



Title: Crime and Performance

Presented by: Deputy Chief Constable Vanessa Jardine

Purpose of paper

1. To update members of the Strategic Policing and Crime Board on progress against the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) within West Midlands Police's (WMP) performance framework.

Context

2. The performance framework focuses on our key priorities including Serious Violence, which are in line with the new National Crime and Policing Measures.
3. Once the WM Police and Crime Commissioner's new Police and Crime Plan has been finalised, future iterations of this paper will incorporate reporting which explores force performance against priorities identified in the plan.
4. 2020/21 was a unique year and against the backdrop of the Covid-19 pandemic, the force saw reductions in volume crime including burglary and robbery, experiencing significant reductions as a direct result of the series of national lockdowns. The pandemic did however, result in an increase in vulnerability related crime including Domestic Abuse, Online Harassment and Hate Crime.
5. The pandemic presented a number of challenges for the force, particularly in terms of staffing levels, impacting on key areas of business including call handling, investigations and our engagement with partners, who suspended many key services during this time. A change in crime recording requirements around vulnerability, especially Domestic Abuse and Stalking and Harassment has also impacted on crime levels during the review period.
6. Over the last 18 months the force has implemented two new large-scale data management systems. ControlWorks and CONNECT replace legacy applications

for processing calls for service and managing cases, essentially creating an entirely new information management environment within the organisation.

7. The implementation of these new systems has resulted in some internal process changes as well as new opportunities for interrogating and interpreting data. However, as with any large scale technological transformation programme, there has also been some challenges whilst the system has fully embedded. The adoption period is now over and the force is using CONNECT and ControlWorks as part of business-as-usual.
8. The following section provides a summary of headline performance discussed at the August 2021 performance panel, the monthly oversight body, which provides scrutiny for performance in the force.

Current Performance

9. The last few months have seen significant demand challenges with record levels of emergency telephony demand. This trend is not unique to WMP and has been experienced nationally. However, it is predicted that once schools/ colleges return, demand will readjust to pre Covid-19 levels.
10. Crime has continued to increase over the first five months of this financial year with Total Recorded Crime increasing by 37% (+40,000) compared to the same period in 2019/20, pre-pandemic. These increases have been largely driven by new crime type/offence recording requirements around vulnerability, especially Domestic Abuse (DA) and Stalking and Harassment, as well as an increased awareness and propensity of reporting from the public via a wider choice of channels¹.
11. In respect of violent crime, specifically violence with injury (non domestic abuse related), all neighbourhood policing units (NPU's) are experiencing offences commensurate with, or above pre-pandemic levels, with Coventry and Birmingham city centres experiencing acute demand over the summer months, as the night-time economy returned.
12. A more detailed overview of performance in a number of key categories are discussed below:

Telephony Demand (999, 101 and Online)

13. Following the lifting of Covid-19 restrictions in July, the West Midlands has seen a significant increase in demand, a trend reflected nationally. This has translated to an increase in calls for service, as measured by volumes of 999 and 101 calls, as well as live chat, that have regularly passed 6000 records a day. July 2021 saw the force receive 77,276 calls, almost 2500 more than the previous highest month on record (July 2018). The last four months have also been the first time more calls were received on the emergency rather than the non-emergency channel.

¹ This was one of the findings of a recently conclude piece of work, undertaken by Crest Advisory, to provide WMP with additional insight into what's driving increases in domestic abuse demand and to set out recommendations for managing that demand more effectively.

14. This level of demand has placed pressure on service levels in terms of timeliness of answering these demand channels. The priority is always to answer emergency calls and resource is dynamically moved to ensure this channel is prioritised. However, this resulted in wait times for 101 and live chat increasing during the review period. The unprecedented demand recorded for the force resulted in service levels for 999 call answering reducing from an average of 10 seconds, down to 25 seconds. Congruently, 101 calls took on average 13 mins 27 seconds compared to the normal average of 5 minutes. To manage these challenges, priority decisions were taken to deploy additional resource into Force Contact, resulting in improved performance against call answering across the 101 and 999 channels.
15. West Midlands call handlers continue to answer emergency, non emergency calls as well as live chat, with approximately 75% of all contact being dealt with by Force Contact with an appropriate resolution.
16. July saw a peak for non-emergency demand being dealt with via our digital channels, with only 59% of non-emergency demand handled via telephony. This has reduced from 92% in 2018 and is showing a positive trajectory towards our ambition of 55%. The Live Chat channel represented 36% of this demand, with July seeing an average of 712 chats per day. During the hours when our automated chatbot Bob-E was active, 30% of chat demand was deflected away from a call handler.

Responding to Demand (P1/2 Response Times)

17. Linked to the increase in calls for service, July 2021 saw a record number of logs initially graded as P1 (Immediate response). The average response time for P1 incidents increased to 17 minutes during July, an increase of 2 mins compared to the average. August and early September have seen response times improve due to a reduction in demand and similar to last year, it is expected that this will continue during the winter period. A similar picture was seen with our P2 (Priority response) log picture, albeit a smaller percentage increase versus the peak of August last year.

Improving Investigations

18. The force monitors a number of performance measures aimed at understanding the effectiveness of the force's investigative processes including the volume of positive investigative outcomes.
19. Maintaining the focus in this space is a priority for the force to ensure the victims of crime are at the very heart of everything we do. We continue to make strides in key areas to create a strong investigative base including a good standard of call handling, underpinned by THRIVE (which identifies and mitigates cases where vulnerability and safeguarding needs exist), positive crime data integrity, embedding of ControlWorks and key resource intensification in this area.

