



Strategic Policing and Crime Board

Tuesday 17 November 2020

Emergency Police and Crime Plan Priority: Objective 3: Leading and supporting a partnership response to the national emergency

Emergency Police and Crime Plan Priority: Objective 4: Ensure the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner does all it can to effectively respond to the national emergency, including commissioning services that mitigate its effect and support the return to normality

Presented by:
Alethea Fuller, Deputy Chief Executive

Background

1. The purpose of this report is to provide members of the Strategic Police and Crime Board with an update and overview of the OPCC response to objectives 3 and 4 in the new emergency chapter of the Police and Crime plan and set out progress against the activities within the chapter.
2. It is helpful to remind ourselves of some of the areas that the PCC is currently leading on, including developments that are innovative, while working in partnership and/or ensuring that programmes are community led or involve people with lived experience. This work is detailed in the PCC's Police and Crime Plan [Your Police Your Priorities](#) and also in the [Emergency Chapter](#) which was developed as a response to the Covid-19 pandemic.
3. This report gives a snapshot of some the work that has been taking place, highlighting key areas of work that have progressed since the last report to Board and will take each of the objectives in turn.

Objective 3: Leading and supporting a partnership response to the national emergency

4. The PCC chairs the Local Criminal Justice Board which brings together key criminal justice stakeholders from the region; funds the 7 Community Safety Partnerships and chairs the West Midlands Community Safety Partnership, allocates funding to the 7 Youth Offending Teams; has led the urgent strategic criminal justice response to Covid-19 (eg early prison release packages and instigating and leading the public health domestic abuse campaign [#NoExcuseForAbuse](#) is accountable for delivery of support services for victims of crime, the Violence Reduction Unit and its funding which

traverses early intervention at infancy all the way up to adulthood and parent support, and is represented on various strategic boards around reforms to youth justice, early help and children's services. One of the PCC's flagship policies is the PCC's 8 point approach for a harm reduction drug policy – vital to reducing cost, reducing crime and reducing harm from drugs.

5. Intervention and prevention has remained a priority for the PCC throughout his term of office, including the development and implementation of the Commission on Gangs and Violence (a nationally leading programme of community engagement, research, and project delivery aimed at prevention, education, highlighting disproportionality and reducing reoffending), the delivery of domestic abuse perpetrator programmes, the delivery of urgent response government funds around early intervention for youth crime, the delivery of the Violence Reduction Unit (including projects around tackling domestic violence, leveraging peer support in schools, providing routes of escape to those in hospital with violently inflicted wounds, kick starting new place-based hubs bringing together partners to tackle the social drivers of crime, and other projects aimed at supporting young people in challenging life circumstances away from crime) and supporting partners in these efforts such as grant bid support for organisations applying for funding.

Criminal Justice

6. The OPCC has worked with WMP and wider partners such as the Crown Prosecution Service to identify any missed opportunities for out of court disposals. This has involved WMP reviewing cases already sent to CPS. This work featured as a key strand within the Criminal Justice Recovery Group which is chaired by the Deputy PCC and tackles the immediate issues facing the Criminal Justice system from COVID, but also aims to identify opportunities and new ways of working that have emerged under COVID.
7. We are working with West Midlands Police to increase the use of Out of Court Disposals and diversion opportunities such as the New Chance programme for female offenders. To support this work, the OPCC is developing a wider intervention and prevention strategy, with the proposed development of a multi-agency Diversion Hub. The Diversion hub aims to reduce reoffending, embed a culture across the criminal justice system of diversion first and become a centre of excellence to identify new ways of tackling reoffending and implementing new diversion opportunities.

