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west midlands
police and crime
commissioner

Twenty years on, is MAPPa achieving its objectives?

Response from Simon Foster, West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner

As Police and Crime Commissioner for the West Midlands, I welcome the Criminal Justice Joint Inspections report into whether MAPPa is achieving its objective to ensure that improvements are made regarding the concern around risk management activity. It is encouraging to read that, where formal meetings take place, MAPPa enhances risk management and protection of the public.

The concern around how MAPPa guidance is interpreted differently across local areas and the lack of awareness among some policing staff nationally is noted. Within the West Midlands, a comprehensive Integrated Offender Management training programme is in place for Offender Managers. The training manual was provided/reviewed as part of an internal audit and makes specific reference to MAPPa, including public arrangements, responsibilities, categories and levels, screening process, safeguarding, MARAC, VISOR and disclosure. Chairs of MAPPa meetings are required to be MAPPa trained, with Inspectors chairing Level 1/Level 2 meetings and Chief Inspectors chairing Level 3 meetings.

There is good practice locally in the management of investigations. Where an incident is deemed too high risk, safeguarding, assessments and referrals are undertaken by the Safeguarding Team within the Public Protection Unit in order to ensure the risk to the victim is managed and that referrals are made as and when required. This includes referrals to MARAC, child protection conferences or adult social care.

Where relevant, my priorities are focused on prevention and intervention, whilst keeping a link between integrated offender management and the governance of the Local Criminal Justice Board, along with its sub-delivery groups. As part of the West Midlands Reducing Reoffending Delivery Group, one of the main priorities is to work with Criminal Justice partners to provide a smooth transition on release to support stability. This includes looking at ways to improve pathways for those leaving prisons, mapping provision for in reach/through the gate support, increase the rate of community substance misuse treatment take-up, which work will be further strengthened through my position as Senior Responsible Owner for our Combatting Drugs Partnership and to create bespoke offers for prison leaves across Integrated Offender Management.

I welcome the recommendation that workloads for staff managing sexual offenders are reviewed. This is an extremely complex area and one which has been seeing increases within the West Midlands. In the absence of a nationally recognised ratio, West Midlands Police have applied a 1:50 SOM:RSO ratio whilst also applying the 20% of caseloads for high risk level RSOs.

West Midlands Police are one of the pilot forces taking part in Operation Soteria (Project Bluestone), the Government's programme on improving the policing and criminal justice responses to RASSO crimes as detailed within the End to End Rape Review 2021. The programme has been assessed through academic evaluation, with the initial findings calling for an additional pillar to be added to the 5 pillar model in order to facilitate a shift from victim focused investigations to offender focused investigations. It highlights opportunities to understand both teams processes and policies in managing repeat offenders but also the need for work which increases intelligence in this space.

A particular issue raised in the recently commissioned VAWG problem profile, which is reporting to the NPCC later this month, is the issue around the recording of victim/offender relationship due to issues with recently implemented systems within West Midlands Police. This is a critical factor to

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address as gaps in knowledge around victim/offender relationships could adversely impact West Midlands Police's ability to truly assess risk.

Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference/One Day One Conversation steering groups are working locally in the seven local authority areas to better link up the processes of identifying and addressing safeguarding risks to ensure that the processes from Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hubs, MARAC and ODOC are streamlined and efficient.

In 2021, the Violence Reduction Partnership (VRP), in collaboration with the West Midlands Domestic Abuse Board, commissioned a review of MARAC which highlighted difficulties in the numbers of MARAC cases and resulting MARAC and ODOC meetings within Birmingham. The review is ongoing, with a focus going forward on mapping processes across all seven local authority areas to identify best practice and opportunities to develop a more standardised set of processes across the West Midlands.

This is alongside my ongoing commitment to develop workable domestic abuse perpetrator programmes to support the behaviour change work around these crimes, both through the CJS and through other means.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Simon Foster', written in a cursive style.

Simon Foster

West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner