



**Strategic Policing and Crime Board  
23<sup>rd</sup> January 2024**

**Police and Crime Plan Priority:** where appropriate

**Title:** HMICFRS Engage

**Presented by:** DCC Green

### **Purpose of paper**

1. To provide an update on the decision of HMICFRS to move West Midlands Police (WMP) to engaged status of enhanced monitoring.

### **Background**

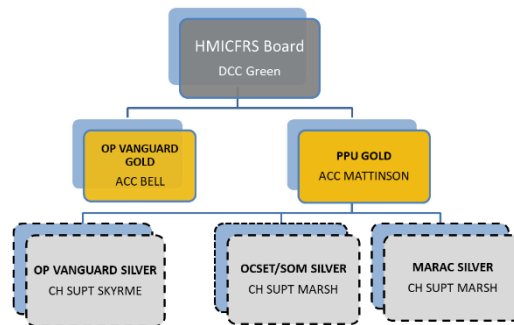
2. HMICFRS issued notice on 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2023 that WMP would be subject of a PEEL inspection.
3. At the point that HMICFRS give notice, any other inspection work that takes place in force during the inspection period (inspection period is the point from when HMICFRS give notice, until the conclusion of the reality testing in force) can be used as evidence to support PEEL findings.
4. The inspection for OCSET and SOM's took place at the beginning of June: specialist inspection teams are used by HMICFRS given the nature of the subject.
5. During the 'hot' de-brief for the OCSET and SOM's inspection, WMP were advised that there were some areas of concern and were instructed to implement a rapid improvement plan by HMICFRS. This plan was submitted to HMICFRS on the 31<sup>st</sup> July 2023 within the required 28 days.

6. The improvement plan was presented to HMICFRS and updates have been provided to HMICFRS approximately every 6 weeks as requested by HMICFRS.
7. The feedback received during these update meetings with HMICFRS have always indicated that good progress is being made against the issues identified.
8. The Victim Service Assessment was conducted in May 2023 and sampled cases from January, February and March 2023.
9. The Victim Service Assessment is a review of 100 crime files; tracking the victims journey through every stage, from the initial point of contact, through to the outcome stage.
10. 10 files are reviewed each of serious assaults, other assaults, stalking and harassment, rape, other sexual offences, burglary, other neighbourhood crime, domestic abused related offences. The remaining 20 files are selected based on a focus on particular outcomes decided by HMICFRS.
11. Following the findings from this case file review, HMICFRS instructed that WMP should implement a rapid improvement plan to address the findings.
12. It is important to note however, that within the PEEL 2023-25 report, WMP has been highlighted in regard to promising practise in improving how the police respond to and investigate rape and other serious sexual offences.
13. In September 2023, HMICFRS concluded their PEEL inspection with two weeks of field testing in force.
14. Following the conclusion of the reality testing, in October 2023, a debrief took place with the regional HMI, Chief Constable and wider Force Executive Team. The concerns around MARAC were raised as part of this debrief.
15. Following the debrief, there were various written exchanges between the Chief Constable and the HMI discussing the data that was being relied upon as part of the inspection findings. WMP evidenced through further data submissions improvements in performance that had already been achieved since the new operating model was introduced in April 2023. All data used by HMICFRS was prior to April 2023.
16. On the 24<sup>th</sup> November 2023, HMICFRS wrote to the Chief Constable and the Police and Crime Commissioner to advise that due to a number of Causes of Concern identified during the inspection, WMP was being placed into 'enhanced monitoring' otherwise known as 'Engage'.

## **Governance and Performance Monitoring**

17. There are a number of gold and silver groups that have been set up in order to address the Cause of Concern raised by HMICFRS. These groups ultimately feed in to the HMICFRS Board which is a monthly meeting, chaired by the DCC. The Causes of Concern are also a standing agenda item at the Force

Performance Board which is a full day meeting held monthly, again chaired by the DCC. The governance arrangements are shown here:



18. Since publication of the report, the recommendations are being reviewed to ensure that the activity ongoing in force addresses the Causes of Concern and that we have the appropriate tracking in place.
19. Although quantitative data will be used to track progress, this will be used alongside qualitative data to ensure that as well as improving compliance, quality is not being impacted and is also improving.

## Causes of Concern

20. As a result of the PEEL inspection work, HMICFRS identified 4 Causes of Concern. The detail of these Causes of Concern, and the activity taking place to address these areas are detailed in the rest of this paper.
21. Each cause of concern will come with several recommendations to address.

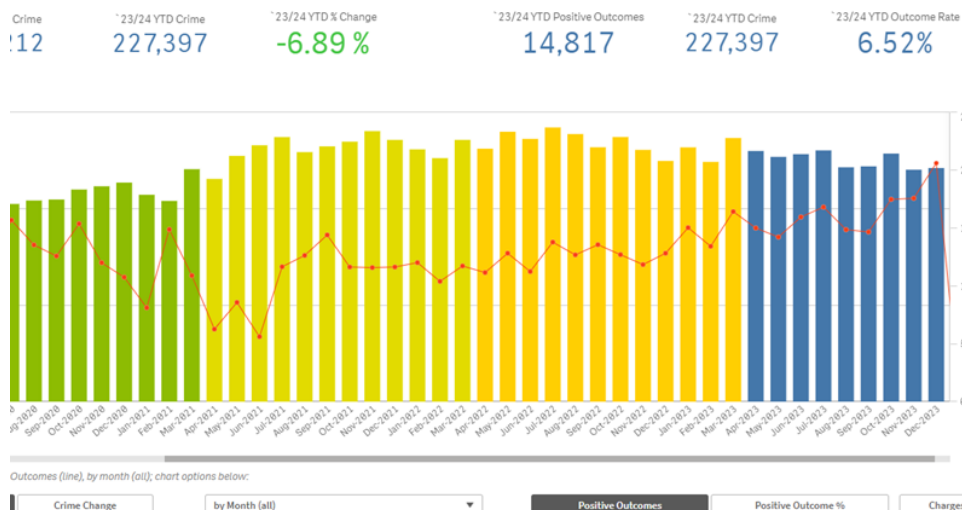
## Investigating Crime

22. This Cause of Concern states 'The force needs to make sure it carries out effective investigations which lead to satisfactory results for victims.
23. HMICFRS have made five recommendations in relation to this Cause of Concern.
  - a. Make sure staff and officers have sufficient skills and capabilities to carry out high quality investigations
  - b. Make sure it carries out proportionate, thorough and timely investigations into reported crimes, which are supervised effectively
  - c. Make sure investigation plans are created where applicable and that all investigative opportunities are taken
  - d. Make sure it consistently achieves appropriate outcomes for victims
  - e. Make sure it is using outcomes appropriately, in a way that complies with force and national policies, leading to satisfactory results for victims

24. A significant amount of work has already taken place to address this Cause of Concern as a result of the Rapid Improvement Plan that was implemented by WMP in August that is being run under Operation Vanguard.
25. The activity is detailed in a delivery plan and associated project plan and is tracked through an established gold and silver command structure.
26. Visits have taken place with forces who are considered by HMICFRS to be good at investigating crime. Best practise from these visits have been implemented where appropriate.
27. An example of best practise that has been introduced to WMP is the Quality Assessment Thematic Tool (QATT). The QATT is an in-depth assessment that covers all areas of an investigation including victim focus, suspect management, investigation standard and supervisor review.
28. Each Inspector and Chief Inspector with investigative responsibility, completes ten QATT assessments a month. Seven of these are for their own areas of responsibility, and three are for another area to ensure transparency.
29. Over 1500 assessments have been completed to date. The findings from the QATT are discussed at both the silver and gold meetings, as well as being available for use by LPA's and departments as part of their performance meetings as the data allows performance to be broken down to LPA, team and individual.
30. The QATT results so far have been used to establish a baseline, ensuring that the question set is correct and the score that is generated highlights where there needs to be a focus. Overview of the findings will be presented in this paper moving forward.
31. Masterclasses have been running since September for all sergeants and inspectors across the force. Over 75% of those eligible have already attended; with masterclasses running until February.
32. These masterclasses set out the standards expected in terms of quality of investigative plans, supervisor reviews and so on, as well as where and how information should be recorded.
33. There are a number of performance measures that have been identified to track improvements to investigations. These include, but are not limited to, volume of open crime, unallocated crime, investigations awaiting a supervisor review and outcomes.
34. The percentage of open crime currently sits at around 31,000. This is less than 10% of the total recorded crime in a year. This figure is comparable with other forces within our MSG.
35. The volume of unallocated crime at any one time continues to reduce, with the number consistently almost half where it was in September. The timeliness of