Early Release Prison Package

8. The PCC has worked with external providers to identify any spare capacity within our commissioned providers in order to provide additional support for those leaving prison during the height of the pandemic and spring lockdown period. The aim was to reduce reoffending and therefore the cost to the wider system and taxpayer. Work has continued to identify ways of supporting continuity of care.
9. The OPCC is working with West Midlands Police and Probation partners to respond to the HMICFRS recommendations on Offender Management. The recommendations were as follows:

Chief Constables, National Probation Service Divisional Directors and Community Rehabilitation Company Chief Executive Officers should:

- Define their IOM operating model and produce practice guidance that sets out clearly what is required by each agency at every stage of the IOM supervision process.
- Improve the quality and accuracy of recording in IOM cases, in particular, the activity relating to public protection
- Analyse training needs and ensure that all staff receive sufficient training to enable them to fulfil their duties. Training in public protection, safeguarding children and working with vulnerable adults should be prioritised.
- Ensure that service users are kept informed, as much as possible, about the benefits of inclusion in IOM, the support available and the monitoring and information sharing ramifications of IOM supervision.

10. From early discussions and comparison of work across WMP and the National Probation Service, work to improve Integrated Offender Management would be better aligned across the criminal justice system to avoid duplication and maximise the impact on offenders and reducing reoffending. A proposed steering group would bring partners together to develop a whole system approach to IOM. The group's focus of work could include the following:

- Gap analysis
- Identify opportunities for consistency across local authority areas
- Pathway identification
- Identify further opportunities to reduce duplication across the system

11. The governance for this work will sit with the West Midlands Community Safety Partnership, chaired by the Deputy PCC.

Regional Criminal Justice

12. Our regional response to the recovery of the criminal justice system has continued at pace. The Commissioner chaired a Regional Criminal Justice Collaboration Forum meeting on 14th October and the Deputy Commissioner has continued to hold a bi-weekly Regional CJS Recovery Task and Finish group meetings throughout the month. Both meetings have been focused on working with our CJS partners to understand how the system is recovering and issues which are ongoing or arising as a result of CoVID-19. Video Remand Hearings (VRH) have been a significant focus for the region this month, given the impact they have had on policing, both in terms of the cost of supporting the hearings from custody blocks and the impact they have had on available cell space.

13. The Regional Co-Commissioning working group, chaired by Regional Probation Director met on 21st October. For this meeting, a mapping exercise was completed, which looked to identify what services are commissioned by each service across the region. This will assist in identifying any gaps across the wider region in commissioned services across reducing offending, reoffending and victims and witness services. Further work is underway to drill down into more detail for some of the commissioning

areas and will further enhance our understanding of the opportunities to commission services as a region.

Changes to the National Probation Service

14. In July 2018, the Ministry of Justice announced it would cut short the contracts of private Community Rehabilitation Companies and remodel probation, intending to keep a public/private split and CRCs continuing to supervise low and medium risk offenders. However, due to pressure from Chief Probation Inspector Dame Glenys Stacey and various other sectors, the MoJ announced in May 2019 that the NPS would be responsible for all offender management with CRC successor organisations able to bid to deliver unpaid work and accredited programmes.
15. In June 2020, Justice Secretary Robert Buckland announced the end of the Transforming Rehabilitation programme. The change to the MoJ's plan was attributed to COVID-19 and that the planned outsourcing of unpaid work and accredited programmes would be cancelled with responsibility for these returning to the public probation service. Staff working for the current Community Rehabilitation Companies (CRCs) would be able to transfer to the National Probation Service or to organisations delivering resettlement services via the Dynamic Framework. This signals a return to a wholly public sector probation service.
16. The Dynamic Purchasing Framework was opened for registration shortly after with different categories for interest and will be the main opportunity for voluntary organisations of all sizes to deliver services through the probation system.
17. In the West Midlands region, we have been working closely with our Regional Director for NPS. The regionalisation of probation was one of the reasons that we developed a regional tier of governance for Criminal Justice in autumn 2019. This forum brings together our CJS partners who primarily have a regional footprint, the four police forces and PCCs. The forum has been our integral response to COVID-19, reducing duplication across the region and ensuring a joined up response to the considerable backlog that we are still facing across the Criminal Justice System. Under the governance of this forum, we have also developed a co-commissioning working group, to join up on commissioning work across the region and we have developed our first piece of co-commissioning with an out of court disposal offer for anger and anxiety driven criminality. This will be delivered across the four police force areas and is co-funded by NPS, demonstrating their ambition to focus on issues upstream and support our regional way of working.
18. The commissioning process for the Dynamic Framework is now underway. We have worked closely with the NPS to provide support for this process, with representatives from across the four OPCCs supporting in three out of the four 'lots'.
 - Education, Training and Enterprise
 - Accommodation
 - Wellbeing
 - Women's services

