



Strategic Policing and Crime Board

28th September 2021

Title: *Victims and VAWG*

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Purpose of paper

1. The purpose of this paper is to provide the strategic police and crime board with an update on the victims portfolio with particular reference to;
 - ✓ VAWG and how the OPCC seeks to prioritise VAWG related crimes
 - ✓ Victims Code compliance
 - ✓ Victim Fund – funding update
 - ✓ DA perpetrators - funding update
 - ✓ Regional Hate Crime Service
2. This is a paper is a joint paper between the Force and the OPCC.

Background

3. The Covid-19 pandemic together with the tragic deaths of Sarah Everard, Blessing Olusegun and others has led to a national outcry from the public thus creating a shift in the landscape of victim services both nationally and regionally. Domestic abuse, now internationally coined the shadow pandemic; has seen increases in reporting as well as complexities in terms of the type and length of support required by victims. This coupled with the increased focus on VAWG related crimes has brought into sharp focus how we are responding to gender based crimes.

4. VAWG and Domestic Abuse emerged as top priorities through the Police and Crime Plan consultation alongside Serious Violent Crime, Drugs and Community Policing.
5. The PCC also appointed the first West Midlands Victims Commissioner; Nicky Brennan. Nicky has been working closely with regional and national partners to enhance the voice and rights of victims.

VAWG

6. **EMVAIWG Alliance**; The OPCC will be establishing an Ending Male Violence, Abuse and Intimidation against Women and Girls Alliance (referred to as EMVAIWG hereafter). The alliance would be the single point of partner ownership that provides strategic leadership for EMVAIWG across the West Midlands and will set the strategic direction for the West Midlands approach to EMVAIWG.
7. Our vision for this work is to seek to prevent, reduce and respond to VAIWG crimes by working with partners to challenge the endemic cultural/social attitudes which enable VAIWG crimes to take place and the narrative supporting gender based abuse to persist.
8. The above EMVAIWG Alliance structure will closely associate with the regional governance over Exploitation and Abuse (includes Sexual Assault and Abuse, Domestic Abuse, Modern Slavery/Human Trafficking and Criminal Exploitation and Missing).
9. **VAIWG working group & WMP VAIWG strategy**; the OPCC has supported the force with the VAIWG working group and development of the WMP VAIWG strategy. In particular the Engagement, Insight and Communications strand is aligned and joint working on elements such as the Women and Safety public survey and the #noexcuseforabuse campaign is key to ensure that we are asking women and girls in the West Midlands what they want to change.
10. In addition there have been several targeted piece of work which include the below;
 - **Newly commissioned regional hate crime project** starting April 2021 (see further details in Hate Crime update below).
 - Publication of the multi-agency **West Midlands Sexual Assault and Abuse Strategy 2020-2023** in January 2021.
 - Re-establishing the **regional sex work forum** to bring partners together to prevent and reduce risk of harm to sex workers across the region in collaboration with WMP.

- Promotion of **Trauma informed training** and practice as part of the West Midlands Violence Reduction Unit (VRU)'s Barnardo's led Trauma informed practice training.
11. **Safer Streets Fund 3 – VAWG & SWAN fund**; the Home Office released a specific VAWG related Safer streets fund this year as well as a VAWG focused Safety of Women at Night fund including related to the Night time economy which links strongly into the forces stranded approach to VAWG.
 12. The OPCC submitted a regional bid to SSF3 in collaboration with partners across the region with a real focus on educational prevention work and addressing specific cohorts of particularly at risk groups including female rough sleepers and sex workers. The announcement of the outcome will be in October 2021.
 13. **WMOPCC/WMP created an online public survey**; Women and Safety in 2021. 1819 (91%) of 2006 respondents identified as female. In the survey, 80% had experienced sexual harassment in a public place, 49% had experienced sexual harassment, sexual assault or rape in the West Midlands with only 7.5% and 19.4% respectively reporting these crimes.
 14. **StreetSafe online tool**; Within with the Tackling VAWG strategy; the government has created an online pilot for anyone to anonymously tell the police about public places where they have felt or feel unsafe.
 15. WMP/OPCC intend to promote StreetSafe when the results of the regional Women and Safety survey are able to be shared publically and to acknowledge and recognise the 2006 responses that were sent in. The dual effect of promoting the StreetSafe tool and also continuing the dialogue of women and girls views in where they have felt or feel unsafe will enable further development in prevention, reduction and reaction to VAWG.
 16. **DA demand round table and presentation of research in West Midlands**; In April 2021, the OPCC Academic Advisory Board held a meeting focusing on "Reconsidering Risk in Relation to Domestic Abuse," with academics from across the region presenting on various research both commissioned by and relating to domestic abuse response.
 17. Further to WMP commissioning Crest Advisory and Birmingham City University to complete independent analysis of both the West Midlands domestic abuse demand and West Midland Police's pilot examining the proportionate investigation of domestic abuse crimes which fall at the lower end of the threat/risk spectrum; the OPCC are now holding an event both to bring the academics together and partners across the region to present recent research and also to focus on creating the approach to

domestic abuse perpetrator programme/behaviour change work moving forward within the region for financial year 2022/23 onwards.

