnerabilities which is essential to appropriately responding to the needs of an interviewee. To check understanding and decision making, candidates participate in a 3-day learning scenario based upon child sexual exploitation (CSE).
15. In addition, investigators specialising in specific areas of vulnerability receive tailored training within WMP. For example, child abuse investigators will complete the Specialist Child Abuse Investigator Development Programme, after they have received initial ICIDP accreditation. Over 8 days, they learn about the ranges of child development and vulnerabilities of child abuse in the context of wider abuse and develop an understanding of sexual offending including

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<sup>3</sup> inputs under the Mental Health Act 1983 and the Mental Capacity Act 2005

grooming. Staff also receive inputs on CSE and the importance of *Voice of the Child* in decision making and actions as well as accreditation to allow them to conduct their role.

16. Staff specialising in the investigation of serious sexual offences also complete the Specialist Sexual Assault Investigator Development Programme (SSAIDP). This is a progressive course and provides staff with the knowledge and skills to understand the needs of the victims and evaluate the best strategies to support them.
17. A further example is multi-agency child death investigation training aimed at both health professionals and police. This is designed to improve adherence to the SUDI (Sudden Unexplained Death of an Infant) process and to identify signs of physical abuse and neglect when a child has died.

### *Custody*

18. Recognising changes in the custody environment including the establishment of new roles such as Custody Officer Assistants and Detention Escort Officers, WMP has developed its custody courses for new and joining staff. Dealing with mental health and wider associated vulnerabilities is part of core business for staff in the custody environment and this is now incorporated into training to enable staff to effectively assess vulnerability and implement appropriate care strategies. In July 2018, changes were made to PACE Code of Practice C regarding safeguards for vulnerable suspects which will enhance the way in which the Force responds to vulnerability within the custody environment.

### *Force Contact*

19. All Force Contact staff receive a comprehensive training package with a strong emphasis on THRIVE+ and its application to emergency and non-emergency calls from the public. To build upon THRIVE+ training, staff receive learning inputs across all strands of vulnerability including mental health, domestic abuse, honour based abuse and FGM. Case studies are used where contact staff are required to identify aspects of vulnerability and how it affects their call grading decision.
20. The induction programme also includes inputs on Hate Crime. Staff learn about anti-social behaviour and its close relationship with vulnerability and take part in mock training phone calls to embed overall learning from the course. Between November 2017 and March 2018, DS Bode (PPU) delivered bespoke training to all Force Contact 999 and 101 operators in relation to understanding Domestic Abuse policy and procedure in their role. This training focused on the use of the THRIVE risk assessment tool in the context of DA calls for service, an input on

the importance of “Voice of the Child” and Intervention and Prevention Pathway referrals.

#### *Operation Sentinel*

21. As well as training, the Force is seeking to improve awareness of different aspects of vulnerability via *Operation Sentinel* with the primary aim of ‘Making hidden suffering of children and vulnerable people everybody’s business’.
22. This highlights a core component of Sentinel in terms of improving awareness and ensuring that hidden/under reported crimes are a priority for the whole organisation and not the sole responsibility of dedicated departments such as the PPU. Further information regarding Sentinel can be found in the corresponding Hidden Crimes paper.

#### **Working together to provide a seamless service for vulnerable victims**

23. As a strategic priority for WMP, vulnerability features as part of a number of governance boards which cross executive portfolio areas including Crime, Local Policing, Security and Operations. The WMP Governance structure can be seen in Figure 1 overleaf.
24. The Vulnerability Improvement Board currently reports into the Crime portfolio board and specifically focusses on the HMICFRS recommendations and areas for improvement around vulnerability and the national vulnerability action plan. WMP also has an Intervention, Prevention and Violence Board which addresses key aspects of vulnerability.
25. As part of business as usual, the force is also connected through a range of force wide tasking processes from the daily Threat, Review Meeting (TRM), Local Tactical Delivery Boards, the Force Tactical Delivery Board and finally Strategic Tasking. These meeting structures bring together all aspects of the organisation and provide the opportunity for specific incidents of vulnerability to be discussed as well as emerging thematic trends in order to direct an appropriate response.
26. The PPU Domestic and Child Abuse teams have a strong relationship with Neighbourhood Policing Unit Senior Leadership Teams as well as local neighbourhood teams. The PPU teams formally link into the neighbourhood teams through the daily Tasking Review Meeting (TRM) and the monthly Local Tactical Delivery Boards (LTDB), but are also available on a daily basis to provide advice and guidance in relation to their areas of expertise, and to act as the conduit into other PPU teams such as the Sexual Offences and Adults at Risk Teams. Information and guidance is also shared by the PPU with wider policing teams through the PPU Intranet page, supporting the delivery of training inputs to new recruits and through use of digital technology such as video presentations and Cartoons.