19. PCCs will also be able to draw providers from the Dynamic Framework when it is complete after June 2021.

Road Safety

20. Significant progress has been made regarding the office's response to the government white paper [Gear Change](#). A letter – outlining in detail the rationale underlining our campaign to devolve powers to enforce against minor moving traffic offences to the Combined Authority as well as our plan to make these new responsibilities workable – has been formalised and is ready to present to decision makers in the Department for Transport and the Home Office. We are working closely with partners at West Midlands Police, the Combined Authority, the Local Government, Highways England, and the NPCC toward the furtherance of this endeavour, which, if successful, we believe will greatly enhance all efforts to reduce congestion and improve safety on our roads.
21. In collaboration with West Midlands Police, the office has submitted a response to the Department for Transport's roads policing review (call for evidence). The review has presented a great opportunity to push policies and approaches that have worked well in our region onto the national stage. The excellent work of the Road Harm Prevention Team and MARSO teams have been highlighted, as has the success of Operation Zig Zag.

Fraud Symposium

22. On the 19th of October the West Midlands PCC, in partnership with the Association of PCCs, hosted the National Online Fraud Symposium. The purpose of the symposium was to launch our report, authored by BCU, which can be found [here](#). The report was written in light of a series of workshops which took place in February of this year at the National Fraud Summit, which we hosted, again, with the APCC. Key individuals from across the fraud prevention space attended these workshops, such as the Chair of the Credit Industry Fraud Avoidance System (CIFAS), numerous PCCs, and representatives from across policing, trading standards and the wider private sector. The report is therefore a result of input on a cross sector basis and of varying levels of seniority from across these different sectors. It is this mixture of views that have created the 15 recommendations within the report.
23. The Symposium on the 19th of October was structured into two sections. A morning of speakers and an afternoon of discussions. In the morning we heard from speakers who have been leading the way in fraud prevention. These included: Waheed Saleem (WM DPCC), Bob Wigley (Chair of UK Finance), James Thomson (the Deputy Fraud Portfolio holder at the APCC and Chair of the CoL Police Authority Board), Anthony Stansfeld (Fraud portfolio chair at the APCC and Thames Valley PCC). We also heard from a woman who had been victim of a romance fraud and learned about the devastating impact that this type of fraud can have. She pressed home the importance of the work we are trying to achieve here.
24. In the afternoon we broke up into three different discussion groups which were recorded over Zoom. These discussion groups were chaired by officers from West Midlands OPCC. The groups worked through the recommendations within the report to discern three things for each recommendation:

- To gain attendees views on the recommendations within the report (were they an accurate representation of the original attendee's thoughts)
 - Establish what needs to happen to take the recommendation forward?
 - Who needs to ultimately own each recommendation going forward?
25. The ambition was to come away from the discussion groups with a clear understanding of who from the symposium would be able to support the work moving forward and be able to assist us with lobbying. From here we would be able to establish an action plan that could be updated against at the next fraud symposium. Sadly there was not the appetite for this in the groups. The predominant message was that ownership needed to be taken from the top. Both politicians and senior individuals within the public and private sectors needed to pay this attention and provide it strategy. We have taken this away and developed a lobbying strategy.
26. The next steps for this piece of work are to establish an action plan in partnership with the APCC to do three things:
- Establish where that recommendation is in terms of how close it is to being implemented
 - Establish what tangible next steps need to be implemented to take the recommendation forward
 - State which stakeholder needs to own that recommendation. Such as: NPCC, APCC, College of Policing, Home Office etc.
27. Once we have this action plan established our view is to take this to another symposium which we will host in the New Year. At this symposium we will specifically request that the Securities Minister attends so that they can exhibit a 'you said, we did' in light of the report. We can then also present our action plan at this symposium and update the forum. This symposium will also be a good opportunity to make a call to all PCCs to include fraud in their new Police and Crime plans for the new term of office.