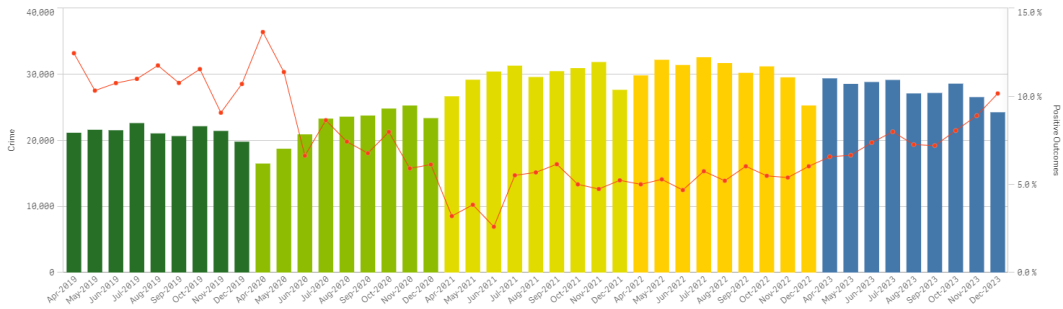
allocation is anticipated to reduce further through the ongoing work of Op Vanguard.

36. The number of investigations waiting for a supervisor review have reduced by almost a third since September. A supervisor review is needed every 28 days, and as a result, the Connect system has been set up with various alerts. Due to the way those alerts are configured, alerts are triggered on day 28 of an investigation. It is recognised that shift patterns will ensure that many alerts occur when supervisors are on leave and so the force will inevitably have a proportion of overdue reviews.
37. In light of this, a new dashboard has been created on Qlik to allow supervisors to see when an investigation is approaching 28 days, to support in managing their workloads and ensuring timely reviews are completed.
38. The quality of these reviews will also be assessed through the QATT, as described above.
39. Feedback has been sought from staff through an initiative called '30 ideas in 30 days' which ran throughout November 2023. Over 150 ideas have been submitted, and over 120 are being progressed and prioritised for implementation.
40. As a result of the ideas submitted, several changes are being made to Connect. One example is the introduction of an investigation tab, where a template will be completed to ensure consistency; and allow for completion of plans to be tracked.
41. The data that HMICFRS refer to in their report shows a positive outcome rate of 3.6% for victim-based crime, for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023. Year to date (YTD) for the 23/24 performance year, this figure is already at 6.1%.



42. YTD the total recorded crime outcome rate for 23/24 is 7.75% with December seeing an outcome rate of 10.2%, the highest in over 3 years.

<sup>22/23</sup> YTD Crime: 274,023     
 <sup>23/24</sup> YTD Crime: 249,638     
 <sup>23/24</sup> YTD % Change: -8.90%     
 <sup>23/24</sup> YTD Positive Outcomes: 19,350     
 <sup>23/24</sup> YTD Crime: 249,638     
 <sup>23/24</sup> YTD Outcome Rate: 7.75%     
 <sup>23/24</sup> YTD Charge Rate: 5.15%



43. An Outcome Review Team (ORT) has been set up, to review any outcomes outside of those submitted as OC1 – OC9 + OC22. Where missed opportunities to bring offenders to justice are identified, the ORT are feeding back learning as well as ensuring that the relevant action is taken.
44. All positive outcomes are processed by the Crime Service Team to ensure that they are applied inline with policy.
45. In addition to this, a schedule is being developed using Audit & Compliance and VSA team to provide additional assurance that outcome codes are being correctly applied.