27. In addition to the normal business processes to address vulnerability, a strategic meeting (Gold) chaired by ACC Operations was convened in the summer of 2018 due to the unprecedented rise in the level of Domestic Abuse outstanding offenders. The Gold meeting involves senior leaders from all departments and aims to enhance WMP's response to vulnerable victims. Through review and close scrutiny, it is intended to use this opportunity to reflect on lessons learnt over the period.
28. In order to drive the issue of vulnerability throughout the governance structure, the WMP Governance Manager plays a key role in ensuring that vulnerability matters are signposted to the appropriate governance board to unify WMP's mission to reduce vulnerability and prevent the duplication of effort.
29. To support this governance structure, a 'Governance and Knowledge Hub' is being developed to enable all staff to access key information and actions discussed across all boards, including those bespoke to vulnerability. This ensures that everyone understands how the force is addressing vulnerability and the key role they play as part of the wider WMP effort.

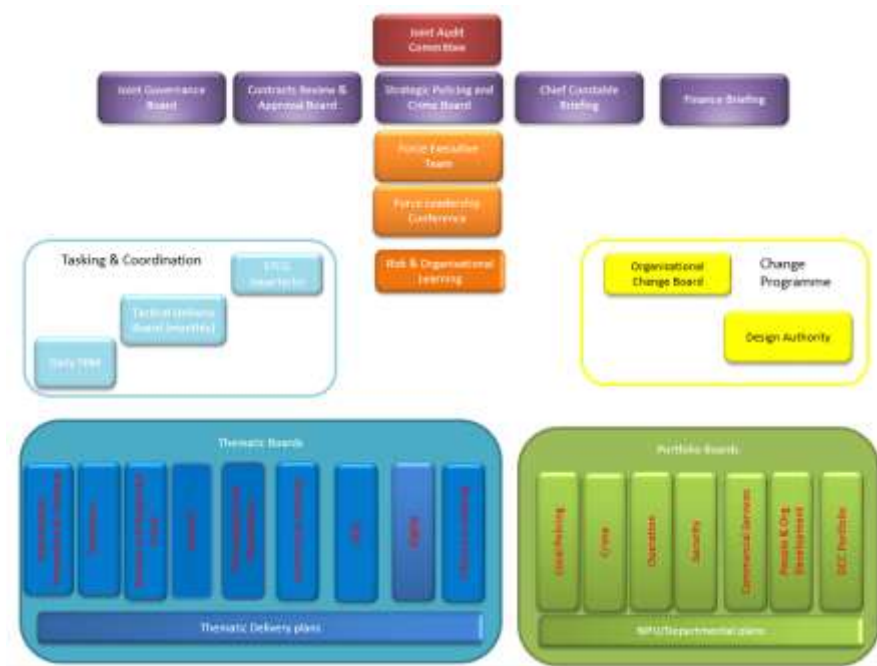


Figure 1 – West Midlands Police Governance Structure

### Preventing Violence against Vulnerable People Programme

30. The PVVP Board is a joint board chaired by ACC Crime and the Chief Executive of Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council (SMBC). It provides executive leadership, oversight, support and challenge in protecting the most vulnerable in society; children, young people and vulnerable adults. The mission is achieved through the collective direction of core public services through three pillars:

- **Prevention** – engaging communities through awareness raising, early intervention and culture change
- **Protection** – safeguarding those at risk and supporting those affected
- **Justice** – holding offenders to account and preventing reoffending

31. The following section provides an update on the activity of the PVVP programme in the context of specific areas of vulnerability.