Heroin and Crack Action Areas

28. In the Serious Violence Strategy, published in April 2018, drug markets were identified as one of the main drivers of the recent increases in serious violence. A commitment was therefore made to build on activity already underway and provide funding to support delivery of Heroin and Crack Action Areas (HACAAs). The HACAAs would provide local partners and communities with the space to consider their response to a variety of public health issues, particularly around problematic heroin and crack use, the links to serious violence and the increase in drug-related deaths.
29. The Serious Violence Strategy is a priority of the Home Secretary who is keen that the commitments within it are taken forward as quickly as possible in order to address the crime and health impacts of heroin and crack cocaine.
30. The West Midlands was awarded £70,000 to co-ordinate activity across the West Midlands. The beneficiaries of the funding would be those misusing heroin and crack cocaine, together with local health services and police forces due to lower costs from lower health and crime harms. The wider community would also benefit from reductions in crime and anti-social behaviour/disorder associated with drug use.

31. In terms of impacts, the funding would:
- bring local partners together (e.g. local authority, health, policing and probation) to reduce heroin and crack use and offending in their area;
 - ensure that there were coordinated pathways available to provide appropriate support to users;
 - help forces in the region to understand the drivers of the crack increase;
 - ensure that solutions were provided to areas and that local partners were committed to actions and held to account; and
 - ensure the evaluation of the impacts of different initiatives to support other areas with decisions on their local initiatives
32. The outcomes would be lower crime and health harms, leading to lower costs for local health and police services.
33. Stage one of delivery since July, has been all about engaging with partners and gaining feedback from them. We wanted to make sure that our action plan and any interventions we take are informed by the views of partners in each locality. To this end, we have held workshops with partners across the region, grouped by local police force area with West Midlands split into 2 sessions due to size. In addition to drug service providers, commissioners and police, we have had representatives from homeless charities, community safety teams and others whose work may be relevant to the goals of this project. These sessions have been a forum in which we have invited partners to offer their thoughts on the current state of heroin and crack use in their areas, and the issues that come with this. We have been able to gain feedback on what they think would be of most benefit, when it comes to the action plan for our HACAA project.
34. Stage 2 of the project is now in progress which is about compiling the main themes from the workshops and developing initiatives that will feature in the action plan. These include a seminar on Naloxone to encourage first responders to carry this across the region, a county lines pilot (in conjunction with WMROCU) where we join up an enforcement operation with multi-agency wraparound support for users, and work to understand current commissioning and collaborative opportunities across the region in respect of prison in-reach and resettlement services.
35. In addition to these, we have also been progressing separate pieces of work that will meet the HACAA objectives of understanding the scale of the problem and hopefully benefit all partners. Analysts at WMROCU are in the process of producing an in depth drugs market analysis across the whole region. This will focus on crime data, in terms of looking into the footprint of OCGs in the region and high level offenders in each region, but also health data and provide us an insight into particular hotspot areas e.g. areas where ambulances have been called out for overdoses, numbers of naloxone administrations etc. This information should be of real value to partners and allow them to target and tailor the interventions they provide. We have also commissioned a lived experience research piece from a user involvement organisation which will start this month. A key theme from the workshops is that we need the user voice heard in the project. The provider will get user views across a range of issues, exploring early intervention and prevention, harm reduction approaches and experiences with county

lines. Again, we hope this can provide us great insight into the issues and inform the actions of partners going forward.

36. We have drawn up a specification for research with service user groups. A key theme that has emerged from our workshops is that we need to use the expertise of service users themselves. They are the experts on these issues and so we need to tap into this. With this research, we hope to hold workshops with user groups across the regions to get their views on these issues. Topics we want to cover include: user views on heroin / crack treatment, why crack users may not be as engaged in services as opioid users, their experiences with OCGs. Again, we hope this can provide us great insight into the issues and inform the actions of partners going forward.
37. A steering group has been established, led by Public Health England, with regards to the Drugs Early Warning system in Birmingham. This system, another of the Commissioner's eight recommendations, has been set up for a while now. It allows for WMP, drug service providers and other colleagues to receive updates on any new drugs that may be causing harm in local markets. The ability to do this is highly important, especially when a new substance has entered the markets that is causing serious health implications for users. In this new steering group, we are working on refining this protocol to ensure that information is shared as quickly as possible. If the new plans are put into place, we will have a system in which WMP officers can bring substances to the City Hospital laboratory, get them tested and send out this information within a couple of hours. With this approach, we are aiming to emulate good practice from Greater Manchester Police.
38. Progress reports will be brought back to board members on a quarterly basis.

Domestic Abuse

39. We are also in the process of relaunching the [#NoExcuseForAbuse](#) campaign to ensure that victims know support services are available to them at all times.
40. DA demand continues to rise and the second lockdown brings with it additional challenges. Currently WMP are seeing a year on year increase of 37% in reports of domestic abuse. In terms of the services we commission, staff in the teams are feeling the impact of ongoing restrictions, low morale and feelings of anxiety have meant some staff are now requesting to work from home instead of in the office. Commissioned services have also reported higher sickness levels and staff having to self-isolate is also becoming an issue for some. Despite this, services have continued to deliver and we continue to monitor demand as we move through the pandemic and support the agencies and partners to work through their business continuity plans.
41. In relation to Domestic Abuse, specifically in September 2020 an investigative pilot began which has shifted 41 police officer in PPU from targeting low risk offences towards medium and high risk meaning low risk offenders will no longer be voluntarily interviewed and rather than processing through an investigation; the route is often to discuss the matter with both parties or to proceed to a conditional caution and signposting to diversionary activity for offenders and support for victims. The pilot is ongoing, and we will continue to work with WMP and providers to monitor its impact.

Local Criminal Justice Board: Women and Girls Delivery Group

42. The OPCC held the third meeting of the Women and Girls Delivery group, the gender-specific subgroup of the LCJB. At the meeting the terms of reference were reviewed and it was decided that the girls element of this work should take place in a separate task and finish group to feed into the group that focuses on adult women to be most effective and impactful. This is because work in the girl's space nationally is much further behind that of women and would require slightly different objectives and representation including YOS and children's services.
43. The group is continuing to scope the provision for women in the criminal justice system across the West Midlands to assess where the gaps are and inform the focus of the group and any need for commissioning of services in the region. The Women's Justice Partnership will be bidding for the West Midlands into the Ministry of Justice fund for reducing offending amongst females and will update the group accordingly. National Probation Services and West Midlands Combined Authority representatives will be responding to the government consultation on the Comprehensive Spending Review on behalf of the group for services for women and girls in the CJS and on the need to support the work being done in the West Midlands to reduce women's imprisonment and achieve more positive outcomes for women and their families.

Vulnerable Victims Review

44. The [Vulnerable Victims Review](#) was finalised in the first week of September and has now been published. Recommendations for this review have been drawn up in collaboration with the Force Domestic Abuse, Sexual Assault and Abuse and Stalking and Harassment leads, and will sit within the exploitation board structure for oversight and delivery. The report reviews the services provided by the criminal justice system to victims of crime in the West Midlands and took first hand evidence from victims. It has brought to light a number of ways in which the current services could be improved to ensure that victims of crime feel empowered to come forward, report crimes and get the right support they need. The review also looked at the response victims received from the police.

