



Title: Victims and VAIWG

Presented by: Assistant Chief Constable Claire Bell

Purpose of paper

The purpose of this report is to provide the Strategic Police and Crime Board with an update on activity within the Victims Portfolio. This is an OPCC and WMP joint paper.

1. To provide an update on Victims, including
 - Victims' Code – self assessment
 - Victims Satisfaction and Victims voice
 - Regional hate crime service, including the recording of gender-based hate crime
 - 'EASI' Stalking intervention and how this changes Forces response to stalking

2. To provide an update on Violence and Intimidation against Women and Girls hereafter VAIWG, including:
 - VAIWG working group & WMP VAIWG strategy
 - HMICFRS inspections. Review of policing domestic abuse during the pandemic 2021, Joint inspection response to rape 2020/21, Interim report and how effectively the police engage with women and girls and upcoming inspections over VAIWG.
 - Key lines of enquiry relating to VAIWG including Domestic Abuse reporting and CREST work.

Background

How the police service deals with victims of crime is fundamental to the trust and confidence that the public have in the service we provide and therefore our legitimacy with the public as a whole. Being a victim of any crime can have a devastating effect on an individual, their family and their community, and the first service they call upon is the police. Tailoring our service

right for each individual victim is important. We will share findings from our recent Victim's Code self-assessment audit, our areas of focus and the approach we are taking to continually improve our service. We will also share the progress we have made around victim satisfaction, primarily focusing on the progress and learning made since the internal launch of the citizen charter and service standards.

Whilst Violence, Abuse & Intimidation against Women and Girls (VAIWG) is a societal problem that needs a societal response the police have a key role to play, working with statutory and non-statutory partners, to make women and girls feel safe, feel confident to report, prevent harm and bring perpetrators to justice. This is a priority for West Midlands Police. We will share the work we have done, in developing a West Midlands Police strategy to tackle VAIWG, as well as update on some recent and related HMICFRS inspection reports.

1. Victims

1.1 Victims Code

1.1.1 Measuring compliance against the Code of Practice

The Code of Practice for Victims of Crime is one of the most important documents for victims of crime, setting out in law the services and information victims are entitled to receive as they interact with the Criminal justice system. The code states what each criminal justice agency must do for victims and the timeframe in which they must do it.

A revised code was launched in force in April 2021. The force has developed a new action plan which will focus on **'delivering a good quality and consistent service to victims and witnesses'** by ensuring all victims as defined by the Victims Code are:

- Treated with respect, dignity, sensitivity, compassion and courtesy
- Supported to make informed choices that are fully respected
- Have their privacy respected by service providers in accordance with their obligations under the relevant privacy and data protection laws
- Provide services to assist victims and their family to understand
- Engage with the criminal justice process

1.1.2 Driving Standards and Improvement

The force has developed a new audit process and dashboard which will capture a wider range of information and allow for more in-depth assessment and targeted areas of work. The dashboard was developed with the support of the OPCC and now focuses on vulnerability such as Domestic Violence, Burglary, Robbery and Hate Crime. The audit also provides data which will enable WMP and the OPCC to assess impact and disproportionately against gender, age and ethnicity. Although still finalising the performance measures once agreed it will enable the force to better embed the Victims Code within the assessment of victim's needs, acknowledging how individual circumstances can mean that our response needs to be different and tailored not to the crime type but consider vulnerability of citizens and 'doing the right thing' for them.

The most recent audit was completed in July 2021. Compliance is calculated based on:

- Did the victim receive an acknowledgment that a crime was "Yes" or "Not applicable"?
- Were the updates timely "Yes"
- Was a VPS offered "Yes" or "Not applicable"
- If a need was identified, were victims referred within 2 days to support services "Yes" or "Not applicable"
- Was the victim informed about the Victims Code and provided with a link "Yes"
- Was the victim informed of the end of their CJS journey "Yes" or "Not applicable"

In addition, the Victim Code Champions Network continues to drive force wide performance against the Victims Code, and seeks to measure compliance. The Victims and Witnesses Delivery Plan drives improvement and captures the service offer from each department in line with national standards.

1.1.3 Key findings

The overall assessment by the Victims Code Lead is that WMP provides a good level of compliance and service against most areas of the Victim Code. Areas identified for improvement in the future are;

- Offering a VPS – In 28% of the samples a VPS was not offered
- Was the victim informed of the end of their CJS Journey – 14% weren't
- If a need was identified, was the victim referred within two days? 15% weren't referred at all despite a need being identified, 7% were referred but it took longer than two days.
- Was the victim informed about the Victims Code – 51% weren't (n.b. included for reference but isn't included in overall compliance calculation)

It is to be noted that the survey was recently refreshed via the self-assessment process to ensure all areas which are able to be covered, are. The introduction of the new Connect system has also impacted on available data.

