



Strategic Policing and Crime Board

Date of meeting: 18th June 2019

Police and Crime Plan Priority: *Protecting from harm*

Title: *Violence Crime*

Presented by: *ACC Sarah Boycott and ACC Sue Southern*

Purpose of paper

1. This paper is to inform members of the Strategic Police and Crime Board (SPCB) to provide an overview of knife crime, vulnerability and youth violence and the current intervention and prevention work under taken by West Midlands Police (WMP). There is a particular focus on serious violence involving those under 25 years (non DA) with an emphasis on knife crime and youth violence including county lines. This paper will also report on the activity within the West Midlands Regional Organised Crime Unit (WMROCU) and WMP to tackle the correlation between vulnerability and youth violence, specifically County Lines. This report is for discussion.

Background

2. Knife crime, including robbery, has steadily increased since the summer of 2015 and there has been an increase in the number of injuries and fatalities amongst the regions young people. The data relating to 'Knife Crime' in this report is defined by the Home Office counting rules guidance (ADR160) which include specific serious offences where a knife, blade or sharp point is used to wound, attempt to wound or threaten a victim. Knife crime offences include any instrument used as a weapon that is sharp and capable of piercing the skin. Threats are counted when the potential victim(s) are convinced they were going to be stabbed and there is evidence of the suspects intent to create this impression. This includes a knife or sharp instrument concealed but threatened.

3. Birmingham in particular, has seen elevated levels of knife crime where a knife is used to threaten and where injury is inflicted, with figures now at the highest they have been in eight years. Whilst knife crime offences are not solely confined to the city centres within WMP, knife crime continues to be a significant issue for the Birmingham geography. Within a ten day period in February 2019, Birmingham saw 3 fatal stabbings of teenage males. Following the final stabbing on 25th February 2019, Chief Constable David Thompson declared 'Knife crime is an emergency'.
4. There are a wide variety of intervention and prevention initiatives and work streams undertaken by WMP in response to knife crime. There has also been an elevated national response to knife crime and serious violence affecting under 25 year olds.
5. WMP has received £7.62m from the Home Office to deliver an 'operational surge' in the area of Serious Violence involving under 25 year olds (non Domestic Abuse (DA) with an emphasis on knife crime. As a result, a Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) has been appointed and will lead a two year project which has been named Project Guardian.
6. Tackling county lines is a priority for UK law enforcement at a National, Regional and local level with police and partners working in partnership to identify and take action to reduce this growing threat.
7. The National Crime Agency guidance and definition of a County Line is:

"a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs into one or more importing areas [within the UK], using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of "deal line". They are likely to exploit children and vulnerable adults to move [and store] the drugs and money and they will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons"
8. County lines can affect anyone and the region is home to individuals involved in county lines from the ages of 12, up to 60 years old. Whilst males represent the vast majority of county lines offenders and victims, there is evidence of females being involved, including those vulnerable to sexual exploitation. It is assessed that females may be less likely to be suspected of involvement in county lines activity, albeit the true extent of female involvement remains an intelligence gap.
9. The National County Lines Coordination Centre (CLCC) is a multi-agency unit, bringing staff from the NCA, ROCUs and police forces together to develop the intelligence picture, The unit prioritise action against the highest risk and threat lines; and engage with partners across government, including health, social care and education to address the

wider issues, including the safeguarding of vulnerable people. This acknowledges that a whole system approach to tackling the problem is required.

- Along with every police force in England and Wales, WMP collate national data relating to county lines. This involves searching incidents, arrests, crime records and intelligence as well as missing person records, to identify instances of county lines and ensure they are recorded.

Knife Crime

Statistics for Incidents of Knife Crime

- This data is in line with Home Office counting rules and will show the detail over a period between 48 months, the last 24 months which includes wounding, attempt wounding or threatening of an offence and in detail during the notable spike in offending. The most notable spikes in knife crime between February 2019 and April 2019 is broken down to give a wider understanding of this period. There is also a 4 week view of knife crime presently which shows a reduction in offences from the spiked period but also breaks down the profile of offending times, locations and those that are victims and/or offenders.

- Figure 1 below, shows the knife crime over the last 24 months. Evidently there has been a continued increase with a significant spike between February 2019 and April 2019. Figure 2 shows a breakdown of the significant spike in knife crime from February to March 2019. March saw 414 recorded offences, April saw 316 and May had 319 recorded against a previous average of 312 per month. Since November 2018 33% of the offences occur in Birmingham West whilst 54% occur within the Birmingham boundary.

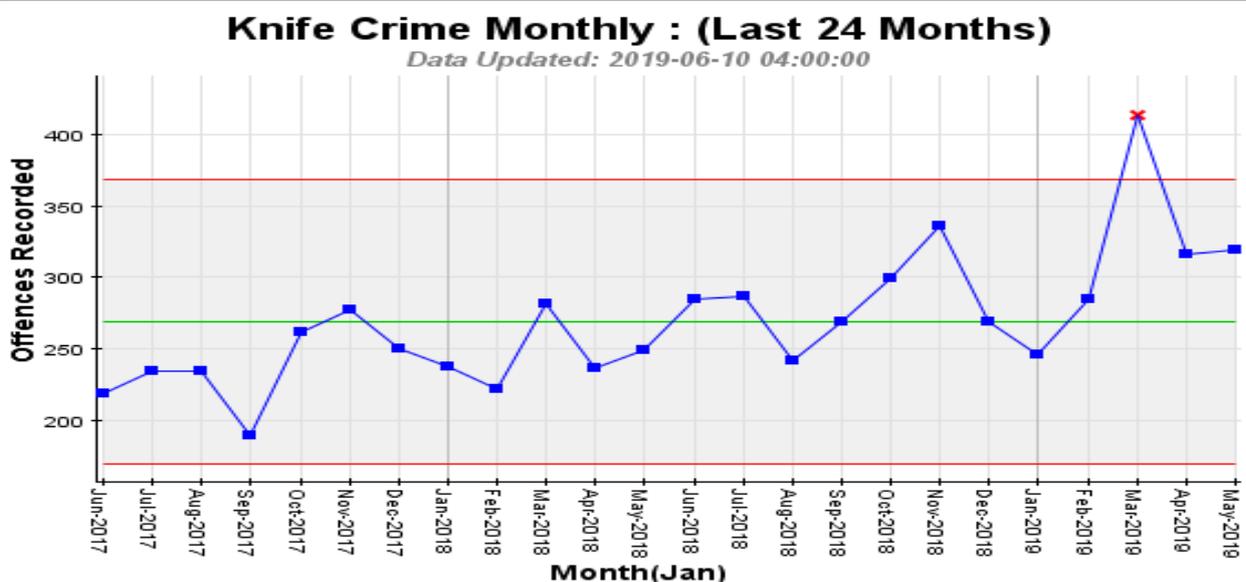


Figure 1 Knife crime over the past 24 months

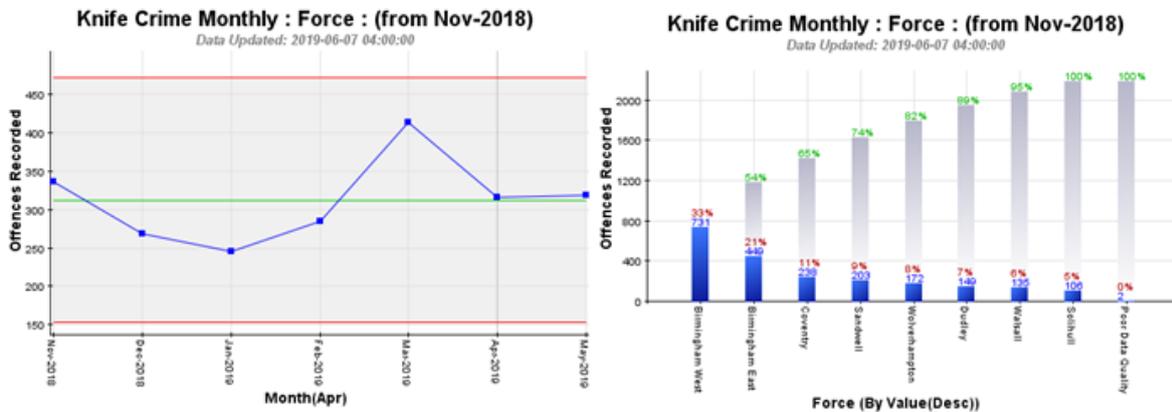


Figure 2: Knife Crime by month and by NPU location

13. The weapons which are being used are most commonly unknown knives or kitchen knives, with machetes only being used in 13% of all knife crime offences. This could indicate that it is more likely offenders will be more likely to use smaller, less obvious bladed articles across the WMP geography. Force wide, the weapons have been most often used as a threat, and have been used to cause injury only 19% of the time. Robbery offences have been more likely to involve the use of knives rather than violent offences force wide.

14. Figure 3 shows that the majority of knife crime offending has occurred in the evenings and afternoons, with some NPUs recording a large amount of knife crime occurring late at night (approx. 00.01-06.59). NPUs with a night time economy the offences peak between 17:00-01:00. Force wide Knife crime is predominantly between 14:00hrs and 23:00hrs

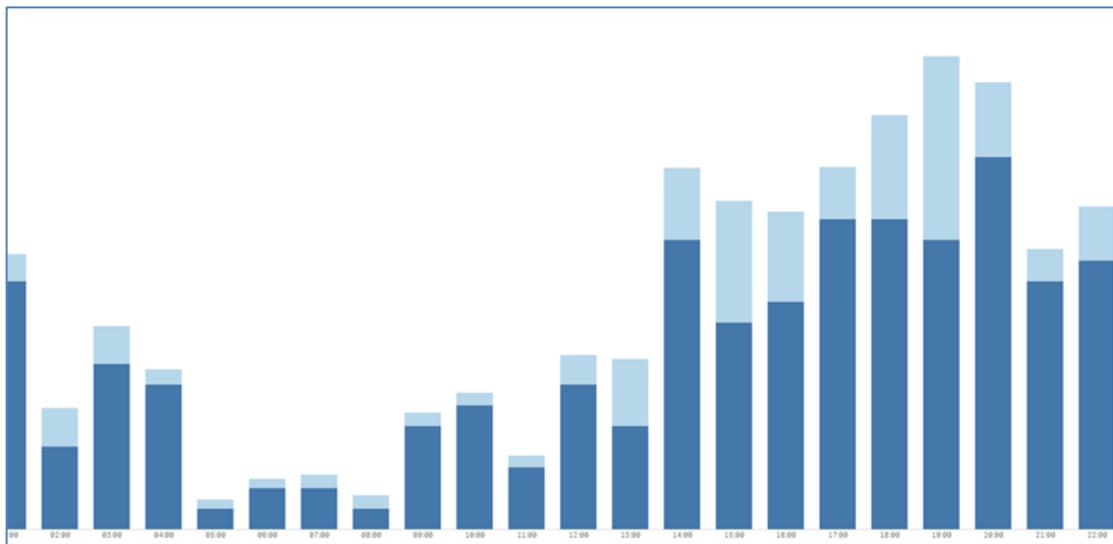


Figure 3: Knife crime by time of day

15. Figure 4 shows that violent offending peaks between May and July. Knife crime is included within this category. Therefore the increase in March this year was unusual.

Crime Type		Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Violence	VWI	-5.5%	-14.1%	-3.8%	-2.7%	6.6%	8.6%	13.8%	-0.2%	-0.6%	1.5%	-5.5%	1.9%
	PPV / WI	-12.6%	-17.5%	-4.0%	-0.2%	9.8%	12.2%	17.3%	0.2%	2.3%	3.1%	-5.3%	-5.4%
	Domestic Violence	6.7%	-12.3%	-4.3%	-3.4%	2.6%	3.2%	7.4%	2.1%	-0.9%	1.4%	-7.0%	4.5%

Figure 4: Seasonal offending pattern for violence

16. The majority of knife crime offences force wide occurred in public, on roads and outside addresses. The heat map in Figure 5 shows the hotspot areas of offending (in the last 4 weeks). The NPU's most affected are Birmingham East, Birmingham West, Coventry and Wolverhampton.

17. The majority of knife crime offending has occurred in the evenings and afternoons, with some Neighbourhoods Policing Units (NPU's) recording a higher numbers of knife crime occurring late at night (approx. 00.01-06.59). NPU's with a night time economy show a peak of offences between 17:00-01:00. Force wide knife crime is predominantly between 14:00hrs and 23:00hrs

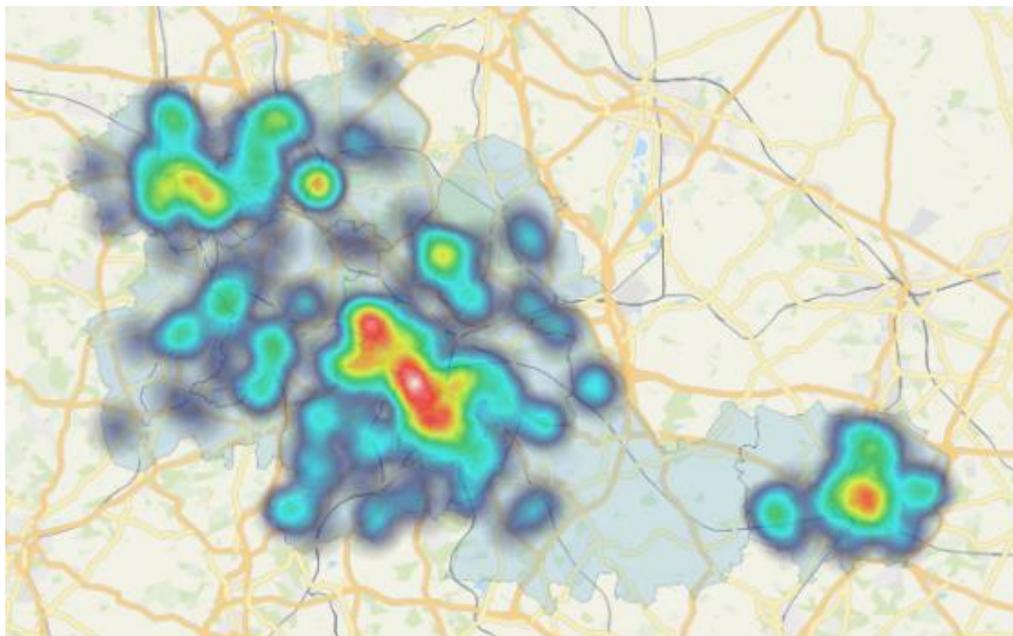


Figure 5: Hot spot locations of knife crime (last 4 weeks)