18. **HMICFRS inspections** – This year has provided a multitude of both legislative change (Domestic Abuse Act) and national and international strategic direction (as above and below) for change within the move to end male violence, abuse and intimidation against women and girls.

- Review of policing domestic abuse during the pandemic 2021
- Joint inspection response to rape 2020/21, Interim report and final report (published 17th September 2021)
- Police response to violence and women and girls

19. The majority of the feedback within these reviews is that the criminal justice system, police and CPS are not adequately responding to VAWG, and that often the criminal justice response is that investigating VAWG crimes such as rape is just “really difficult” (as cited in the Joint rape inspection part 1).

20. In contrast, the response from in depth interviews with rape survivors included in the publications found that all victims want/need is empathy, better communication and an explanation of what is going to happen next. Simple and practical solutions that victims and survivors of these serious crimes are not being delivered.

21. **End to End Rape Review/Operation Soterio Pilot** – As part of the Government’s End to End Rape Review published in July 2021; there is a move towards a new five pillared approach to responding to and investigating RASSO offences. As part of the Government’s move towards this new approach, WMP is one of the four pilot forces for the next stage of the process which is named Operation Soterio. This will include a 3 month long academic deep dive starting in April 2022 into PPU to review all RASSO policies, practice and quality.

The approach is a five pillar approach as follows –

- a. Suspect Focused Investigation
- b. Repeat Offenders
- c. Victim Engagement: A Systematic Procedural Justice Approach
- d. Learning and Development and Officer well-being
- e. Data, analytics and monitoring case progression.

22. The methodology is one of transformation, moving away from a transactional approach, to embedding change and making it sustainable. This is only achieved by a radically different approach to that taken in the past.

23. The OPCC will be working in partnership with WMP to ensure that the pilot development and findings are reflected through the partnerships and that movements are made to embed the five pillared approach.
24. This is coupled with a Home Office successful Star fund to support further technology advancements in digital forensics.
25. In addition WMP are working closely with West Midlands CPS to ensure that it is a whole criminal justice response and the OPCC is using LCJB as a forum to drive change with other criminal justice partners.

Victims Code

26. The overarching strategic priority of the Victims and Witnesses Delivery Group; a subgroup of the West Midlands Local Criminal Justice Board is the effective implementation and oversight of the Code of Compliance for Victims and Witnesses with partners; improving victim satisfaction throughout the Criminal Justice journey; and ensuring appropriate support and facilities for victims and witnesses giving evidence.
27. To support these objectives information is sought from other sources such as the Victim Right of Review Policy, Service Recovery reports and Complaints from the police and CPS. A recent review of Achieving Best Evidence (ABE) interview suites indicates improvements are required. The Victims and Witnesses Delivery Group provides oversight of that process.
28. The OPCC is also involved with the Force's Victims Code Champions Meeting which has established an action plan to drive improvements and ensure mechanisms are in place to effectively capture the Force's compliance against the Victims Code. However, it is important that improvements to increase victim satisfaction are driven by victims' experiences of the reporting process and we recognise the need for appropriate trauma-informed mechanisms to hear and respond to the voice of victims, as well as code compliance metrics.
29. As part of this work, the OPCC is in the process of establishing a joint task and finish group with West Midlands Police, which will later be expanded to include wider criminal justice agencies, particularly those with responsibility to deliver victims' rights as set out in the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime in England and Wales. The Victims
30. Voice Task and Finish Group will seek to understand whether victims' experiences of reporting crime to the Police matches the Force's perceptions of code compliance. This

is a crucial element in improving procedural justice for victims; to listen and respond to victims' experiences of the reporting to improve victim satisfaction, ensuring they feel supported.

31. The priorities and aims of this work include:

- ✓ Ensuring there are robust and effective mechanisms to hear victims' voices and experiences and utilise this to drive improvements;
- ✓ Improving compliance against the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime;
- ✓ Reducing attrition rates;
- ✓ Increasing the likelihood that victims would report again;
- ✓ Ensuring that victims are not retraumatised by the reporting and criminal justice process;
- ✓ Increasing trust and confidence in policing, and subsequently feelings of safety

Funding update

32. Funding update will be given on the following funding streams;

- ✓ IDVA and ISVA EOI Ministry of Justice Funding
- ✓ Male Rape Crisis
- ✓ Home Office Perpetrator Funding

33. **IDVA ISVA EOI – Ministry of Justice Funding;** £3,287,133 has been allocated to the West Midlands from the Ministry of Justice over 2 years, following our application to the National ISVA and IDVA Fund. The MOJ have committed to funding posts for two years, however at this stage have confirmed funding for year one only.

