



Strategic Policing and Crime Board

27th February 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

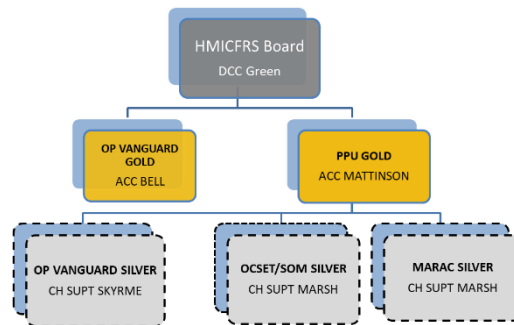
2. HMICFRS issued notice on 23rd January 2023 that WMP would be subject of a PEEL inspection.
3. At the point that HMICFRS give notice, any other inspection work that takes place in force during the inspection period (inspection period is the point from when HMICFRS give notice, until the conclusion 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 31st 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 24th 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. As part of the rapid improvement plan that was implemented following the Victim Service Assessment aspect of the inspection, a significant amount of work has already taken place in this area.
24. Since the PEEL report was published in December 2023, there has been a review of the existing work within Operation Vanguard to make sure that the activity that is being done aligns to the recommendations linked to the Cause of Concern for Investigations.
25. HMICFRS have made five recommendations in relation to this Cause of Concern. The update for each recommendation is detailed below.
26. **Make sure staff and officers have sufficient skills and capabilities to carry out high quality investigations**

- a. The masterclasses have continued as described in the previous paper. 92% of those eligible have now completed this training. The last of this round of masterclasses are scheduled in mid-February.
- b. As part of these masterclasses, feedback is being sought from those that have attended to identify further opportunities and requirements. This includes further Connect training that may be needed
- c. An online survey is currently being designed between the Investigations Improvement Unit and Organisation Learning and Development.
- d. The survey is to allow a training needs analysis to be completed, which will then inform what training is needed and who can complete it.
- e. One thing that has already been identified through the 30 ideas in 30 days initiative and feedback from leaders as part of the masterclasses is the need for some dedicated Connect training. Opportunities to facilitate this is being explored.
- f. In addition to this, a review of all of the formal qualifications are being completed (i.e. PIP2) to ensure that there are sufficient numbers of investigators on LPA's and depts. where required.

27. Make sure it carries out proportionate, thorough and timely investigations into reported crimes, which are supervised effectively.

- a. This recommendation now sits under a workstream of Investigation standards.
- b. As part of the efforts to improve quality of supervision, WMP has introduced the Quality Assurance Thematic Tool (QATT).
- c. To date, over 3,700 QATT have been completed.
- d. The QATT is broken down into 4 different sections; Victim focus, suspect management, investigation standards and supervisor review. Each are given a grading out of 5 based on the responses and then the investigation is given an overall grading, again out of 5.
- e. The data that has been collected during November, December and January has been used to identify a baseline whilst inspectors have got used to using the tool.
- f. The average overall grade of the investigations reviewed so far is 2.5. Broken down into the different aspects the average grades are:
 - i. Victim Focus – 2.5
 - ii. Suspect Management – 2.8
 - iii. Investigation Standards – 2.7
 - iv. Supervisor Review – 2.1

- g. Once the QATT have been completed for that month, the results are uploaded onto a QLIK dashboard that allows access for supervisors and above to review the findings.
- h. More generally, compliance with the completion of supervisor reviews on investigations is tracked through performance day chaired by the DCC, governance boards chaired by the ACC's and departmental and LPA Service Improvement Meetings.
- i. A current snapshot of investigations that have been open for more than 28 days, show that 82% have a completed supervisor review. This is in comparison to almost half not having a supervisor review when the Victim Service Assessment was conducted by HMICFRS.
- j. Whilst the compliance of completing these reviews is increasing, the QATT is an important tool in order to understand the quality of these reviews, and where the standards are not being met, feedback is being given to those supervisors.

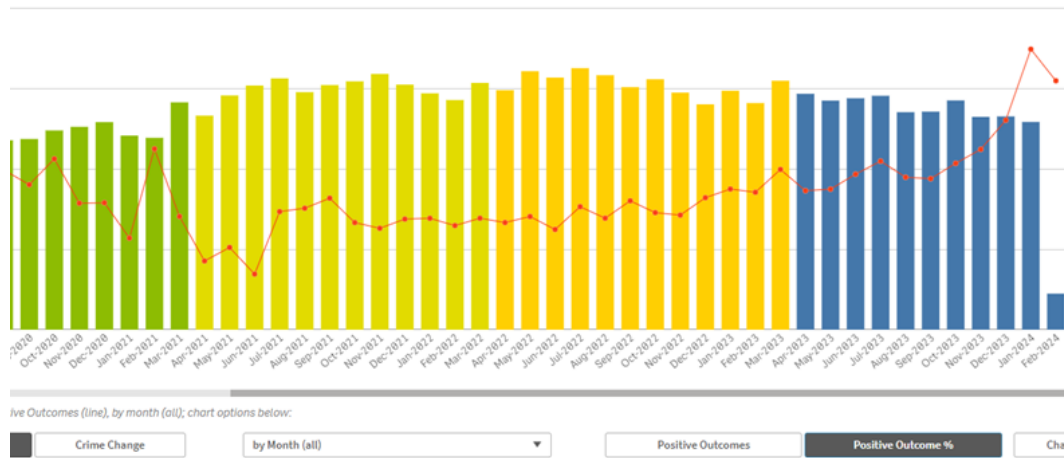
28. Make sure investigation plans are created where applicable and that all investigative opportunities are taken.