18. The population density map in Figure 6 shows that these areas are the most densely populated NPU's and include the region's city centres.

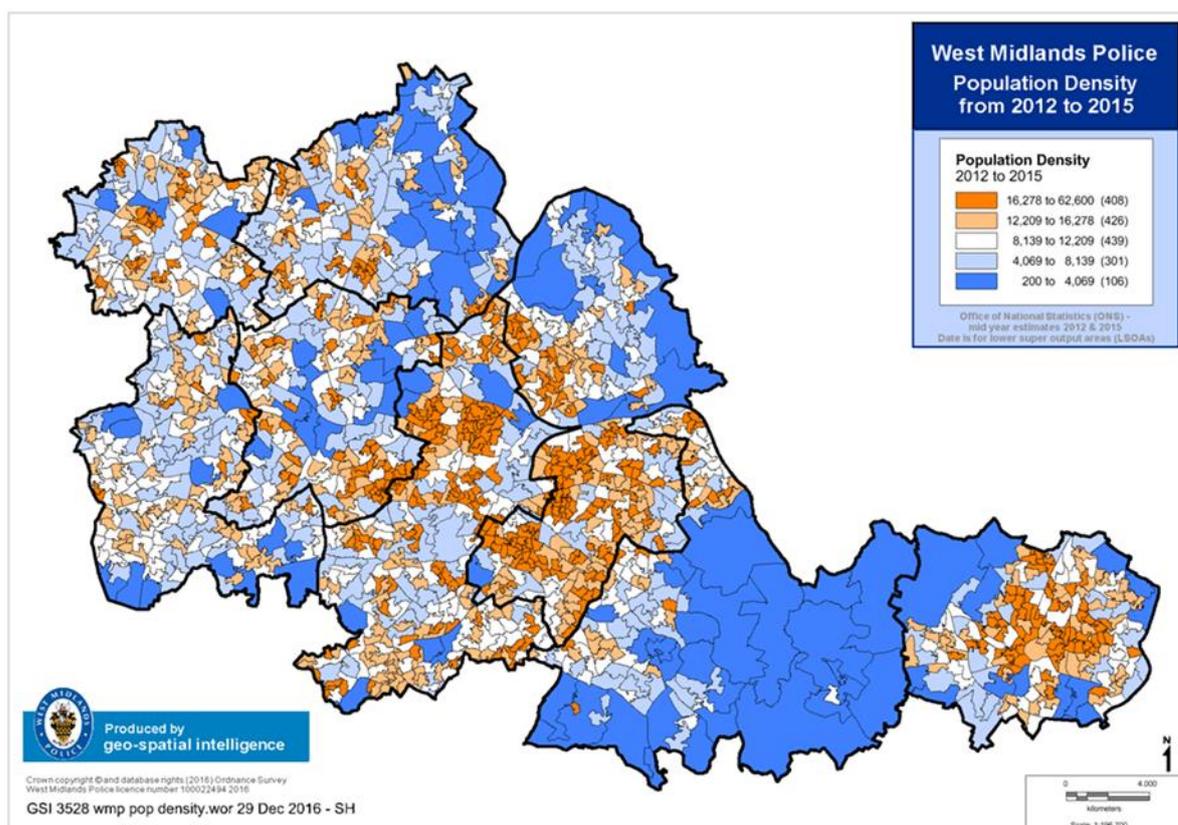


Figure 6: Population density within the West Midlands Police area

19. Since Nov 2018, 46% of victims force wide have been under 25, they have been mostly White North European (50%) followed by Asian or Asian British (21%) in ethnicity, and male (79%) in gender. Of known offenders, 47% force wide have been under 25, the majority have been White North European (49%) in ethnicity, and male (83%) in gender. Figure 7 shows the ethnic breakdown of the wider population in the West Midlands for comparison.

Census data		
White	Asian	Black
70.13%	18.82%	6.00%

Figure 7: Ethnicity of the West Midlands population (2011)

20. Figure 8 shows that 57% of knife crime offences against young victims (u25) occur in Birmingham.

Knife Crime Monthly : 17 and Under + 18 to 24 * Force : (from Nov-2018)

Data Updated: 2019-06-07 04:00:00

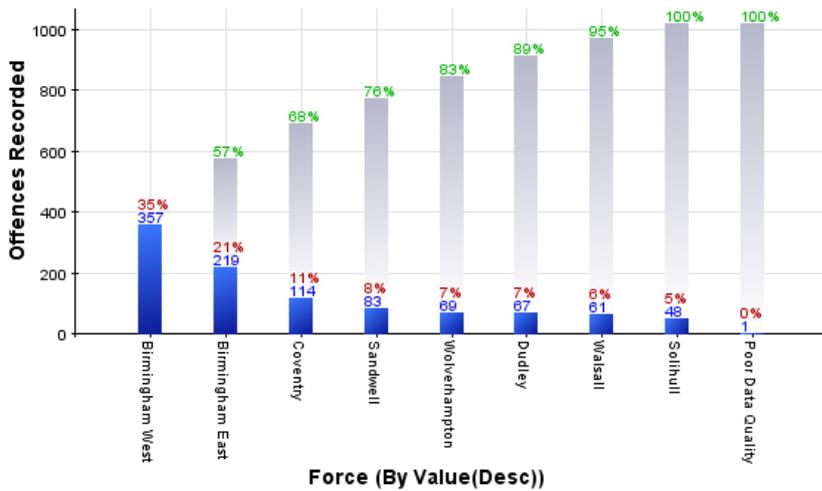


Figure 8: Knife crime victims aged under 25, by offence location NPU

21. Since Nov 2018, 49% of victims in Birmingham West and Birmingham East are under 25. Followed by Coventry at 48%. (SfN data)

22. Table 1 highlights that of knife crime 40-50% of victims are under the age of 25 across the West Midlands.

NPU	TRC Knife Crime	Victims under 25	%Proportion under 25
Birmingham West	731	357	49%
Birmingham East	449	219	49%
Coventry	238	114	48%
Sandwell	203	83	41%
Wolverhampton	172	69	40%
Dudley	149	67	45%
Walsall	135	61	45%
Solihull	106	48	45%

Table 1 knife crime victims under 25 by NPU

23. Figure 9 shows that since Nov 2018, the majority of the offenders were male (92%). The occupation of the offender was rarely completed, however 55% of occupations were recorded as 'unemployed' and 33% of occupations were recorded as 'student'.