#### *Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking*

32. A regional board was established in June 2017 and is chaired by a PPU Detective Superintendent and is currently developing a regional 4P action plan, incorporating national initiatives whilst building on both local and regional work. To compliment this process, January 2018 saw the launch of a project to develop regional multi-agency policy and procedures to protect potential victims of modern slavery and human trafficking across the West Midlands. The development of training for the seven metropolitan areas with capacity for delivery to local teams is ongoing.

#### *Domestic Violence and Abuse (DVA) and Serious Sexual Violence Update*

33. To supplement previous regional bids to develop Domestic Violence and Abuse (DVA) provisions across the West Midlands, a further bid has been submitted to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. Subject to outcome, this will build upon funding previously awarded to the region. It aims to develop and sustain additional refuge provision, with additional advice and support to victims and survivors of domestic abuse.
34. A review and audit of regional DVA standards across the West Midlands identified shared areas to focus on improving service provision, namely workforce development, shared learning and effective practice.
35. A similar audit of practice is currently being undertaken in respect of the regional Rape and Sexual Violence Governance Standards which were published in the autumn of 2016.

#### *Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation (CSAE) Update*

36. Training events to raise awareness of CSAE with partners across the health sector and security industry have been delivered across the region. Workshops focused upon changing practice regarding children who go missing and transitioning from users of children's services to adult services.
37. The regional *See Me, Hear Me* website has grown with support from colleagues across local authorities and WMP. This website is aimed at children, young

people, parents and carers, as well as professionals and has received national recognition at the Public Sector Excellence Awards.

### *Criminal Exploitation*

38. Recently, a series of workshops were held across the region in conjunction with colleagues from WMP and Local Authorities. They provided an overview of criminal exploitation as well as challenging how this issue could be tackled. Building upon feedback from these events, as well as local practice, PVVP are considering how this can be regionally progressed within an overarching framework of exploitation.

### **Managing the complex and competing demands of young victims of exploitation**

39. Young people can be exploited sexually (CSE), in a labour context, or for criminality (i.e. County Line and Cannabis Grows). It has subsequently been recognised by the Vulnerability Improvement Board that due to the competing and complex issues of exploitation, a specific 'exploitation' subgroup is required to focus on this area of business.
40. The primary purpose of the subgroup will be to establish proposals on how WMP and partners deal with exploitation more effectively. The terms of reference for the subgroup is in the process of being developed.
41. In terms of the current process for young victims of exploitation, referrals are channelled via the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). Any safeguarding decisions are expedited through the MASH process.
42. The Force are also supportive of the national work being undertaken such as that of the 'Panel for the Protection of Trafficked Children' (Barnardo's led – OPCC funded) in raising the awareness of the trafficking of non-UK child nationals.

### **VICTIMS CODE**

#### *Supporting Victims*

43. WMP complies with Victims Code legislation and the enhanced entitlements for vulnerable victims. This Code defines a vulnerable victim as persons under the age of 18 years of age at the time of the offence, and/or where the quality of a witness's evidence is likely to be affected because of:
- a mental disorder within the definition of the Mental Health Act 1983
  - a significant impairment of intelligence and social functioning
  - a physical disability or physical disorder<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Based on the criteria in section 16 of Youth Justice and Criminal Evidence Act 1999



44. Through the early THRIVE+ risk assessment process at first point of contact, an initial assessment is made by staff of the whole incident, those involved and any associated vulnerabilities. Staff speaking with the victim will explain how the criminal justice process will operate, and what they can expect in terms of service from the police and partners. This conversation also enables WMP staff to identify any barriers or concerns of the victim (i.e. language barriers), and develop a bespoke contact plan for future communication. Staff will also take this opportunity to explain relevant support services which may be appropriate dependant on any vulnerabilities identified.
45. Once a vulnerable victim has been identified, *enhanced entitlements* under the Victims Code can be implemented. An example regularly completed by WMP staff is updating victims promptly about any developments in an investigation such as an arrest or charge. The Victims Code is relevant throughout the criminal justice process and contact plans are updated to meet the needs of victims and maintain trust and confidence in WMP.
46. If a crime results in a suspect being charged and a victim is required to provide evidence to court, *Special Measures* can be applied for by the prosecution with support from the police. The purpose of *Special Measures* is to ensure the best evidence from the victim is presented before a court and includes the following options:
  - the use of screens so the victim does not have to see a defendant and the public gallery
  - the ability for the victim to provide evidence via video link
  - the use of video-recorded evidence to be played in court as the victim's main prosecution evidence
47. In addition to *Special Measures*, WMP also offer referrals to specialist sexual abuse services to provide support outside of the criminal justice process.