1.1.4 Victims Code Compliance Framework

As previously mentioned, in April 2021 the Victims Code of Practice was implemented. The new code is designed to be streamlined and simplified, to improve victims' access to it, and provide greater clarity on the expectations of agencies. It is designed to be more 'user friendly' accompanied by practitioner guidance for all relevant agencies.

The notable change is that entitlements have now become **RIGHTS**. In conjunction with the launch, the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) will be revisiting their Code Compliance Framework with the ambition to broadening the scope. Police Forces are already required to report via their Police and Crime Commissioners. WMP has commenced work to understand what this means in terms of measuring compliance, working with the OPCC and WMP Partners to develop a compliance framework in line with this new version.

The plan includes activities to further;

- Improve data collection and audit process with greater emphasis on compliance
- Improve service to victims by ensuring they are kept informed and ensuring referral to support services remain
- Training to raise staff awareness and encourage adherence to the code
- VPS to ensure victims are being offered the opportunity to make a statement but more discretion on when the VPS is taken
- Review the referral process and the list of organisations to refer to

The initial assessment has highlighted that we are still unable to audit certain aspects of the code, primarily due to the information not yet being easily accessible, for example;

- If the police took any of a victim's property as evidence, victims have the right to get it back as soon as it is no longer required. This will be solved by Connect reminders
- Victims of sexual violence, gender-based violence or domestic abuse, have the right to request that the police officer conducting the interview is of a gender of their choice.
- All information under this right must be provided within 5 working days (1 working day under Enhanced Rights) of reporting the crime.
- Victims may be entitled to compensation through the CICS. Victims have the right to be told by the police how to apply for compensation through the Scheme.
- Where the police or the CPS are considering an Out of Court Disposal (OoCD), victims have the right to be asked for their views and to have these views considered when a decision is made.
- Bereaved close relatives have the right to request a visit to the court before the trial date to familiarise themselves with the building, regardless of whether they are required to give evidence.

A further workshop is being arranged by the OPCC to ensure suitable progress against this plan.

Further work is also planned to look at how victim satisfaction and victim code compliance can be brought closer together.

1.2 Victims Satisfaction

1.2.1 Progress on the citizen charter

The force, in partnership with the OPCC, has developed a Citizen Charter and Service Standards. The Charter essentially outlines the minimum standards that WMP intends to uphold whenever and wherever it deals with citizens. It was developed following consultation with members of the public and WMP employees and acts as a guide both for employees and citizens, letting employees know what is expected of them, and informs citizens what to expect

from WMP. Employees are the greatest advocates of WMP and have the most significant influence on public satisfaction, it is therefore vital to ensure that our people understand the service offer throughout the whole customer journey. This will ensure that they are able to set realistic expectations at the outset and throughout any investigation.

Communication and engagement activities continue with internal employees to embed the charter and WMP are working closely with the PCCs office to launch the Charter externally to the public. Further consultation has taken place with Independent Advisory Groups (IAG) and key community stakeholders to inform the role they will play in monitoring how WMP is performing against the Charter and service standards.

1.2.2 How victim satisfaction is measured, giving citizens a voice

Following the pilot of the SMS survey in late 2020 the citizen satisfaction project has embedded the SMS survey into Force Contact and Force Response since February 2021, giving an increased voice to the public about the service they have received. The survey obtains real time service satisfaction from the public across a much wider range of police involvement that our previous surveys have been able to. Information from SMS surveys is segmented against multiple factors, including incident type, caller demographics, location, day of the week, time of the day and down to team and individual level in order to gain insight, learn, develop and reward. The survey is reviewed regularly to learn further and make any necessary adjustments and explore long term impacts

The SMS survey is sent to all people who contacted us via telephone for all incident types which are deemed to not put the public at risk or be insensitive around the nature of the call. Work is ongoing to develop a process that captures feedback from vulnerable victims and witnesses without placing them at any risk. Current response rates for the SMS surveys are 10% which is higher than the 6% response rate for previous email surveys. 51% of respondents provide us with free text comments. 50% of respondents provide us with their demographic data.

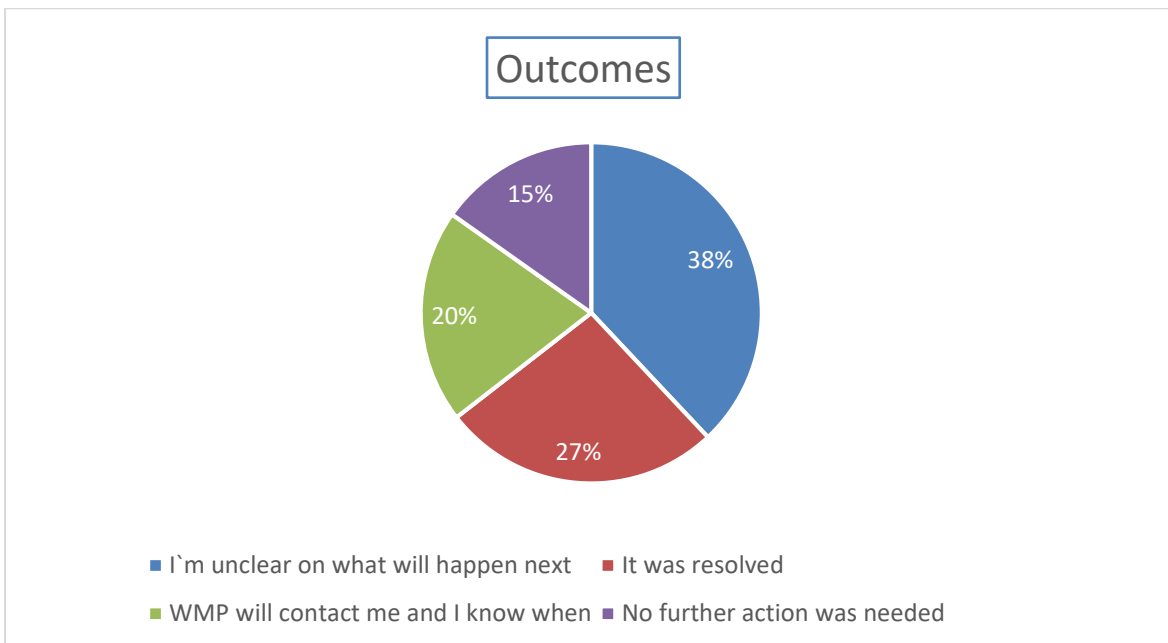
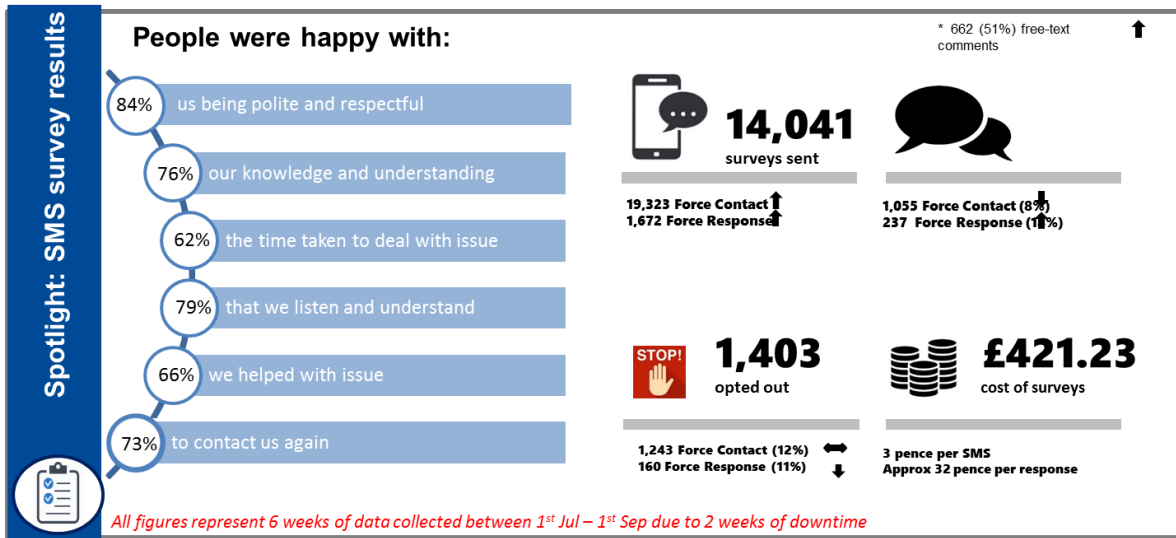
The next stage of the SMS survey roll out is into Initial Investigations within FCID to understand citizen experience of the next stage of the citizen journey. SMS surveys are expected to go live in September 2021 within this area of business. Further roll outs of the SMS surveys are scheduled for FCID and Neighbourhood Policing Units in 2021/2022.

1.2.3 How information is used once collated

SMS survey results for Force Contact and Force Response are currently uploaded into the Qlik performance dashboards. The results from each SMS survey are displayed against the key questions asked of citizens. All managers and supervisors have access to the dashboard to ensure team and individual performance is understood. Both departments use this information as part of WMP Conversations, their service improvement meetings and their quarterly performance reviews (QPR) with their lead ACC.