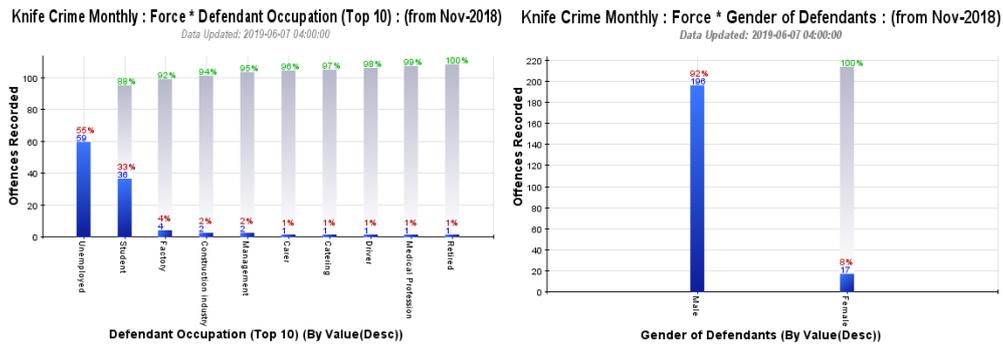


Figure 9: Occupation and gender of defendants

24. During the period of February 2019 and April 2019 there was a significant spike in knife related crime, also during this period there were a number of murders that involved a knife. The last knife related Murder was recorded on 24th April 2019. Between 1st February 2019 and the 30th April 2019 there were seven knife related murders, 5 of which occurred in Birmingham and two which were domestic related. Both domestic murder victims were over 25 years and the other knife related murders were all under 25 years of age.

25. Figure 10 shows a 48 month period of knife related murder. During the last 12 months between June 2018 and May 2019 there have been 19 knife related murders. The previous 12 month period saw 22 knife related murders. So whilst there was a dramatic spike in knife crime between February 2019 and April 2019 the number of knife related murder has decreased.

Recorded Crime - Month : X - ADR 160 Homicide

Data Updated: 2019-06-12 04:00:00

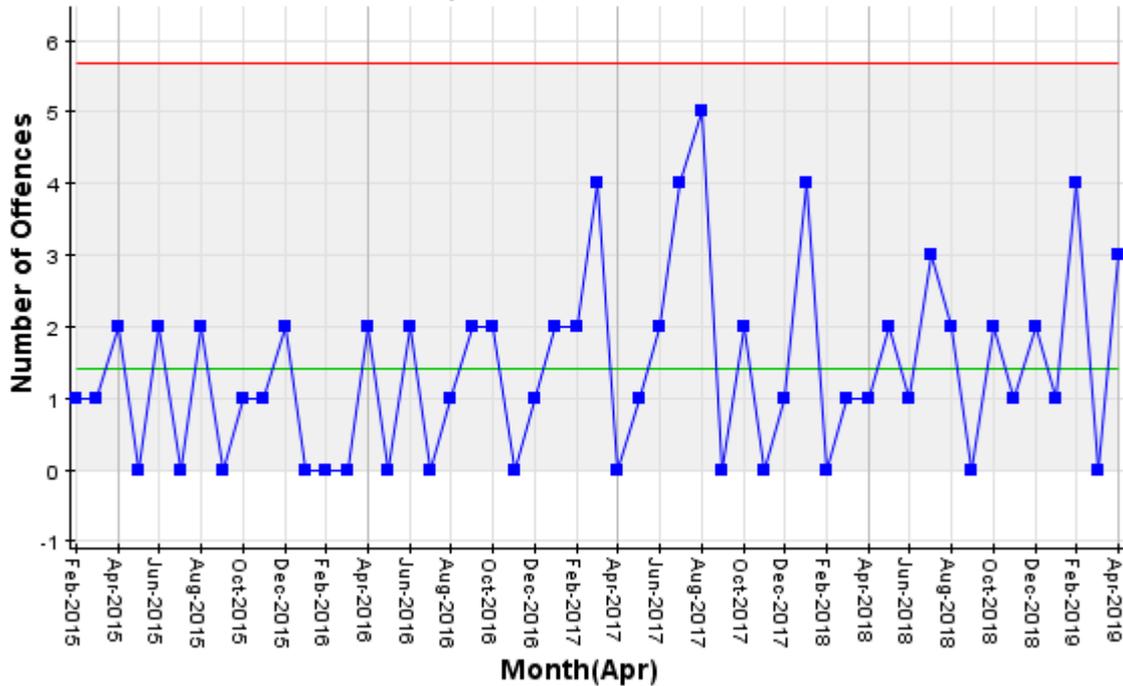


Figure 10: Knife crime Homicide

An overview of the operational response - intervention and prevention work undertaken by WMP

26. There are a range of operational responses to knife crime and many that have included intervention and prevention work undertaken by West Midlands Police including national responses.

Operation Sceptre – National

27. Operation Sceptre was launched in July 2015 nationally with the aim of reducing knife crime. Operation Sceptre sees all 44 forces come together nationally to respond to the rise in knife crime. Operation Sceptre provides guidance of tactics that can be used by police forces in the fight against knife crime and these tactics are adopted in a number of weeks of action that have been implemented nationally.

28. The most recent week of action was during 11th to 17th March 2019 where the communities of West Midlands would have seen increased police visibility and action. During this week of action In total across the week of actions there were 90 knife recoveries or seizures and 9 arrests.

29. WMP actively encouraged education establishments, partner organisations, parents and young people to work with collectively to raise awareness about the risks and impacts carrying a knife can have on individuals in the community. The activity included:

- Police lead 83 weapon sweeps and weapon sweeps with community members for knives that are hidden in public on wasteland, parks and open spaces resulting in 18 knives being recovered.
- Working with partners increased test purchasing with retailers to ensure retailers are being responsible and only selling knives to those that are the correct age.
- Officers at pivotal locations with knife arches and knife wands. This provides prevention opportunities but also an opportunity to engage with many members of the public and educate on the impacts of knife crime whilst providing a visible presence and reassurance.
- Increased officers deployed at locations such as transport hubs and bus station to provide reassurance and engagement opportunities.
- Schools presentations where children and young people were spoken to about knives and in some cases knife arches used at schools to check for any pupils carrying knives.
- An increase in positive news stories: good arrests; convictions or initiatives was also part of the communications strategy.
- A number of knife surrender bins are located force wide, and during this week of action 59 knives were surrendered.
- During this week of action there were 13 arrests and 9 knives seized that were not a consequence of stop and search. There were 55 stop and searches with four knives seized.