#### *Victims Code Compliance*

48. The crime recording system used by WMP means it is difficult to measure compliance against the Victims Code. To overcome this barrier, a senior manager has been allocated as Victims Code lead in order to drive compliance throughout the organisation.
49. A dip-sample of the crime recording system has recently been completed to ensure WMP are correctly recording and responding to the needs of victims. A in depth review (deep-dive) is also underway with key departments to assess Victims Code compliance, which will incorporate the victims' overall end to end experience. Findings from this deep-dive will be shared to capture organisational learning.

50. In autumn 2017, WMP established a network of Victim Code Champions who meet on a quarterly basis to improve overall service to victims victim code compliance. A key stakeholder at this meeting is the WMP Connect Team who are advising on software developments which may support the future measurement of victims code compliance.
51. Whilst the Champions Meeting is supporting the force's strategic response to Victims Code compliance, general crime report reviews by supervising officers are also taking place on a regular basis to check for compliance with Victims Code legislation. Feedback is promptly provided to individuals and teams to rectify non-compliance issues.

### *Challenges with Victims Code Compliance*

52. As previously identified, one of the main challenges for WMP is the difficulty measuring compliance with the Victims Code, albeit this is being worked through via the WMP2020 Programme. However, WMP is reassured that the Victims Code is at the forefront of daily business for frontline staff and supervisors and the champions meeting provides a level of confidence regarding knowledge of the Victims Code across the whole organisation. This is evidenced by other police forces including Hampshire and Devon and Cornwall approaching WMP to capture best practice.
53. The WMP Victims Code lead and departmental Victims Code Champions will continue to drive compliance from a local to strategic level.

## **PARTNERSHIP AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

### **Voluntary and Statutory Sector Partners and IAG Engagement**

54. WMP engage with both statutory and voluntary sector partners across all areas of vulnerability throughout the West Midlands. There is on-going engagement with both statutory and non-statutory partners including CPS, Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCB), Local Safeguarding Adult Boards (LSAB), Health, Education, Local Authorities, Strategic Safer Partnership Boards (SSPB) and Health & Well Being Boards in order to enhance services to all victims of crime. As an illustration of the detailed and integrated engagement with key partners, two examples are detailed below:
  - In terms of Adults At Risk, a West Midlands Metropolitan Emergency Services Adult Safeguarding Group has been created that allows the police, fire service, ambulance service and senior managers from the seven Local Authority Adult Safeguarding teams to develop consistent working arrangements in support of vulnerable adults.

- A bi-monthly Birmingham against FGM meeting sits in order to share best practice and discuss learning opportunities. Operation Limelight is also running this summer involving airport police, regional police teams, Children's Services and Border Force in order to intercept passengers on incoming and outgoing flights from areas of the world prevalent for FGM.
55. WMP continues to work with statutory partners such as the Home Office, National Stakeholder Group, PVVP lead, Border Force, and Crimestoppers. WMP has recently been invited by the National Police Chief Council lead to meet with international colleagues to talk through best practice both here and abroad.
  56. At an operational level, each local authority area has a CMOG (CSE and Missing Children Operational Group) meeting where partner agencies come together to discuss victims, offenders and locations and how to tackle them collectively. Supporting this process, a case management approach takes place where safety plans for individual children at medium or high risk of CSE are agreed.
  57. WMP works in partnership with Public Health England and other key partners to prevent people being drawn into violent crime through the Violence Prevention Alliance (VPA). The VPA brings together partners to work together with the shared understanding that violence and its associated harms are preventable. The VPA seeks to adopt a public health approach of identifying and addressing root causal factors that can reduce vulnerability, violence and improve health and wellbeing. Alliance members do this through evidence based interventions as well as testing and evaluating new approaches. The Alliance is a member of the World Health Organization's global network of Violence Prevention Alliances.
  58. At local Independent Advisory Groups (IAG), community representatives from racial, religious, LGBT and disability reference groups engage with police representatives on a local level.