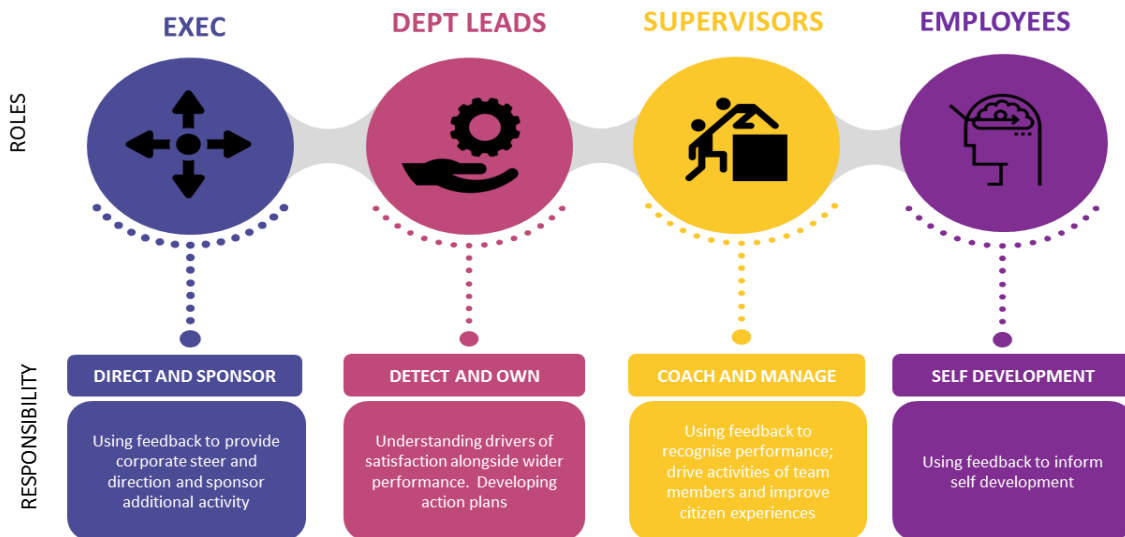
The latest survey data is contained within the image below.

Citizen Satisfaction Project – SMS survey results July/Aug-21



1.2.4 Plans to enhance and improve how victim satisfaction is captured and used to improve service.

Being citizen focussed and using insight is not just about being able to collect data and information. It is about having the capability to turn that information into action and requires a culture which values insight and is willing to act on it. The below diagram is the approach we are using to embed this culture, ensuring that feedback is acted on and can drive improvement.



- Reward and recognition:** WMP are using a new system to provide a reward and recognition initiative that is been trialled by the project team. It recognises staff that deliver a great citizen experience. Staff members can receive online recognition via the WMP recognition portal and also be put forward to receive new and innovative items. This complements the other tools in the reward and recognition framework and provides a flexible, responsive and transparent means of recognising and rewarding staff contribution to delivering excellent service to customers (both external and internal). It is also linked to the values and behaviours of WMP. The project team are working with Rewards and Benefits to develop a long-term reward and recognition process and a Diamond Award for Customer Service.
- Learning and development:** A customer service self-help hub has been created on the force intranet system together with a customer service workbook. Feedback from the SMS surveys is being used to develop new learning content for organisational learning products.
- Reference to the charter is now included within work-based assessment inductions and assessments alongside fairness in policing and reflective practice.
- Developing Insight:** The project team are working with the data analytics lab to develop tailored sentiment analysis reports using both quantitative and qualitative feedback from the surveys. This analysis will enhance our learning, ensure the voice of our customers is heard and enhance engagement within our communities.
- Wider roll out of SMS Surveys:** Our communities have an increased voice through the use of the SMS surveys, we have higher response rates compared to other surveys and more than half of respondents are willing to give free text comments.

1.3 Early Awareness Stalking Intervention (EASI)

West Midlands Police' 3-year strategy, This Works Matters, focuses on making the greatest difference possible for our communities. Key principles include Innovation, Acting with

Precision and Collaboration which are closely linked to the objectives of this stalking intervention programme, including our strategic aim to improve our response to VAIWG, Domestic Abuse (DA Stalking), reduce harm and vulnerability and reduce demand. There is no known, accredited, fully researched and evaluated stalking intervention nationally and this trial hopes to close this intervention gap, providing an evidenced based solution to break the cycle of abuse perpetuated by the high volume of repeat and serial stalkers in WMP region.

Home Office funding has been secured to invest in this 12-month pioneering, collaborative programme between WMP, National Probation Service, Women's Aid, Midlands Psychology Services and Derbyshire University. The bespoke clinical intervention programme, known as the EASI project (Early Awareness Stalking Intervention) will be evaluated at three intervals over the year with a final evaluation report after August 2022, which will enable WMP and its partners to review and assess future intervention and prevention opportunities. Measurable outcomes include;

- Prevention of escalation in behaviours/risk to self and victim(s)
- Improved knowledge and confidence in working with stalking perpetrators amongst Police, Probation, CPS, Courts
- Improved victim safeguarding and support
- Reduced re-offending rates amongst perpetrators
- Reduced risk factors/distress symptoms amongst perpetrators
- Stalking perpetrators engaged in interventions
- Improved psycho-social functioning amongst perpetrators

There will be 100 stalking perpetrators selected to engage with EASI over the next 12 months and two dedicated project staff (PSIO's) will work alongside PPU Investigators and project partners to ensure selection and eligibility criteria are met.