30. These tactics are also used throughout the year by all Neighbourhoods with the additional promotion and intensity of activity taking place during Operation Sceptre weeks. A selection of Neighbourhood officers have recently undergone training, provided by the College of Policing in partnership with PSHE Association, to deliver inputs to Schools with bespoke lesson content that adds value to the curriculum specifically addressing issues of concern to policing i.e. knife crime, drugs and consent.

Operation Forecast – West Midlands Police

31. Operation Forecast commenced on 21st February 2019 as part of West Midlands Police response to the rising levels of robberies and knife crime across Birmingham. Whilst

knife crime remains a challenge force wide, the Birmingham Neighbourhood Policing Units have disproportionately high levels of offending.

32. The instigation of Operation Forecast led to a surge in operational activity and a significant number of police resources deployed across Birmingham to deliver a variety of policing tactics designed to effectively prevent violent, knife point robberies specifically prioritising:

- Preservation of life
- The prevention of further offences
- Bringing offenders to justice
- Improving public confidence with the police and how we are tackling serious criminality

33. The policing style for Operation Forecast was set as proactive, robust and sensitive to achieve the preferred outcomes and prioritised as follows:

- Proactive activity to prevent further offences
- Respond at pace to incidents that have occurred
- Thorough investigation of offences

34. Proactive activity has been intelligence led identifying the areas that are impacted by knife crime and the opportunities for activity in those areas. This has included: Section 60 stop and search; weapon sweeps; engagement in key locations such as schools, colleges and universities; high visibility patrols; ANPR deployments at key locations; engagement with key community groups and the Independent Advisory Group (IAG).

35. Operation Forecast continues as a response to the rising levels of robberies and knife crime in Birmingham. Table 2 provides quantitative data around some of the activity that has taken place. The weapons include weapons that have been seized as part of any of the policing tactics deployed which includes stop and search and weapon sweeps.

Total Searches	Section 60 Search	Arrests	Vehicle seized	Cannabis Caution	Dispersal	Children Advice and Support Service Referrals	Weapons
5387	1949	319	120	106	51	10	147

36. Whilst section 60 Stop and Search authority can be a controversial tactic, engagement and consultation with key stakeholders has been a pivotal part of consideration and deployment of the tactic. Section 60 authorities have been given and utilised as a tactical option for Operation Forecast and prior to the first city wide Section 60 an extraordinary public meeting was convened with representatives from each of Birmingham's four Independent Advisory Groups (IAG), Community Reference Groups and Stop and Search Scrutiny Panels. Evidence about levels of knife crime, the demographics of victims and offenders and the police tactical initiatives already tried were shared with the attendees before introducing the proposals of a city-wide Section 60. Increased use of stop and search was a suggestion from some of the attendees.
37. Once the Section 60 operations had commenced, community representatives were invited to attend briefings and accompany officers on deployment. It was noted that many of the community groups, Stop and Search Panels and IAGs were populated by adults, and so a bespoke Stop and Search Scrutiny Panel was convened, comprising teenagers of school age. They accompanied officers, and their feedback was used to further refine the briefing offered to officers.
38. In addition to external groups, internal staff associations representing various faith groups and Black Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) officers have been invited to critique the operational plans. This advice was then used by a senior officer who participated in a live broadcast to Unity FM, a local radio station with significant listenership from the local Muslim community.

Project Guardian

39. Project Guardian supports the response to the Home Office £7.62 million to deliver an operational surge in the area of serious violence involving those under 25 years. The primary objective for all of the police surge funding is to reduce serious violence in public spaces with a focus on reducing knife crimes committed against young people. There are four strands to the project: suppression; intelligence; investigation and diversion.
40. Whilst the operational surge will benefit West Midlands communities collectively, four Neighbourhood Policing Units (NPU) have been identified through intelligence as priority NPUs. These are Birmingham West (BW), Birmingham East (BE), Coventry (CV) and Wolverhampton (WV).

41. The £7.62 million funding from the Home Office will be utilised to release added capacity, capability, innovation and high standards within West Midlands Police.
42. Project Guardian will create capacity by releasing operational activity that is presently focused within the night time economies' across the West Midlands. This will mean enhanced staffing across the night time economies to reduce alcohol fuelled violence, but also to target robbery offenders who prey upon those who attend the NTE and may be vulnerable.
43. To ensure that the impact of Project Guardian can have longer term effect, academic research will be commissioned. This will include the analysis of partnership data to understand and examine the drivers and symptoms to support and enable targeted interventions and preventative activity across the region
44. It is recognised that there is opportunity within the investigation of knife crime and serious violence investigations to improve the outcomes for victims and prosecution, rehabilitation, prevention and intervention opportunities for offenders. Project Guardian will target an uplift in resources to support the primary and secondary investigation of key offences to increase these opportunities and outcomes for victims and offenders.
45. Educating communities and particularly young people is another key objective. Effective communications strategies will be commissioned to educate communities. This will ensure a strong focus on the enduring legacy of the programme beyond its two years and equip key stakeholders both internally and external with greater networks of support to share learning, enrich the intelligence picture, provide innovative solutions and forge stronger relationships with partners and communities.
46. The programmes overarching aims are to achieve an increase in prevention and enforcement, increased outcomes for victims and offenders through investigation, increased intelligence and targeting of offenders and victims and improved technology and equipment. There is also ongoing work that looks at further opportunities and initiatives.

Project Guardian - Intended use of Money from the Government to Tackle Violent Crime

47. West Midlands Police has adopted a "project" response to the issue of youth violence and knife crime, setting up a centralised project team to co-ordinate and enhance local delivery of intelligence, tactical, investigative and diversionary responses. This

centralised resource tracks trends across the force and ensures that the appropriate tactics and investigatory processes/outcomes are matrix managed through existing teams and departments. The project has been branded as 'Project Guardian' so that all of the activities outlined can be recognised and associated with the additional funding both internally within West Midlands Police and with wider stakeholders and partners. The project will run over a two year period.

48. The program aim is to achieve the following outcomes:

- Reduction in violence with injury where the victim or offender is under 25 (non DA)
- Reduction in offences (non DA) where knives are used or their use is threatened
- Reduce level of knife injury victims aged under 25
- Increase in the positive outcome rate for violence with injury and knife crimes
- Provide alternative Criminal Justice outcomes to increase the toolkit available to all partners
- Increase in the number of young people who receive knife crime prevention inputs or other diversion activity
- Increase in proactive operations - overt, discrete, covert, partnership, volunteers
- Increase in sophistication with which partners share, capture, analyse and interpret data, information and intelligence
- Increase in Social Capital & Volunteering – engaged/deployed to meet these objectives
- Improving public confidence with the police and how we are tackling knife related crime
- Improving young people's perception of safety

49. The spend will be focused on the following areas:

- a. Hotspot areas: prevention and enforcement
- b. Individuals and groups: Intelligence and targeting
- c. Investigative response: description of activities and outputs
- d. Equipment & technology: description of investment to build capability

50. The project will use overtime to create additional policing surge into hot spots and the night time economy. Police staff investigators will be employed to release neighbourhood police officer time to focus on operations to reduce youth violence. Additional police staff investigators will be recruited to enhance end-to-end investigation of violent crime and the handling of suspects/offenders. A dedicated member of staff will be recruited,

focussed upon encouraging, coordinating and deploying social capital and volunteering within the auspices of this project and its aims.