- a. A template has been created for investigation plans, and changes made to the Connect system, to guide investigators in the completion of investigation plans.
- b. A QLIK dashboard has been completed that shows the completion of the Initial Investigation plan (usually completed by Force Contact, Force Response and Initial Investigation Team when a crime number is first taken out, and also the completion of investigation plans by investigators when they are allocated an investigation.
- c. This dashboard shows that 92% of investigations have the investigative plan completed.
- d. Whilst the dashboard shows the compliance, as described above, the QATT is used to assess the standards of the investigation. The baseline score for this is 2.7 out of 5.
- e. The investigations policy is currently under review as it has been identified through an audit conducted by the internal Victim Service Assessment Team to be having an adverse impact on filing lower level crimes where there may be opportunities to bring offenders to justice.

29. Make sure it consistently achieves appropriate outcomes for victims

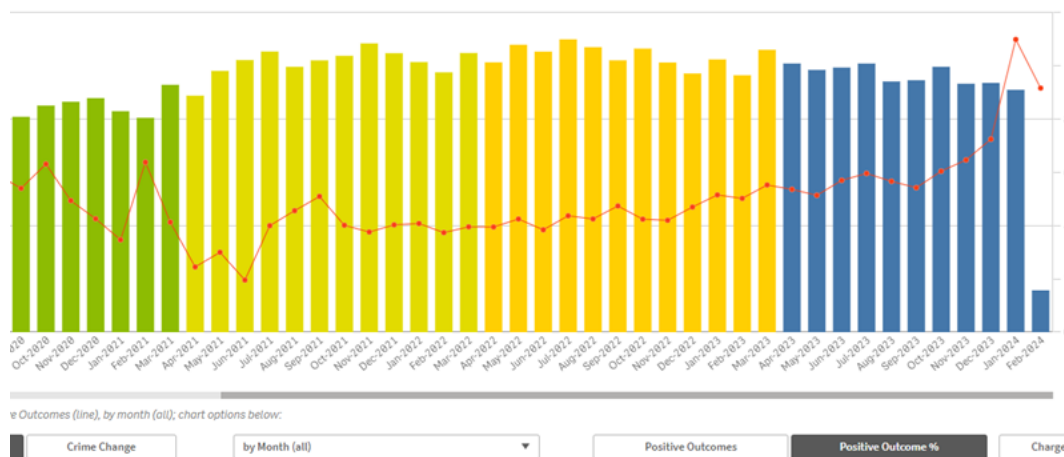
- a. YTD the positive outcome rate is 8.15%. This is an increase of 1.58% since the last paper. In terms of total volume, this is 5676 more positive outcomes YTD as shown in the chart below

TD Crime **,901** ^{23/24} YTD Crime **282,151** ^{23/24} YTD % Change **-9.54%** ^{23/24} YTD Positive Outcomes **22,989** ^{23/24} YTD Crime **282,151** ^{23/24} YTD Outcome Rat **8.15%**



b. In relation to victim-based crimes, the number of crimes has continued to reduce YTD. With outcomes currently at 6.41% which is double the number reported by HMICFRS at the time of the inspection, as shown below

D Crime **862** ^{23/24} YTD Crime **245,396** ^{23/24} YTD % Change **-7.35%** ^{23/24} YTD Positive Outcomes **15,727** ^{23/24} YTD Crime **245,396** ^{23/24} YTD Outcome Rate **6.41%**



30. Make sure it is using outcomes appropriately, in a way that complies with force and national policies, leading to satisfactory results for victims

a. A dedicated Outcome Review Team has been set up to reconsider previously filed crimes where the outcome may have been misapplied, based on the investigative detail. In seven weeks, over 500 positive outcomes have been claimed for crimes that had been incorrectly filed as NFA. This team is in addition to the Criminal Justice OOCR team who are reviewing community resolutions administered for the Divert programme that had likewise been filed as NFA for technical reasons.