Victims Funding Strategy

45. The Government has committed to developing a Victims Funding Strategy after hearing the frustrations of the voluntary and community sector at the [Prime Minister's virtual summit on Hidden Harms](#).
46. The Summit raised issues in relation to victim services funding which were amplified by COVID-19 contingency funding which brought to light the complexities which exist across government departments in respect of how the voluntary sector is funded to deliver support services to victims. The strategy will consider how to place the support sector on a more sustainable footing, underpinned by a new delivery model.
47. It is being proposed that the Victims Funding Strategy will fall into three themes:
 - Objectives and Outcomes – this is about ensuring that there is a shared understanding of what outcomes expected from the services which are commission. It is also about

ensuring government is able to understand the impact of investment in the sector, through collecting and evaluating data in a smart and effective way.

- Quality Commissioning – this is about better understanding the needs of victims and ensuring that the right services are commissioned that cater to the needs of all victims, regardless of who they are or where they are. It's also about ensuring that the support made available to victims is seamless and holistic.
- Funding Mechanisms - this is about tackling the current complexity of the funding landscape, recognising that funding is currently distributed in a number of ways from different pots across government. Government are keen to create a landscape which is stable and enables the sector to focus on the delivery of services and challenges them to improve.

48. All PCC offices have been asked to contribute to the development of this strategy and share their views with the Home Office. The Victims Team will be submitting their response.

Regional Hate Crime Support Service

49. The Victims Team have been working with voluntary and public sector parties in order to develop a West Midlands support service for victims of Hate Crime. They are currently drafting a specification for a Regional Hate Crime Support Service, which will set out the key deliverables for a highly specialised service for victims living in the West Midlands.

50. The specification has been informed by feedback from partners and stakeholders who attended the OPCC Hate Crime Symposium, held in June 2020, and through ongoing work as part of the OPCC Hate Crime Working Group.

51. The service will be commissioned to provide the following elements of support:

- An initial assessment (within 4 days of a crime being reported) which will determine the needs of the victim following the crime being committed.
- Specialist support and advocacy including trauma-informed emotional support to help victims cope and recover.
- Applicants are to demonstrate how they will meet the following obligations:
- Have referral mechanisms into third party reporting centres if the commissioned service is not a third party reporting centre
- Reporting centres are to provide a safe space for victims to report
- Deliver awareness raising workshops in the community

52. Although the aim is to ensure all victims in the 7 Local Authorities across the West Midlands can access support, we recognise that not all individuals who experience a hate crime will feel it necessary to access support or report a crime. Victims will share the same challenges to address the harm caused but may be able to overcome this without accessing external support mechanisms. Once the specification is finalised, information will be published on the OPCC website.

Objective 4: Ensure the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner does all it can to effectively respond to the national emergency, including commissioning services that mitigate its effect and support the return to normality

53. This section of the report updates members on some of the recent services that have been commissioned. It is important to remember that this is just looking at some of the highlights and does not take into the consideration the significant budgets for which the PCC is held accountable, including the Community Safety Budget, the Violence Reduction Unit, Victims Fund, External Commissioning Budget, Safer Streets Fund and the Community Initiative Fund – which equates to £18million. This again presents a snapshot of the significant services commissioned across the West Midlands.

Community Initiative Fund

54. The Community Initiative Fund (CIF) was launched in May 2020 to help organisations who offer support to the community during the COVID-19 crisis, for example vulnerable, homeless and elderly people who have become extremely isolated and in need of support and help following the lockdown.

55. The funding of CIF comes from items seized from criminals under the Proceeds of Crime Act and will target those organisations that offer support to people whose lives have been made harder by COVID-19. In previous years the seized money has been used to fund the Active Citizens Fund (ACF) but in 2020/21 the decision was made to support CIF to support organisations through COVID-19.

56. In operating to the CIF scheme it is recognised the harms from the pandemic will be disproportionately felt in areas where there is greater levels of economic, social and health inequalities and deprivation. West Midlands Police have identified 19 Impact areas and priority will be given to CIF applicants where their activity will benefit citizens within these 19 Impact areas. Guidance is provided on the OPCC’s website in the operation of the scheme and the application process for funding.