There are two main routes to be considered;

- Conditional caution – consent and contract formed with perpetrator to engage in 6 x 1hr sessions over 6 weeks with dedicated psychologist who will deliver focussed acceptance commitment therapy (fACT)
- Conviction – working alongside probation to include EASI as part of community rehabilitation order or suspended sentence order (perpetrator engages in 6 x 1hr sessions over 6 weeks with dedicated psychologist who will deliver fACT)

The programme pilot will robustly research the profile of West Midlands stalking perpetrators. It will evaluate the effectiveness of the EASI against a control group of 100 stalking perpetrators/victims and more generically add to our UK knowledge of this presenting problem to aid better national policing responses to stalking.

2 Violence Abuse & Intimidation against Women and Girls (VAIWG)

2.1 WMP Strategy to tackle Violence Abuse & Intimidation against Women and Girls (VAIWG)

Since the tragic murder of Sarah Everard in March 2021 the significant issue of Violence, Abuse & Intimidation against Women and Girls (VAIWG) has been brought into sharp focus. The subsequent public debate, discussion and demonstration that this is still sadly very much present in our society was clear, as was the expectation that the police can and must do better in this area. West Midlands Police have always taken VAIWG seriously, but like the whole police service it recognises that the lived experiences of women and girls, not just in their own homes, but when they are studying, working, socialising or travelling is not as reflective as it should be in the plans and priorities of policing generally and the force specifically.

As a result, West Midlands Police have developed a 3-year strategy to tackle violence, abuse and intimidation against women and girls. Based on the National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC) strategy, it seeks to build on progress already made but recognises that there are areas of concern that have not received as much attention to date or need improved co-ordination. The strategy does not therefore seek to cover the whole VAIWG landscape.

2.1.1. In setting the strategy it is our ambition to:

'Make the West Midlands a place where women and girls can live, work, study, socialise and travel safely and confidently, free of fear, violence and harassment. We understand the voice of women and girls (and of men and boys), and have a deep understanding of offender behaviour. This enable us to prevent harm, protect the vulnerable and effectively disrupt and pursue offenders. We achieve this with the public and our partners'.

2.1.2 Our approach will:

- Ensure this is everyone's business
- Be perpetrator and prevention focused
- Make the best use of data to:
 - Inform our understanding of the issues
 - Shape our response
 - Evaluate activities and progress
- Employ a precision policing approach where appropriate
- Be clear on tone and language, avoiding victim blaming and setting clear standards and expectations
- Ensure that we listen to the lived experiences of women and girls.
- Involve men and boys in the solution.

2.1.3 Priority Areas

The strategy has 7 priority areas. Each is led by a senior officer. Whilst further detail on the priority areas and what they aim to deliver is contained within the strategy itself below gives a broad outline of the reasons for their inclusion and why a greater focus is required by the force.

- **Safety in Public – Lead: Chief Superintendent Steve Graham**

Key messages heard in recent times tells us that many women and girls do not feel safe in public, girls do not feel safe in school or other educational establishments and a majority of women and girls in the UK have experienced sexual harassment in public spaces. This needs to change.

- **Criminal Justice – Lead: Superintendent Annie Miller/Superintendent Gill Davenport**

Low prosecution rates and failures in the Criminal Justice System (CJS), impact upon the low confidence of victims to report crimes to the police. We have heard repeatedly that some women simply do not trust the CJS and we recognise that in order to improve victim confidence, increase reporting and achieve better outcomes we must work with partners to enhance the entire process and bring perpetrators to justice.

- **Offender and Suspect Management – Lead: Chief Superintendent Mat Shaer**

Considerable attention needs to be paid towards those that perpetrate VAIWG. They are solely responsible for the harm they cause. Managing offenders to protect victims and prevent further harm, and holding offenders to account for their actions is an essential part of this strategy.

- **Recording of Crimes and Incidents – Lead: Chief Superintendent Mat Shaer**

In 2020 the Law Commission made proposals to reform hate crime laws. The commission proposed that sex and gender be added to the list of protected characteristics for the purpose of hate crime and that there was parity in how each was treated. The final recommendations are expected in Autumn 2021. Aside of this (pending) decision it is vital that we have good data and are able to access and exploit it to enable us to understand the problem. The force will await national guidance and then determine what action it will take. In the meantime, work is ongoing to develop processes and policy to ensure information on the protected characteristics of victims is accurately and consistently recorded.