20. The force is currently undertaking a programme of activity to improve our ability to provide a quality service to victims of crime, responding to the increasing levels of vulnerability and manage the increasing complexity of our investigations. The three pillars are:
 - i. Investment from the police officer uplift programme, which will provide an additional 111 officers across our key investigative departments (66 for FCID, 45 for PPU) between May and October 2021.
 - ii. Exploiting new and emerging digital technologies, which support WMPs long term intervention and preventative approach.
 - iii. Continuous Improvement activity which will seek to provide a modern, efficient end-to-end investigative service.
21. This programme of work will not only improve primary investigations by reducing the time from the initial report to the crime being created/investigated and maximising the evidence obtained, it will also maximise opportunities including digital forensics and positive outcomes.

Burglary and Robbery Outcomes

22. Levels of Burglary and Robbery are still below pre Covid-19 levels (Burglary -25% and Robbery -7% respectively) versus the 2019/20 baseline. Whilst the implementation of Connect as our new technology system initially impacted on the numbers of positive outcomes, these numbers have since doubled as the backlog has been proactively managed. For Robbery, our positive outcome rates have improved throughout July and August into September. August has seen our highest month for positive Burglary outcomes for 18 months.

Domestic Abuse / Rape / Hate / Stalking and Harassment Outcomes

23. Unlike Burglary and Robbery, the four outcomes around vulnerability have all seen significant increases in crime versus pre Covid-19 levels: with Domestic Abuse and Hate Crime both increasing by more than 75% compared to the same period in 2019/20; Recorded Stalking and Harassment has increased in same period, by 180%, and Rape increased by 67%.
24. The positive outcome rates have been affected by the fact that whilst the overall volume of outcomes have remained fairly consistent, a much larger volume of crimes being recorded.
25. Domestic Abuse investigations have seen an increase where multiple crimes are being recorded against the same victim, rather than a significant increase in the number of victims. From an outcome perspective, we also see a large proportion of negative outcomes where the victim ultimately does not support police action in this crime type.
26. Similar to Burglary and Robbery, compared with the period immediately after CONNECT implementation, July and August saw better months for positive outcomes for these crime types.

Reducing Serious Youth Violence

27. Violence continues to be a primary area of focus for the force with a range of initiatives and interventions aimed at suppressing and more importantly, preventing violent crime.
28. Following the return of schools / colleges in March, Serious Youth Violence saw a significant rise. This continued as Covid-19 restrictions lifted and weather improved, with May 2021 being the highest month for a number of years with 792 offences being recorded against a current average of 590. Since May, monthly volumes have fallen as schools / colleges have been out for summer.
29. WMP targets its local response to violence under Project Guardian and the taskforce plays a crucial part in reducing Serious Youth Violence across the force. The taskforce has been deployed against priority geographic areas in recent months including Sandwell and Birmingham, seeking to augment local teams and focus on preventative problem solving within these locations.
30. During the forthcoming period, the taskforce will be deployed in Birmingham West, particularly city centre locations, to suppress the increase in numbers we are seeing with the return of the night-time economy, new students entering university and future large events and celebrations.
31. As well as the taskforce, significant work remains ongoing with the Violence Reduction Unit and other key partners such as Education to try and tackle the longer-term drivers for violence. The force is also preparing an ambitious multi-year violence strategy which will aim to galvanize local partners and communities to work in partnership with WMP to tackle this highly complex issue.

Increasing community volunteers (Cadets)

32. The force continues to activate citizens and improve community engagement through our cadet scheme. There are currently 534 young people engaged with the Cadet scheme (an increase of 76 since the previous paper) across 17 different units (+1 from previous paper). Over half the Cadet units now have at least five volunteers classified as community volunteers. An increased use of Cadets by the force at key events including future opportunities within the Commonwealth Games has been a driver for the increase in applications for adult volunteer roles.

Increase in core skills

33. Whilst the pandemic created challenges for the force in terms of maintaining our training provision, critical skills training continued throughout. However, restrictions including the need to socially distance meant smaller cohorts were trained during the period. Following the easing of restrictions, the delivery programme has been re-established for core and specialist training and we are planning to provide additional spaces on courses where safe and sensible to do so, ensuring all staff receive the necessary training in a timely manner.

Reducing repeat missing children

34. Whilst the number of missing children has remained stable, the number of children who are repeatedly reported as missing has increased marginally by 2% during the last three months. This coincides with the phased relaxation of Covid-19 restrictions.
35. We continue to prioritise our response in order to protect missing people in partnership with key partners.

National Crime and Policing Measures

36. As the second largest Force, WMP will have a significant contribution to achieving the outcomes in the national framework. The areas selected within the national framework are reflected in the WMP 2021/22 Performance Framework and will feature in the new Police and Crime Plan. A more detailed look at the comparable measures in the WMP 2021/22 Performance Framework will be submitted to Board in future meetings.

Priority area	National metrics	Data sources
Reduce murder and other homicide	Homicides	Police recorded
Reduce serious violence	Hospital admissions of u25s for assault with a sharp object	NHS
	Offences involving discharge of a firearm	Police recorded
Disrupt drugs supply and county lines	Drug-related homicides	Police recorded
	Police referrals into drug treatment	Public Health England*
Reduce neighbourhood crime	Burglary, robbery, theft of and from a vehicle, theft from a person	CSEW
Improve satisfaction among victims, with a particular focus on victims of domestic abuse	Satisfaction with the police among victims of domestic abuse	CSEW
	Victim satisfaction with the police	CSEW
Tackle cyber crime	Confidence in the law enforcement response to cyber crime	Cyber Aware Tracker
	Percentage of businesses experiencing a cyber breach or attack	Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport survey

Next Steps

37. The board is asked to note the contents of this report.

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