### **Multi Agency Safeguarding Hubs (MASH)**

59. All seven Local Authorities have a MASH in operation, supported by staff from the PPU to ensure WMP's commitment to the Children Act 2004 and Working Together to Safeguard Children by providing a consistent, high quality first response to safeguarding children and criminal investigations. The MASH's work directly with partners in Social Care and Health to ensure the appropriate sharing of information, by placing the child at the centre of decision making. Lead officers for MASH meet quarterly to assist in overcoming issues and to develop shared learning.
60. The introduction of the Dudley Adult MASH in 2018 has allowed WMP the opportunity to review and develop our current response to Adult MASH with the Wolverhampton and Dudley Adult safeguarding Teams. The result has been the development of a consistent model across both MASH, improvements to the

interaction between the Adult MASH and key internal departments and the creation of joint training sessions. The utilisation of the PPU Central Referral Unit (CRU) as the virtual partner for the MASH and the central point of contact for the MASH into WMP, has allowed the force to be more informed and improve the service delivered to vulnerable adults.

### **Community Engagement to Protect Vulnerable Victims from Hate Crime**

61. WMP has revised their approach to Hate Crime and re-launched a revised Hate Crime Control Plan (HCCP) in June 2018 with four key strategic priorities:
  - Close the reporting gap by increasing confidence in victims and communities, and removing barriers to reporting
  - Hate Crime victims and wider communities to be recognised as potentially vulnerable, and receive an excellent service
  - Improve outcomes and satisfaction for victims of Hate Crime
  - Work with partners to identify opportunities for early intervention and prevention of Hate Crime/hostility
62. To achieve these priorities, each neighbourhood unit and department has an identified officer as a Single Point of Contact (SPOC) who are held accountable against the delivery of the Hate Crime Control Plan.
63. A clear element of the plan is engagement with both the public, statutory and non-statutory partners. To improve engagement with local communities and close the reporting gap, Third Party Reporting Centres (TPRC) are present to enable vulnerable victims to report incidents of hate crime to agencies working in partnership with WMP. TPRCs are spread geographically across the West Midlands and cover all areas of vulnerability of hate crime including race, religion and sexual orientation. The focus of WMP and partners through the TPRCs is to ensure the most appropriate services relevant to the specific needs of vulnerable victims is available across the region. For instance, an LGBT male suffering from hate crime may not wish to attend a TPRC located within a religious centre to report or obtain services.
64. Local Independent Advisory Groups (IAGs) regularly include both statutory and non-statutory partners to ensure there is a continued focus to ensure that all community reference groups are represented locally.
65. In June 2018, WMP announced the Diversity and Inclusion Strategy at a senior leader event. This event included representatives from Victim Support, religious and women's reference groups and highlighted the challenges people from vulnerable groups have in engaging with the police. Moreover, it emphasised the importance of Independent Advisory Groups in developing future WMP strategies for the benefit of vulnerable people and vulnerable communities.

## CURRENT AND FUTURE CHALLENGES

### Horizon Scanning

66. Vulnerability scanning is supported by all parts of WMP through the collection of all policing data. In most cases, this data helps WMP to understand vulnerability issues better rather than identify previously unknown vulnerability. For example the exploitation of children for criminal purposes, or County Lines, are not new, but WMP now understands this issue better and has changed its response as a result.
67. Within specialist functions, horizon scanning for vulnerability takes the form of analysis and assessment of different sources of information. The data is collated and analysed within three primary functions:
  1. The Tactical Intelligence Development Team identifies signals within intelligence, crime, and incident reports. They produce tactical products that lead to operational activity that help to prevent crime or protect the vulnerable. They highlight developing issues of vulnerability to the Force through business as usual processes.
  2. The Strategic Intelligence Development Team produces strategic analysis of a broader range of data including partnership data, to try to appreciate vulnerability issues in more detail and begin to propose potential solutions. For example they have produced products on Knife Crime and Sex Workers. Within this strategic team, the Planning Information Support Manager carries out environmental scanning which helps to predict vulnerabilities by proactively identifying emerging trends and risks. This includes keeping up to date with national and local developments, policies and reports that have the potential to influence development of vulnerabilities.
  3. Some of the products produced by the Strategic team support the Force Strategic Assessment or aim to answer specific questions commissioned by Force leads. The products are then shared with relevant internal and external partners, and where appropriate are proactively published through the Freedom of Information Team.
68. Senior Managers are appointed by the Force Executive Team to lead on thematic areas and they act as conduits to subject relevant information at a local, regional and national level. They are responsible for understanding their area of vulnerability and where appropriate creating a plan which the Force can follow to reduce vulnerability and protect those at risk.
69. The agreed activities will include where appropriate, tasks for other Force departments to support the delivery of the plan on behalf of the organisation.