51. Funding will be used to commission innovative and effective communications strategies to educate communities, especially young people and the trusted voices and/or influencers in their lives. A comprehensive communications and engagement media plan is being developed, creating resources and toolkits for officers, parents, partners, agencies and young people to access

52. A strong aspect of the approach is to enable Neighbourhood Policing Units to design tactics and local initiatives driven that provide operational surge, work with local partnerships and intervention and prevention that addresses local need.

53. The project is in its early stages of implementation and is also exploring further opportunities such as the recruitment of additional resources and initiatives designed to have an immediate as well as longer term impact at reducing youth violence. Examples of areas under consideration include:
 - Recruitment of police officers and PCSOs to create dedicated resource to focus on the project's objectives.
 - Pilot for a Teachable Moments in Custody programme
 - Alternative Criminal Justice (CJ) outcomes (such as Out of Court Disposal and programmes) for young people where that is the right thing to do
 - Purchase of certain legacy assets such as further knife arches, knife wands, or newly developed equipment to help tackle the issues
 - Guardian Youth Fund initiative (akin to Youth Opportunities Fund)

An insight into the challenges faced by West Midlands Police in effectively responding to knife crime.

54. Resources are a significant challenge for West Midlands Police. Policing cuts have been significant and there is also a notable and significant decrease in youth provision by external stakeholders which exacerbates the challenges.

55. To tackle the challenges there has been an increase in collaboration with key stakeholders but there needs to be effective and efficient whole system approach to address the underlying causes of youth violence. The approach needs to recognise how adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and other traumatic experiences can affect individuals. Preventing violence requires all public agencies, the third sector and

businesses to realise the impact of trauma and understand different recovery pathways; recognise the signs and symptoms of trauma in those involved within the system and responds by integrating the knowledge of trauma into policies and procedures.

56. There is ongoing work with the government to introduce a statutory duty to highlight the relevance for all government agencies and to coordinate with the third sector. Government lead strategy will support local arrangements and ensure tackling violence is taken as a strategic priority for all agencies.
57. There is a changing nature of youth crime including: county lines; exploitation; robbery; gang culture; social media and mental health. This is not an exhaustive list but gives an idea of the challenges around changing youth crime and the societal changes that occur with this.
58. Working with educational establishments is imperative to support and facilitate intervention and prevention within schools but it also provides opportunities to understand the young people that are excluded from schools.
59. Young people are excluded from mainstream schools for many different reasons, including behavioural, and it is understood that the vast majority of school leaders do not take such decisions lightly. It is recognised that excluded children are at heightened risk of involvement in violent crime as either perpetrators or victims; indeed, some of the most recent incidents of violent crime in Birmingham City Centre have involved children that have been previously excluded.
60. In January 2019, a dedicated police officer was committed to work with five secondary and three primary centres in Birmingham to positively engage excluded children and support hard working teachers in these provisions to identify opportunities to embed intervention and prevention improving outcomes for these children and reduce their vulnerability to exploitation. The outcome of this is monitored and shared across the West Midlands Police and the different Neighbourhood Policing Units to understand how a similar approach may be implemented in other areas.
61. Partnership engagement managers are to be introduced as part of project Guardian to assist schools by facilitating appropriate support for those identified as at-risk. This support consists of sport, integrated-mentoring and character building education. This funding would allow for the introduction of the posts to the wider West-Midlands force area, providing a critical early intervention link between schools, support services and business to ensure that young people are given every opportunity to lead fulfilling lives.

Updates regarding the drivers of knife crime

62. Project Guardian aims, through academic research and intelligence analysis, to deepen West Midlands Police's understanding around the escalation points. Data Driven analysis has been commissioned around the drivers of youth violence and knife crime which the data lab is currently working on.
63. Analysis has shown that in part knife crime is driven by drug use and supply influenced by serious and organised crime. Drug abuse is a key risk factor in the Socio Ecological Model (as seen in figure 11 below) and can be seen in West Midlands Police data and intelligence with Urban Street Gangs more willing to use knives to control drug markets and to threaten rival drug dealers. Drug dependency can also be seen as driver of some aspects of knife crime in the West Midlands either directly through individuals using knives in robberies to obtain drugs or commodities that can be exchanged for drugs.