### **Protecting Vulnerable People – MARAC**

46. This cause of concern states 'The force needs to make sure that its multi-agency risk assessment conferences work effectively to keep vulnerable people safe'
47. HMICFRS made four recommendations in relation to this cause of concern.
  - a. Review the backlog of cases waiting to be discussed at multi-agency risk assessment conferences and make sure that high-risk victims and families receive the safeguarding support that they need
  - b. Prepare a plan for how it will reduce the backlog of multi-agency risk assessment conference cases

Within six months West Midlands Police should

- c. Introduce a multi-agency risk assessment conference structure that can manage current and future demand effectively
  - d. Make sure that multi-agency risk assessment conferences have the right strategic and operational governance arrangements to reduce the likelihood of harm to high-risk victims and their families
48. It is important to note that the MARAC process is an additional partnership safeguarding response that is delivered to high-risk cases. Even without MARAC, those cases still receive the basic safeguarding that all DA cases are treated to.

49. At the time that HMICFRS were in force they identified that in some areas there was a backlog of six to eight weeks until cases were being discussed at a MARAC.
50. Operation Willowbay was introduced in response to the issues raised, and has already made significant progress, including:
  - a. Scoping activity to identify best practice across the country, with over 22 forces engaged with;
  - b. Developed interim guidance that adopts said best practice in relation to the threshold for accepting high-risk referrals into MARAC (reducing throughput by 21%);
  - c. Agreed 'in-principle' funding with OPCC for further investment in the MARAC;
  - d. Consultation with partners to 'future-proof' MARAC arrangements;
  - e. Development of tolerance measures with trigger plans
51. Using the best practice as set out in the interim guidance document, each LPA is within a three week wait time for a MARAC. This is within the tolerances as set out in SafeLives guidance.

LPA	Number of cases awaiting MARAC 08/12/23	Number of cases awaiting MARAC 04/01/24	Maximum number of weeks for a MARAC 04/01/24
Birmingham	183	95	2
Coventry	138	20	3
Solihull	9	9	2
Sandwell	119	33	2
Dudley	71	4	2
Walsall	41	6	2
Wolverhampton	30	11	2

52. A business analyst has been assigned to work with the MARAC team to support in developing the structure and service level offer for approval by the OPCC.
53. There are existing partnership meetings in place on each LPA (DA Strategic Group) where MARAC is a standing agenda item.

54. In early 2024, there will be an additional two boards set up to support the governance around MARAC. These are:
  - a. MARAC Strategic Governance Board (chaired by the OPCC)
  - b. Regional MARAC Operational Group (chaired by the regional MARAC lead)

### **Managing Offenders and Suspects – Sex Offender Managers**

55. This cause of concern states 'The force does not manage the risk posed to the public by Registered Sex Offenders effectively
56. HMICFRS made six recommendations in relation to this cause of concern
  - a. Ensure the operating model supports the robust management of registered sex offenders by trained staff to minimise the risk to children
  - b. Ensure WMP implements an effective framework so that it can make fully informed decisions about the current and future capability and capacity it needs to protect children from registered sex offenders
  - c. Ensure it uses information about its performance to accurately assess and respond to the demand faced by sex offender managers, including data on active risk management system assessments (ARMS), risk management plans (RMP's), visits and the number of cases per officer
  - d. Supervisors review cases at appropriate intervals in line with expected standards
  - e. It supports sex offender managers wellbeing
  - f. Sex offender managers use digital tools effectively to identify offending
57. Operation Rosaria has been set up to address the required improvements within sex offender management.
58. As part of the changes to the force operating model in 2023, SOMs moved LPA ownership to Public Protection.
59. An uplift of 2 Sgts and 12 officers has been agreed for the management of registered sex offenders and recruit to fill these posts is currently ongoing.
60. To manage the numbers while this recruitment is occurring, overtime is being used.
61. Over the last four weeks, until 8<sup>th</sup> January 2024, there has been a significant reduction across all areas:
  - a. ARMS – 22 (down from 219)
  - b. RMP's - 20 (down from 178)
  - c. Visits – 56 (down from 236)