- **Our Behaviour – Lead: Chief Superintendent Sam Ridding**

The public expect the highest standards of behaviour from the police service. How we behave as individuals and collectively impacts on the trust and confidence of communities. This is particularly the case with VAIWG and we must acknowledge and take steps to ensure greater internal accountability and legitimacy.

- **Be Intelligence and Data informed – Lead: Chief Superintendent Andy Hill**

Being data driven and informed by intelligence is vital for us to understand and respond to the challenges and issues effectively. It also allows us to be more precise in identifying and defining our actions and solutions and ensures that we evaluate and continuously learn and improve.

- **Engagement, Insight and Communications: Lead: Hilary Hopker/Chief Superintendent Kim Madill**

How we engage and communicate is important in setting the tone and making it clear that VAIWG is abhorrent and will not be tolerated. It is vital that we are clear that women and girls are never to blame for the behaviours of others. Finally listening to, understanding and responding to the lived experiences of women and girls must be an enduring part of our work.

2.1.4 Governance and accountability

Underpinning the strategy is a delivery plan. The delivery plan forms the basis of the changes we will make to improve the service and outcomes for Women and Girls. Each work strand lead will be expected to report into the bi-monthly VAIWG Strategy Board and subject of

scrutiny by the lead Assistant Chief Constable who will report into the relevant force performance and scrutiny mechanisms.

2.2 HMICFRS Inspections

2.2.1 Review of policing domestic abuse during the pandemic

The HMICFRS conducted a thematic review of the Policing of Domestic Abuse as part of the Policing in Covid series. The themes found in this report will be further explored in two future scheduled reports: Violence Against Women and Girls thematic inspection and throughout the PEEL programme. Three recommendations were made in this report.

During the pandemic there has been an overall increase in first time reporting of DA but normal reporting levels were resumed by June 2020. Specialist Domestic Abuse services have seen large increases in reporting and requests for emotional support either due to existing DA cases or plans to leave an abusive partner when the lockdown ends. There has been a move to online reporting but not to Police and a notable increase in calls for service from 16-24 yr olds. There has been an overall annual downward trend in arrests for DA.

The HMICFRS found that that forces have adapted well to the challenge of the Covid landscape and employed new innovative practises to engage with victims and 'reach in' to victims rather than waiting for them to 'reach out'. However, the report also suggested that this was due to a reduction in demand from other business areas such as the night time economy which allowed Domestic Abuse to be truly prioritised.

Forces reported numerous ways to proactively support victims and there was a recorded increase in applications for Domestic Violence Protection Orders. The move to virtual DVPO court hearings also improved efficiency (WMP has recorded a notably lower number of DVPOs than our MSGs).

The report identified that delays in obtaining advice from the wider Crown Prosecution Service was potentially increasing the risk of harm to victims. It had already been identified in an earlier report that Covid increased the time from charge to trial so in some cases these factors exacerbated the victim's decision to withdraw their support for prosecution.

HMICFRS found that in a 12-month period up to March 2020, on average, 75% of cases are discontinued by police for either outcome 15 (did not proceed due to evidential difficulties but where a victim did support the prosecution) or outcome 16 (cases were discontinued due to a lack of support for police action). This raised serious concerns for the HMICFRS.

The report found there had been no increase in domestic homicide during the period of the pandemic. WMP are mentioned for their proactive use of MARAC and for operating above the standard requirements for cases per 10,000 adult females per force.

2.2.2 Joint inspection response to rape

HMICFRS shared the first phase of the police and Crown Prosecution (CPS) response to rape report with a phase two report anticipated in winter 2021. The report considers the response, decision making and effectiveness of the police and CPS at every stage in a case of rape, and focuses on cases that result in no further action. In summary, the report found that whilst there were effective individuals and teams in every police force and CPS area, many failed to put the victim at the heart of the investigation. Further work is required to meet the national focus of government, policing and the CPS to provide focus, clarity and commitment to building

strong victim focused cases. 13 recommendations resulted from the inspection, of which eleven are directly relevant for action by WMP.