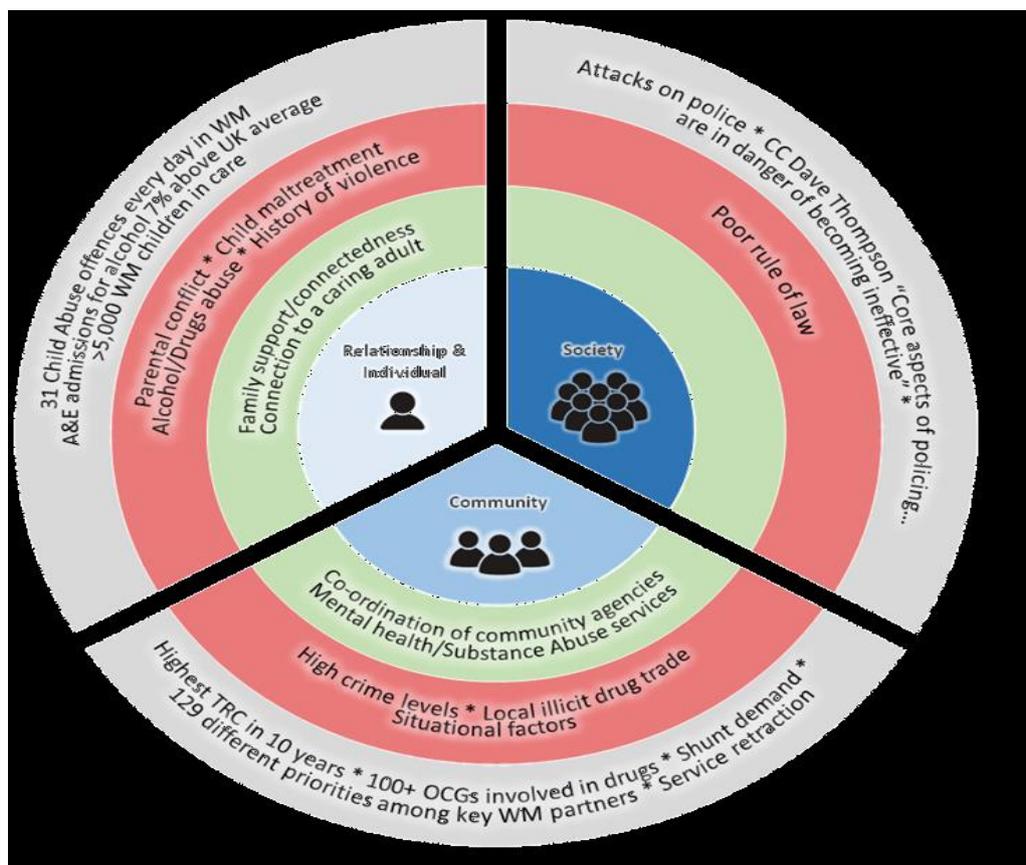


Figure 11 Socio Ecological Model

64. Knives appear to be the “weapon of choice” by young people who professed to carry a weapon and the ready availability of knives in the home compounds the issue further. The role of a supportive family/caring adult are important protective factors that will be missing for certain vulnerable young people when deciding whether to take a knife to school or a public place.
65. Being raised in an area with high levels of crime and deprivation is a known risk factor for violence. West Midlands main hotspots for both knife crime and robberies correlate with areas that have the highest levels of deprivation and long-standing crime and disorder issues. A recent study by Aston University, commissioned by West Midlands Police, found that while young people say they carry weapons to protect themselves in areas they perceive to be unsafe, it is the presumption that others are armed that helps produce fear and insecurity.
66. The role of the media where negative stories project knives as an integral part of contemporary urban youth cultures have the effect of amplifying young people’s fear in particular travelling to places where there is a perceived threat of knife crime and robberies. The study by Aston University found that the everyday feature of knives and knife crime, partly aided by the media reporting, means that certain types of crime such as robbery become popular as knives become ‘trendy’. A lack of capable guardians and withdrawal of service provision in these areas³ are important protective factors that will be impacting on our most deprived locations.
67. The West Midlands Police area is experiencing high levels of all risk factors associated with knife crime and robberies and compromised protective factors – the ‘safety net’ of police and partner interventions is also currently severely strained due to a reduction in resources available to the police and the retraction of support services as a result of financial pressures faced by partners. Interventions which do not seek to address the wider social issues associated with young people such as, social inequality and deprivation, poor mental health and drug addiction are unlikely to provide long lasting solutions to knife crime and robberies.

West Midlands Police Partnership work relating to knife crime

68. There are a number of effective partnerships across the West Midlands that have been introduced in relation to knife crime and serious violence as part of the Violence

Prevention Alliance, which is co-chaired by an ACC from West Midlands Police and Director of Public Health, with funding from the OPCC.

69. Violence Prevention Alliance; Mentoring Violence Prevention (MVP) is a secondary school peer to peer mentoring programme to draw people away from violence and develop leadership skills, confidence, social awareness and self-respect.

70. Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) Co-ordinators is a pilot currently operating in Sandwell and Dudley which focuses upon developing a trauma informed approach for public services, partners and the third sector. The aim is to facilitate and enable early support for vulnerable young people.

71. A programme of ACE training took place between March and May 2019 with a second wave commencing June/July 2019. There is capacity to accommodate up to 500 people across all these sessions which run from half day awareness through to 3 day 'train the trainer' sessions. A number of officers from Force Response and Force Investigations have undertaken the 'train the trainer' sessions to go back and train colleagues within their respective departments. This will encourage officers to refer young people that they meet and encounter who may be vulnerable to violence into their respective partnership teams who can secure connectivity with the appropriate support organisation. This training also seeks to empower partners in public service and the third sector to refer vulnerable young people to support agencies.

72. 'Teachable Moment' is an initiative that provides early support for young people affected and involved in violent crime to draw them away from violence. This involves youth workers in hospital A and E departments. The VPA co-fund and support youth workers in Birmingham QE and Heartlands A and E, in addition there are now similar programs in Coventry and Wolverhampton hospital A and E departments.

73. Violent crime is not a problem that affects excluded young people alone; some of the worst incidents of violence in recent times have been perpetrated by young people that have not been excluded nor shown any known previous violent tendencies at school or in the community. These young people have still made the decision to carry and use knives. Whilst it's very important that there is a coordinated partnership response from all partners to support excluded children, the wider societal issues must be tackled, and the perception that it is culturally acceptable for some young people to routinely possess and use weapons is unacceptable.

Early Intervention Youth Fund (EYIF) & Gangs and Violence;

74. Through the seven Community Safety Partnerships (CSP) of the West Midlands and the Gangs and Violence Commission in Birmingham, the OPCC has commissioned a range of providers delivering diversionary activities targeted at young people and communities identified within our proposal as ‘hot spots’.

75. 15 projects in Birmingham, funded by the Gangs and Violence Commission and EIYF commenced in February 2019 and a further seven projects commenced in April 2019.

76. Birmingham’s Children’s Trust, in partnership with the OPCC, has established an enhanced mentoring and diversion programme for children at risk of permanent exclusion. A number of Voluntary Community Social Enterprise (VCSE) providers have been engaged to deliver the service and referrals and starts in provision are ahead of their indicative profile.

77. An existing mentoring project aimed at gang members and those at risk managed by Safeguarding of Vulnerable Adults (SOVA), previously funded under Birmingham’s Youth Promise Plus, is benefitting from EIYF support.

78. A programme of half term (Feb-March) sports activities funded through EIYF (underspend) enabled over 3000 young people to access sporting activities in the half term with many continuing to access provision up to the end of March. Many of the providers delivering these activities are committed to working with the OPCC to extend the offer beyond current funding.

79. Schools based activities identified by the OPCC schools partnership manager have seen a number of innovative projects supported. Further EIYF (underspend) has enabled several projects delivery in the current year.

EIYF & G&V Projects

Many of these are already up and running and will be delivering over peak time periods including summer break:

Compass Support	Castle Vale / Erdington
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The Precious Trust	City Wide - Girls
First Class Legacy	Ladywood
ACT CIC	NW Birmingham
Envision	Hot Spot Area - Schools
Continental Star	Aston / Nechells / Perry Barr
DATS TV	Hotspot areas
Lords Taverners	Ladywood and Erdington
Eurosum	Hot Spot Areas - Somali Community
ACP Group	Sparkbrook
Dream Chaser	Hot Spot areas
Titan Partnership	NW Birmingham
Mount Zion	Aston Nechells
Peacemakers	Hot Spot areas
Snow Camp	Hot Spots

Vulnerability

County lines headlines

80. Nationally there are around 2,000 county lines recorded, with the Metropolitan Police being the highest exporting area for county lines. The West Midlands is assessed as being the second highest with WMP representing 9% of the 2000 lines recorded.¹

81. Between 13th to 20th May 2019, a National County Lines Intensification week took place whereby police and partners coordinated activity across the 4 P strands (Prevent, Pursue, Protect, and Prepare). National results indicate 24 deal lines were identified, over £270,000 were seized, 640 arrests made, 770 premises visited and over 355 vulnerable juveniles and 580 vulnerable adults engaged. Nearly 5,000 Class A deals were recovered, 97 bladed weapons, 11 firearms and 30 other weapons seized.