## **Force Management Statement (FMS)**

70. WMP has recently completed its first Force Management Statement which included a section dedicated to 'Protecting Vulnerable People'. The force graded this section as 'Red' due to concerns in terms of the forces ability to respond to vulnerability due to anticipated future demands likely to exceed the ability of resources committed to protecting the vulnerable, despite investment.

### *Force Demographics*

71. WMP is the second largest force in England and Wales and subsequently has a number of characteristics that increase levels of potential vulnerability including a large population under 25 years old, high levels of deprivation<sup>5</sup> and high levels of unemployment. As a result of such demographics, the force experiences high levels of policing demand relating to vulnerability including domestic abuse, child abuse and modern slavery.
72. This needs to be considered alongside redesigned service provision of partner agencies in critical areas such as mental health, drug and alcohol addiction services, children services and adult social care. This reduction in capacity amongst police and partners across the West Midlands has also impacted on capacity inside of policing.

### *Demand and Complexity*

73. Despite a reduction in WMP establishment and partner agency service provision, there has been the emergence of complex crime themes such as county lines, slavery and child sexual exploitation alongside increases in more traditional known crimes including Domestic Abuse and Child Abuse. The increasing ease of access to digital devices also presents emerging challenges to WMP's ambition to preemptively reduce threat, harm and risk by safeguarding vulnerable individuals, particularly minors, against emerging cyber-enabled crimes such as online stalking, harassment and online-grooming.
74. This change in demand has increased the requirement for partnership working via mechanisms such as the MASH to respond to vulnerable victims of crime. This presents an on-going challenge for the force in terms of our ability to work with partners to respond, particularly when considering the complexity often associated with such crimes including cultural and language barriers and geography. An example of how the changing threat picture is impacting on how the force needs to adapt is for Slavery, which has now become core business for specific teams within FCID, subsequently changing their operating model.
75. As a result of the above challenges, WMP is continuously working both internally and externally to explore more effective and scalable approaches to the changing

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<sup>5</sup> 45.6% of the population live in the top 20% of England's deprived areas

threat landscape including an increase in the PPU establishment<sup>6</sup>, investment in trained specialist officers, improved working practices, enhanced analysis and a multi-agency approach to all forms of vulnerability. The 'Redesign Public Protection' project is also being designed around five interdependent functions that will provide the PPU with an improved way to manage a growing level of demand, including new and emerging threats.

76. However, the FMS identifies that future partnership engagement is required around the development of a common 'risk' language/assessment and a review of data sharing processes in order to maximise the opportunities for vulnerable individuals to be identified. In response, WMP continues to work with the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) and the newly formed Combined Authority to explore future opportunities to coordinate better data and data sharing policies and practices.
77. The rise in policing of vulnerability will not be wholly met through technological advances, employee awareness, tasking or streamlining of the Public Protection Unit. As a consequence, choices will need to be made regarding making further reductions in other areas of policing or the adoption of different approaches to the management of vulnerability.
78. The force cannot be certain it will be able to match future policing need in the area of vulnerability without success in reducing demand, changes to service levels or significant investment. However, the force is committed to continuous improvement and learning, along with working with other departments across WMP's operating model and partners to provide a better level of service to the vulnerable.

The Board is asked to:

- Note the report and the progress made in the area of vulnerability.

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<sup>6</sup> PPU establishment increased by 50 posts in 2017