34. The allocation for 2021-22, is £1,617,802 and the indicative amount for 2022-23 is £1,669,330.

35. There is an existing funding commitment for ISVA's of £217,494 from the allocation, and therefore the total amount of funding to be distributed across the ISVA and IDVA services is £1,400,307.91.

36. Allocations for year 2 will be confirmed once the OPCC confirms to the MoJ prior to the end of the financial year how funding was utilised in 2021/22. The funding will support 33 additional IDVA posts and 8 ISVA posts.

37. Of the 33 IDVA roles, nine will support female and male victims, one will exclusively support male victims and twenty three exclusively female victims of high risk Domestic Abuse.

38. Table 1 provides a breakdown based of the funding awarded and areas in which advocates and advisors will support victims and survivors of domestic and sexual abuse:

39. Table 1

IDVAs	Birmingham and Solihull	Coventry	Wolverhampton	Black Country (Sandwell, Walsall and Dudley)
	<p>MARAC IDVAS x 12 with 50% to hold language specialist</p> <p>1 BAME MARAC IDVA for African Caribbean women</p> <p>1 older women MARAC IDVA for over 55s</p> <p>3 Courts IDVAs minimum of 1 BAME</p> <p>2 DAPO IDVAs (<i>Domestic Abuse Protection Order</i>) posts to pilot this work across Birmingham over the next two years</p> <p>1 X IDVA supporting women in the Criminal Justice System</p>	<p>1 X IDVA with Polish/Eastern European language specialism.</p> <p>2 X IDVAs (supporting DA victims from Black and Minoritised Ethnic Groups)</p>	<p>1 X BAME IDVA</p> <p>1 X CJ IDVA</p>	<p>2 X LGBT IDVAs covering Sandwell, Dudley, Walsall, Wolverhampton and Coventry</p> <p>1 X YP (Young Person's) IDVA covering Walsall</p> <p>1 X YP IDVA covering Dudley</p> <p>1 X IDVA post supporting Elderly DA victims (over 55s)</p> <p>1 X YP IDVA covering Sandwell</p> <p>1 X IDVA supporting victims with disabilities in Walsall</p> <p>1 X IDVA across Sandwell, Dudley and Walsall supporting male victims of DA.</p>
ISVAs				
	<p>3 X ISVAs, this includes 2 ISVAs and 1 CYP ISVA</p>	<p>Coventry 1 x ISVA</p>	<p>1 X Specialist Sex Worker ISVA</p>	<p>Walsall and Wolverhampton X 1 CYP ISVA</p> <p>Sandwell/Dudley X 1 CYP ISVA</p> <p>1 ISVA in Sandwell/Dudley/Walsall supporting male victims and survivors.</p>

40. **Home Office Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Funding;** In September 2020, the Home Office launched funding for domestic abuse perpetrator programmes. The OPCC was

successful in securing funding to enhance the Regional DVPP and the Drive Project, the details of which were presented at February's SPCB.

41. This funding was for a set 12 month period with 6 months funding provided by the Home Office and 6 months match funding by the OPCC, to conclude in September 2021.
42. The OPCC has provided an additional two months funding until 30th November 2021 to allow safe demobilisation of these services.
43. The YUVA intervention for young people using violence and abuse towards parents/carers, funded through this round of funding will continue until March 2022.
44. In late May 2021, the Home Office launched their second round of funding for domestic abuse perpetrator behaviour change programmes, with Police and Crime Commissioners allowed to apply as lead organisations. The fund was split into three categories of innovative domestic abuse, stalking, and adolescent perpetrator programmes. The PCC ran an expression of interest process for this fund .
45. On 22nd July 2021 it was announced that the West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner had been successful in its application and has been awarded £209,332.78 for the period of 1st August 2021 – 31st March 2022. This funding is being proportionately matched 'in kind' to enable delivery of the Early Awareness Stalking Intervention for 12 months, across the entire Force area, addressing the behaviour of ex-intimate stalking perpetrators through a clinical psychology intervention.

Hate Crime

46. The Regional Hate Crime service (including force recording of gender based hate crime - force Update)
47. On July 1st 2021, the West Midlands Hate Crime Victim Service launched (delivered by Remedi). The service provides long-term and short-term, emotional and practical support to all victims and witnesses of Hate Crimes and Hate Incidents. When a victim reports a hate incident or crime into the Force, this is sent on to Remedi who are commissioned to deliver the service.
48. The team is made up of caseworkers that are trained to support victims across all 5 strands of protected characteristics (i.e.) race, religion, disability, sexual orientation or transgender identity.

49. Remedi accepts referrals from the police and agencies as well as those who want to refer themselves, victims do not have to have reported crime to be supported.
50. As a part of the service, Remedi launched the Football Hate Crime Initiative on the 29th of August, caseworkers attend some football games across the region to provide on the spot emotional support to any victims or witnesses of Hate Crime during the match (victims have an opportunity to make self-referrals to the service following support offered). Remedi are the first organisation to deliver this initiative at football games.

Recommendation

The board is asked to note the above updates.

Author(s): Victims