1. Immediately, police forces should ensure information on the protected characteristics of rape victims is accurately and consistently recorded
2. Police forces and support services should work together at a local level to better understand each other's roles. A co-ordinated approach will help make sure that all available and bespoke wrap-around support is offered to the victim throughout every stage of the case. The input of victims and their experiences should play a central role in shaping the support offered
3. Police forces should collect data to record the different stages when, and reasons why, a victim may withdraw support for a case. The Home Office should review the available outcome codes so that the data gathered can help target necessary remedial action and improve victim care.
4. Immediately, police forces and CPS areas should work together at a local level to prioritise action to improve the effectiveness of case strategies and action plans, with rigorous target and review dates and a clear escalation and performance management process. The NPCC lead for adult sexual offences and the CPS lead should provide a national framework to help embed this activity.
5. Police forces and the CPS should work together at a local level to introduce appropriate ways to build a cohesive and seamless approach. This should improve relationships, communication and understanding of the roles of each organisation. As a minimum, the following should be included:
 - considering early investigative advice in every case and recording reasons for not seeking it
 - the investigator and the reviewing prosecutor including their direct telephone and email contact details in all written communication
 - in cases referred to the CPS, a face-to-face meeting (virtual or in person) between the investigator and prosecutor before deciding to take no further action
 - a clear escalation pathway available to both the police and the CPS in cases where the parties don't agree with decisions, subject to regular reviews to check effectiveness, and local results
6. The police and the CPS, in consultation with commissioned and non-commissioned services and advocates, and victims, should review the current process for communicating to victims the fact that a decision to take no further action has been made. They should implement any changes needed so that these difficult messages are conveyed in a timely way that best suits the victims' needs
7. Police forces should ensure investigators understand that victims are entitled to have police decisions not to charge reviewed under the Victims' Right to Review scheme and should periodically review levels of take-up
8. Immediately, the College of Policing and the NPCC lead for adult sexual offences should review the 2010 ACPO guidance on the investigation of rape in consultation

with the CPS. The information contained in available guidance must be current to inform effective investigations of rape and provide the best service to victims.

9. The Home Office should undertake an urgent review of the role of the detective constable. This should identify appropriate incentives, career progression and support for police officer and police staff investigators to encourage this career path. It should include specific recommendations to ensure there is adequate capacity and capability in every force to investigate rape cases thoroughly and effectively
10. The College of Policing and NPCC lead for adult sexual offences should work together to review the current training on rape, including the Specialist Sexual Assault Investigators Development Programme (SSAIDP), to make sure that there is appropriate training available to build capability and expertise. This should promote continuous professional development and provide investigators with the right skills and knowledge to deal with reports of rape. Forces should then publish annual SSAIDP attendance figures, and information on their numbers of current qualified RASSO investigators
11. The College of Policing, NPCC lead for adult sexual offences and the CPS should prioritise action to provide joint training for the police and the CPS on the impact of trauma on victims, to promote improved decision-making and victim care

These recommendations are managed by Head of the Public Protection Unit within the Force Executive Team Crime Portfolio. A local audit of rape cases has been initiated to identify opportunities to improve investigations and victim care.

2.2.3 How effective the police are in engaging with women and girls around VAIWG

HMICFRS conducted a preliminary thematic inspection of violence against women and girls resulting in an interim report. Further work will continue by HMICFRS throughout 2021 to consider the views of women and girls with a final report in September 2021. The interim report considered **how can the police better protect women and girls?** This was and will continue to be assessed through three major pieces of work:

1. A review of all existing HMICFRS inspection evidence, and progress made against past recommendations
2. Lived experiences work with women and girls themselves
3. New thematic inspection activity

The report found that there have been improvements in the police response to violence against women and girls (VAWAG). However, there needs to be a radical and bold shift in thinking about how to tackle crimes that disproportionately affect women and girls. This should be supported with multi-year, sustained funding, backed by solid evidence, and structured through an overarching governance system and framework, which may need a statutory footing. Three early recommendations have been set by HMICFRS.

1. There should be an immediate and unequivocal commitment that the response to VAWG offences is an absolute priority for government, policing, the criminal justice system, and public sector partnerships. This needs to be supported at a minimum by a relentless focus on these crimes; mandated and clear responsibilities; and sufficient funding so that all partner agencies can work effectively as part of a

whole-system approach to reduce and prevent the harms these offences are causing

2. The relentless pursuit and disruption of adult perpetrators should be a national priority for the police, resourced with the appropriate level of capability and capacity
3. Structures and funding should be put in place to make sure victims receive tailored and consistent support

WMP is already working towards these via its Violence and Intimidation Against Women and Girls Board and the associated three-year strategy and delivery plans that are currently being finalised. Funding has been secured to launch a multi-agency Early Awareness Stalking Invention pilot programme to support strategic aims to reduce risk and harm to VAWG and DA victims and research perpetrators.

2.3 Violence and Intimidation against Women and Girls key lines of enquiries and additional information

2.3.1 Details of planned uplifts to PPU in 2021/2022

The uplift in Domestic Abuse (DA) will consist of 88 members of staff being posted in roles that consist of Sgts, PC's and PSIO's. The Sergeants and PSIO's have already been posted and the Constables are due to be posted in October 2021. They will primarily assist with dealing with DA incidents and offenders.

The uplift in Child Abuse (CA) will consist of 57 members of staff being posted in roles that consist of Inspectors, Sgts, Constables and PSIO's. Some of these staff are already in post but most will be in situ by the end of March 2022.

The uplift in Safeguarding staff will see an increase in 17 members of staff being posted in roles that consist of Inspectors, Sgts, Constables and PSIO's.