62. Now that the numbers have been reduced, planning is in place to ensure that work is proactively managed to prevent visits becoming overdue at the same time.
63. Laptops have now been issued to all Sex Offender Managers to allow access to the dedicated system to record updates at any local station rather than always having to return to only a few locations.
64. A dashboard has been developed that is updated on a weekly basis to provide managerial oversight of performance, as well as better coordination of future demand in terms of visits and ARMS completions.
65. Psychological screening has taken place for all sex offender managers and where necessary, referrals have gone in for further support to be offered.
66. A digital forensics strategy is being developed between SOMS and digital forensics to enhance the opportunities available.

### **Managing Offenders and suspects – OCSET**

67. This cause of concern states 'The force doesn't manage the risk posed by online child abuse offenders effectively'.
68. HMICFRS made eight recommendations in relation to this cause of concern.
  - a. Implement an effective management framework so it can make fully informed decisions about the current and future capability and capacity it needs to protect children from online child abuse offenders
  - b. To address the backlog of cases awaiting assessment by the online child sexual exploitation team, in particular any cases that are overdue, ensuring that intelligence is reviewed regularly to help risks to be assessed.
  - c. Ensure the speed and nature of the enforcement action it takes reflects risks and reduces the likelihood that evidence will be lost, and that warrants and arrests are prioritised
  - d. That safeguarding measures are used for potential victims and suspects, and referrals to social services are made as soon as a suspect is identified as having access to a child
  - e. To assess the demand faced by the digital forensics units and mitigates the effect of any delays caused by evidence not yet being available
  - f. It uses performance information to accurately assess and respond to the demands faced by the online child sexual exploitation team
69. Around 70% of work into OCSET comes from the NCA, with the remainder being through partners, referrals into Force Contact or through CEPISS to take proactive action.

70. An uplift of one sergeant and seven officers has been agreed for OCSET. Recruitment is currently ongoing.
71. HMICFRS also identified when coming into force that WMP was not using Child Abuse Image Database (CAID) enough. WMP now have the 4<sup>th</sup> highest number of submissions.
72. Performance measures have been developed and are tracked regularly through the silver and gold structures in place. This includes a monitoring tool for any unallocated cases.
73. The number of cases awaiting enforcement action now stands at 13. This is well within the figures collated as part of benchmarking with other forces.
74. All cases are given one of four gradings, standard, medium, high risk, very high risk. They all have an SLA for enforcement which is tracked with appropriate escalation points for any packages outside of the SLA.
75. The length of time a package is at the intelligence development phase is also tracked to ensure that there are no unnecessary delays. Due to the nature of the work required in this area, there can be delays that are out of the control of WMP.
76. Two new intelligence analysts have been recruited to the team to ensure that there is not an excess of packages awaiting intelligence development and intelligence refresh on existing packages is not impacted. These staff are due to start in January.
77. Over the last 12 months, the numbers of unallocated cases within digital forensics have reduced from over 400 to 100. This is despite the number of cases received remaining consistent with previous months.
78. Referrals are now being made to MASH at the earliest opportunity rather than waiting for enforcement to happen.
79. A single guidance document has been created, that takes into the new Hydrant guidance.
80. WMP are seeking support from the Hydrant Programme for a peer review in 2024.

## **Next Steps**

81. The Chief Constable will be attending the Police Performance Oversight Group (PPOG) on the 16<sup>th</sup> January.
82. The PPOG provides a forum where other interested parties such as College of Policing, the NPCC, APCC and the Home Office are all present.

83. As per the HMICFRS document 'Inspection of the performance of Home Office police forces' following the PPOG process, the regional HMI will set the criteria for WMP to be disengaged.

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