57. Funding will be distributed over 4 tranches throughout the current financial year. To date three tranches have taken place, with CIF supporting 92 projects across the West Midlands at a total value of £313k. There is also a tranche to take place in January 2021 to allocate a further £57k.

58. A scrutiny panel decides which projects should be supported through CIF. The panel includes representation from the OPCC and the Force.

New Chance

59. New Chance is a specialist project for women over 18 who have been arrested and identified by West Midlands Police as someone who would benefit from extra support. The New Chance project diverts female offenders away from the Criminal Justice System at an early stage and recognises the variety of vulnerabilities these women may be facing. This project was rolled out across the West Midlands in April 2020.

60. Women can be referred to New Chance as part of a conditional caution or community resolution and can also be voluntarily referred if they are charged or the case is NFA’d.

New Chance also accepts referrals for victims of domestic abuse in certain circumstances, there has been a recent effort to increase referrals for 18-25 year olds to provide support as they 'transition to adulthood' and there is work being undertaken to establish a referral pathway from MARAC.

61. Women are referred directly from the Police for support as a diversion away from the court system. It enables women to address the reasons for the offence in a safe environment, meaning they avoid a damaging criminal record and receive the support they need to live a life away from crime. West Midlands Police will also try and refer as many women as possible from the case backlog caused by the Covid-19 pandemic and the providers have accepted referrals for women released early from prison due to the pandemic – the providers work together with the OPCC and WMP to support as many women as possible and divert them away from the CJS.
62. New referral pathways are also being explored such as with local NHSE liaison and diversion teams into the programme to ensure the New Chance programme can offer this support to women and divert them as early as possible away from the CJS.
63. Its development has been guided by the "Whole System Approach" for female offenders (Ministry of Justice, November 2015) recognising the need for a multi-disciplinary approach to meet the needs of these offenders who are often from a vulnerable section of the population. Support is also based on the nine offending pathways for female offenders. It is delivered by caseworkers either at a women's centre or in the community. Women can be visited at home or met in the custody suite. We support women with various issues, ranging from mental health and personality disorder, substance misuse, child safeguarding involvement, past trauma such as abuse or rape, homelessness or domestic abuse.
64. The New Chance programme is currently delivered in Birmingham by Anawim, and in Dudley and Sandwell by Black Country Women's Aid. The PCC has increased funding for these areas by £80,000 in total and provided an additional £90,000 for this programme to be delivered in Solihull and Coventry by Accord Housing Association Ltd. and in Walsall and Wolverhampton by Changing Lives. In total, the PCC is providing £270,000 of funding for New Chance to be delivered across all seven boroughs in the West Midlands this financial year.
65. By being referred to the project, women will not receive a criminal record which will have an impact on the rest of their lives. Instead, they will receive support from a dedicated caseworker who will make a plan with them and identify what they need and if they need to engage with specialist services, to turn their lives around and reduce the number of victims of crime.
66. New Chance offers one-to-one support, group work, advocacy with other agencies or professionals, provision of information and advice. The providers are trauma-informed and are especially equipped to deliver interventions around trauma, safety, emotional resilience and interpersonal skills. Each woman comes with a different set of experiences and challenges and so each support plan is uniquely built around that woman.
67. During appointments with New Chance workers, it is common for clients to disclose vast amounts of trauma including childhood abuse, domestic abuse, substance

misuse, financial difficulties and severe mental health issues. For example, between 1st October 2019 and 31st December 2019 one provider stated that 80% of women in the New Chance programme had disclosed victimisation; 89% of these women experienced domestic abuse, 20% had experienced sexual violence, and 10% had experienced childhood sexual abuse. New Chance is also often the first time clients disclose about trauma they experienced in the past or are experiencing at present.

68. Since August, the OPCC has held Covid-19 continuity meetings with providers and WMP on a monthly basis, as well as continuing with the usual quarterly performance monitoring meetings. There has been a recent effort to increase referrals for 18-25 year olds to provide support as they 'transition to adulthood' and there is work being undertaken to establish a referral pathway from MARAC. We will also be looking as to how more sex workers are able to access the service. WMP has provided details of improved performance across OOCd, and in particular those for female offenders, in October. During October 905 offences were charged and WMP will be looking at the opportunities within them which may have been better served for an OOCd and referral to New Chance for female offenders.
69. In August, the University of Birmingham concluded its evaluation to evidence the effectiveness and impact of this programme which demonstrated that that reoffending amongst New Chance service users with mental health issues was 35-37% lower and those who had substance misuse issues identified had a 51-55% decrease in reoffending. The programme has also received a special commendation from the Howard League for Penal Reform in their 2020 Community Awards.

Cranstoun Arrest Referral Service

70. The Cranstoun Arrest Referral Service (CARS) has been commissioned by the West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner to provide a consistent service for drug and alcohol referrals across the West Midlands area. The service works closely with probation services and courts to increase the number of Alcohol Treatment Requirements (ATRs) and Drug Rehabilitation Requirements (DRRs), which are proven to reduce re-offending and tackle the drivers behind criminality. It provides wrap around support, not only helping individuals tackle the root causes of their drug and alcohol problems, but helping them to get their lives back on track through signposting for a range of services including housing and mental health support.
71. Cranstoun also ran a three month conditional caution pilot, whereby Out of court Disposal (OOCd) work on drugs and alcohol has been picked up by the arrest referral service.
72. As a result of COVID-19 and the impact on community based treatment providers we are aware that service users are not attending face to face appointments as regularly as they would have done 'pre COVID'. The CARS service is providing an opportunity for service users to engage with a Key Worker who is able to reinforce harm reduction advice, provide feedback to treatment teams and reinforce prescription collection regimes that may have changed as a result of COVID-19.
73. CARS worked alongside an officer within Perry Barr custody to facilitate a referral for a Young Person who required a referral to the Birmingham Young Person Substance

Misuse service. CARS was approached by the officer for advice regarding the referral pathways and support options for the YP. A short intervention was provided by the CARS worker and upon release from custody this individual had been referred and left custody with an appointment with his local team.

74. Cranstoun and West Midlands Police have created a downloadable app that is accessible via the police Playstore. This app allows officers to access Cranstoun's dedicated WMP webpage which stores all calendars for the services they deliver on behalf of WMP. This includes CARS, DIVERT, Conditional Caution, Alcohol and Violence and Alcohol and DVA. Feedback has been positive regarding usability.

West Midlands PRE Arrest Drug Diversion Programme - Divert

75. The West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner has commissioned a Pre-Arrest Drug Diversion scheme across the whole force area. This programme forms part of a wider diversion, prevention and intervention strategy, managed by West Midlands Police (WMP), which is aimed at reducing offending and reoffending by using a public health approach rather than a criminal justice approach.

76. With this scheme, WMP became one of only a few police forces in the UK to have such a programme available. As a result, it has received a good level of positive media attention, including a front page feature in The Times (<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/prolific-drug-users-will-no-longer-face-prosecution-3sxxmx73tq>).

77. The majority of offenders charged to court for low level drug offences, will receive a fine or custodial sentence. This punishes the individual, but is unlikely to change offending behaviour. It is also well-evidenced that short prison sentences increase the totality of an individual's offending across their criminal lifespan.

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

79. Cranstoun have developed an education programme that aims to divert drug users from longer term drug use. The Divert Programme is available to anyone (Young People and Adults) found in possession of any illicit substance.

80. The content of the programme includes:

- Drug Specific Harm Reduction Advice
- Naloxone Advice & Dispensing
- Economic & Lifestyle Impact of Drug Use
- Tailored Individual Advice & Support
- Onward Referrals to Specialist Treatment

81. In the first six weeks, Divert has received 189 referrals, including 31 young people. A more thorough evaluation will be done after 3 months.

82. Progress reports on the DIVERT programme will be brought to members on a quarterly basis.

Author: Alethea Fuller, Deputy Chief Executive, Police and Crime Commissioner, West Midlands