82. The West Midlands region saw its most successful county lines intensification week with a high level of activity taking place which resulted in:

- 5 deal lines identified and £33,000 cash seized
- over 70 arrests made

¹ NCA County Lines: Drug Supply, Vulnerability & Harm 2018

- 49 vulnerable juveniles and 19 vulnerable adults engaged with but significantly, a further 29 vulnerable people identified. WMP safeguard all vulnerable adults and juveniles along with partners. Missing persons upon return are debriefed and any safeguarding requirements put in place including appropriate referrals to the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).
- 50 'cuckooed'² addresses were visited and over 700 deals of Class A were recovered worth almost £84,000.
- 11 weapons taken out of circulation including a Taser.
- 1 prison debrief completed which has enriched the current intelligence picture.
- West Midlands based missing children found in Warwickshire and a deal line seized.

83. Organised Crime Groups (OCGs) and Urban Street Gangs (USGs) are known to control and run many of the lines that originate from the West Midlands; with their reputation and use of violence being a factor in threatening smaller, local dealers. This allows OCGs and USGs to perpetuate their criminal activity more readily both inside and outside of the West Midlands.

84. Whilst reporting suggests that the threat and actual use of violence is regularly used within county line groups, the true extent of this issue remains an intelligence gap. It is assessed that in some areas, violence is also taking place as a result of tensions between competing lines, particularly those which are linked to USGs and OCGs. The true extent of this issue is unknown as it is difficult to define those crimes which are linked to county lines as opposed to normal criminal or gang related activity.

85. It is assessed that vulnerable adults, frequently those who are drug dependant, are regularly exploited by county lines offenders, albeit the true extent of this issue represents an intelligence gap. These victims are primarily being used to 'cuckoo', with their home addresses being overtaken in order to sell drugs. These individuals will often be given drugs initially to comply and then become indebted to those running the line. This is assessed to regularly involve violence and intimidation.

86. The West Midlands region sees the exploitation of young people including those looked after in care, often between the ages of 15 to 17 years. This includes both local authority children and those who are in private establishments who often go missing in order to 'run a line'. Reporting suggests West Midlands missing people are often trafficked across

² Cuckooed premises are where vulnerable people are used and county lines offenders take over their home addresses.

the country in order to sell drugs to local drug users, often hundreds of miles away from their home address. Missing children also are known to sit in 'cockooed' addresses to sell or guard drugs, which is a trend reflected nationally.

87. The majority of missing children do not want to engage with police when they return home and many state they have been at a friend's whilst missing and do not disclose anything further. When any debrief takes place, safeguarding measures are considered alongside any appropriate referral to MASH. Whilst it is assessed that missing children are suspected to be involved in county lines activity, the true extent of this remains a key intelligence gap and this is a trend reflected nationally.
88. In terms of the recruitment of these vulnerable children, whilst less understood, reporting suggests that 'exploited facilitators' are used to cross many county lines to seek out further vulnerable children, targeting schools, colleges, pupil referral units and those who have been excluded from education. This presents a challenge as the line between victim and offender becomes less distinguishable.
89. A tentative emerging theme suggests that children are no longer moved from the exporting area, such as within inner cities in Birmingham, Wolverhampton and Coventry, but are starting to be recruited from within the importing town, an example being Birmingham based criminals recruiting in a town in Staffordshire. This is consistent with the national trend.

Overview of Prevent / Protect/Prepare/ Pursue work (4P) undertaken by WMROCU

90. The WMROCU are undertaking analysis to identify the regional geographic hotspots for county lines activity. The analysis seeks to understand the identified county lines originating from specific areas such as Birmingham, Wolverhampton and Coventry. This will provide enhanced understanding in terms of those involved, both vulnerable victims and offenders, as well as ultimately assessing the threat, risk and harm posed by a line. The aim is to guide intervention, prevention and safeguarding activity as well as enforcement where appropriate.
91. WMROCU undertake daily research of all missing children within the region to establish any possible connection to county lines. Missing children data is analysed in order to help establish their location; but also to understand where they may have been taken, via what route, and whom may be controlling them. This work is shared with WMP to better understand the risk and safeguard the missing child sooner through joint work with the dedicated Locate Team.

92. There is daily contact with other police forces around safeguarding opportunities identified from the coordination and intelligence sharing nationally. In addition, the ROCU also undertake National Referral Mechanism (NRM) work with the NCA to identify intelligence identification for safeguarding. For example, if missing people are identified from the west midlands, there would be contact between forces to share the wider intelligence to assist with disruption and safeguarding.
93. Reporting indicates that vulnerable victims are often attracted by the lifestyle, regularly depicted on social media, which glamorise county lines and suggest an associated level of material wealth. In response, WMP's Force CID Prevent team oversee operation 'telecast' which reviews gang based videos to identify those involved for early intervention and prevention.
94. In terms of Prepare activity, the Regional County Lines Coordinator (based within the ROCU), has delivered a number of presentations to educational establishments including schools and Pupil Referral Units to raise awareness of county lines, highlight the associated vulnerabilities and also encourage reporting. WMP local neighbourhood officers have also delivered a best practice schools input into secondary schools and pupil referral units to raise awareness of county lines, which was received positively.
95. Presentations have also been given to raise awareness amongst various partner agencies including NHS staff, the Crown Prosecution Service, Community Safety Partnerships and other law enforcement agencies. Due to the role of transport in facilitating county lines activity, the travel routes commonly associated with regional county lines activity have been targeted in partnership with British Transport Police. Awareness presentations have also been delivered to hire car companies and the National Express Coach Service. The primary aim is to improve intelligence collection and dissemination of information on county lines nominals that may be hiring cars or using coaches.
96. In relation to the Pursue strand, the West Midlands has led on a landmark investigation into Birmingham male who was jailed for 14 years after admitting running a narcotics supply chain and trafficking two boys, plus a girl, to deal on his behalf in 'cuckooed' drugs dens in Lincoln. This was a county lines drug network in which children as young as 14 were being exploited to deal crack cocaine and heroin. It is the first time in UK legal history a police force has secured child trafficking convictions under the Modern Slavery Act as part of a county lines operation.

97. Whilst WMROCU and WMP continue to develop their understanding of county lines activity, there remain a number of identified intelligence gaps which have been detailed throughout this report, particularly the true scale of county lines operations in the region.

98. In the forthcoming period, ROCU will focus on the following priorities to further drive understanding of county lines activity:

- Further understand the national picture concerning county lines being exported and imported in to the West Midlands region
- Explore collaboration opportunities via tasking and coordination to bring together practitioners from across the region and share best practise
- Continue to focus on increasing regional reporting
- Maximise safeguarding and investigative opportunities
- Engage with partners for opportunities to access partnership data

Author(s): **Supt Phil Dolby and Principle Analyst**

Job Title: **SRO – Project: GUARDIAN and ROCU**