There will also be 9 'exploitation focused' staff invested into Serious & Organised Crime & Exploitation (SOCEX). The Major Crime Team is a new area of business for PPU and FCID and will consist of 109 new members of staff across all ranks and working across both departments. They will be posted by the end of March 2023.

The uplift in CA investigators will allow PPU to progress investigations against increased year on year demand by reducing officer workload and reducing investigation length. The allocation of resources will specifically focus on wilful assault & neglect, sexual and violent offences against child victims including online grooming.

The SOCEX uplift will allow an increased reactive response to reported incidents and ensure greater awareness of risk to CA victims of Child Sexual Exploitation.

The uplift in Safeguarding will enable the PPU Safeguarding team to meet the current (and rising) demand of high risk/MARAC cases of domestic abuse. Improved staffing will enable officers to resume more home visits, improve multi-agency engagement and allow them to

respond more quickly to high risk cases as and when they present. The uplift will allow officers to work with up to 30% more cases at any one time when compared to the previous three years. It will also allow officers to reduce high caseloads by as much as 50% in some cases.

2.3.2 Domestic Abuse Reporting

Crest Advisory have now concluded their analysis onto Domestic Abuse demand within the West Midlands region and were given three questions to answer;

- To what extent is the West Midlands an outlier in terms of domestic abuse-related demand?
- What are the most significant factors in explaining the divergence with other force areas, particularly those forces most comparable to the West Midlands?
- What are the implications for West Midlands Police (and partners)?

The Domestic Abuse Lead for West Midlands Police recently presented three areas of opportunity for discussion/future consideration;

2.3.2.1 Domestic abuse demand - key findings

- Recorded levels of domestic abuse have been growing and make up a significant proportion of demand on West Midlands Police.
- However, the West Midlands does not appear to be an outlier in terms of the rate of domestic abuse per population.

2.3.2.2 Domestic abuse demand – repeat victimisation

- Research identified high levels of repeat victimisation across ex/intimate relationships (as opposed to familial abuse)
- Repeat victimisation crosses over same victim, multiple perpetrators (i.e. groomed from one abusive relationship to the next)
- Repeat incidents carry additional risk (escalating violence/abuse) and attracts additional resourcing across the end to end investigation

2.3.2.3. Domestic abuse demand – tackling the headwinds

- The West Midlands has higher than average deprivation, plus higher than average alcohol and drug addiction, therefore the West Midlands has higher domestic abuse risk factors
- The West Midlands has a higher than average number of children in the care of local authorities
- The West Midlands has hyper local problem areas where domestic abuse is more prevalent which correspond with above risk factors

Work is now underway to incorporate Impact Area activities into domestic abuse prevention, analysing on more detail the opportunities that present themselves at a place-based level. NPU Commanders are engaged in this work along with the Force Domestic Abuse Lead.

In addition to the Crest Advisory work, an independent analysis of West Midlands Police’s pilot examining the proportionate investigation of domestic abuse crimes which fall at the lower end of the threat/risk spectrum has been undertaken. Birmingham City University have been commissioned to complete the independent analysis with the recommendation that once this work has concluded, the results of both the Crest analysis and Proportionate Investigation Pilot can form the basis of a round table discussion, hosted by the Officer of Police and Crime Commissioner, to determine a partnership approach to effectively tackle domestic abuse.

2.3.3 Backlog in rape cases referred to CPS

There are currently 13 new cases which are considered overdue (i.e. beyond the 28-day allocation agreement), being 30-58 days in the system. There are currently 9 overdue re-submissions from Police.

2.3.4 Sexual Harm Prevention Orders

There are currently 1,263 SHPO’s (both internal/full and civil/criminal) that have been granted between March 2015 – July 2021

2.3.5 Usage of Digital Kiosks

The digital kiosks have been in use across multiple sites in force since March 2021. There is a total of nine kiosks in place. There has been a period of bedding in and upskilling to enable specific staff to utilise the full functionality of these kiosks. For the period March 2021-August 2021 the total number of recorded rape offences is 2015. During this time a total of 217 items have been processed through the kiosks (this number includes mobile phones, SIM cards and memory cards).

2.3.6 Victim attrition in VAIWG

Challenges currently exist in relation to extrapolating post charge attrition data for VAIWG specific offences during the trial process so this response will focus on attrition measured before charge through outcome code 16 (OC16).

The definition of OC16 – ***Evidential difficulties victim based – named suspect identified. The victim does not support or has withdrawn support from police action.***

Please see below table of thematic areas for VAIWG;

Thematic area	Total recorded offences	OC16 outcome	%

All Rape	1,275	694	54.4%
All other sexual offences	1,399	587	42%
Stalking & Harassment	13,448	5,613	41.7%
All DA marked offences	17,478	12,338	70.6%

The board is asked to note the content of this report

Author: ACC Claire Bell of paper Victims and VAIWG

Job Title: Assistant Chief Constable