- b. Taking learning from both, Operation Vanguard will look to roll out training to staff about the appropriate use of outcomes; detailing what they are and when they should be used.

Protecting Vulnerable People – MARAC

‘The force needs to make sure that its multi-agency risk assessment conferences work effectively to keep vulnerable people safe’

- 31. Op Willowbay was initiated to address the backlog in referrals that had been highlighted.
- 32. HMICFRS made four recommendations in relation to this cause of concern.
- 33. **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**
 - a. The table below shows the reductions in the number of cases awaiting a MARAC and also the number of working days for a MARAC to be held.

LPA	Number of cases awaiting MARAC 06/10/23	Number of cases awaiting MARAC 04/01/24	Number of cases awaiting MARAC 01/02/24	Maximum number of working days for a MARAC 01/02/24
Birmingham	285	95	65	7
Coventry	132	20	17	13
Solihull	26	9	3	11
Sandwell	90	33	30	18
Dudley	91	4	8	13
Walsall	28	6	13	19
Wolverhampton	116	11	8	12

- b. Over the last three months, the numbers have remained within the 28 days that is recommended in SafeLives guidance.
 - c. It is important to highlight that the MARAC’s for high risk DA are in addition to basic safeguarding given to all DA incidents.
- 34. **Prepare a plan for how it will reduce the backlog of multi-agency risk assessment conference cases.**

- a. WMP has been able to reduce the backlog through the implementation of interim guidance.
- b. This guidance was developed by completing a scoping exercise with other forces.

Within six months WMP should:

- 35. **Introduce a multi-agency risk assessment conference structure that can manage current and future demand effectively.**
 - a. A business analyst has been aligned to understand the volume and impact of a series of business rules contained within the interim guidance.
 - b. The use of the interim guidance to reduce the backlogs has indicated that it will support in the reducing the incoming demand by in excess of 21%.
 - c. In principle funding has been agreed with the OPCC to support additional MARAC's where required and an SLA is being developed.
 - d. Consultation has commenced by key strategic partners to ensure that MARAC arrangements are future proofed.
 - e. Tolerance levels are being developed along with trigger plans for use where those tolerance levels are breached.
- 36. **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.**
 - a. There are existing partnership meetings in place on each LPA (DA Strategic Group) where MARAC is a standing agenda item.
 - b. In early 2024, there will be two additional boards set-up to support the governance around MARAC. These are:
 - i. MARAC Strategic Governance Board (chaired by the OPCC)
 - ii. Regional MARAC Operational Group (chaired by the regional MARAC lead)

Managing Offenders and Suspects – Sex Offender Managers

'The force does not manage the risk posed to the public by Registered Sex Offenders effectively

- 37. HMICFRS made six recommendations in relation to this cause of concern
- 38. **Ensure the operating model supports the robust management of registered sex offenders by trained staff to minimise the risk to children**

- a. The new operating model that was introduced in April 2023 means that SOMs (Sex Offender Managers) teams now fall under a single leadership within the PPU with a dedicated Chief Inspector and three Inspectors.
- b. Whilst under a central command, the SOMs are still based within Local Policing Areas (LPA's) to continue the strong working relationships with the LPA's and partners.
- c. There has been an uplift into SOMs of 2 x sergeants and 12 constables.
- d. All SOMs complete a 10-day MOSOVO and 3-day ViSOR course. Where staff join the department and are waiting for courses, they work alongside an experienced SOM in order to begin to learn the role.
- e. CPD sessions are run for all SOMs every 6 months, as well as them attending broader CPD sessions for PPU.

39. Ensure that 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.

- a. The new operating model allows for a more streamlined and consistent management approach.
- b. There are a series of meeting structures that have now been implemented at all levels which allow for timely decisions and action to be taken at an operational and more strategic level.
- c. There is a fortnightly workforce strategy meeting, to ensure that critical staffing issues can continually be monitored and any vacancies and sickness that are causing an issue can be addressed.

40. 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

- a. Operation Rosaria is the WMP response to reduce the backlogs of work within SOMs.
- b. The visibility of performance information for SOMS has significantly improved since the HMICFRS inspection by the development of a Qlik dashboard that breaks down performance and demand by area and team and individual SOM.
- c. The app provides a breakdown of the number of Registered Sex Offenders (RSO's), RMP's, ARMS, supervisor reviews as well as a mapping function.
- d. The current position in terms of demand (compared to June 2023 at the time of inspection)

- i. Outstanding initial ARMS – 4 (52)
- ii. Outstanding 12-month ARMS – 36 (219)
- iii. Outstanding RMP Review – 33 (178)
- iv. Outstanding Visits – 65 (236)
- e. Daily reviews take place to review any outstanding demand and resources flexed where there is a need.

41. Supervisors review cases at appropriate intervals in line with expected standards.

- a. As described above, the new Qlik dashboard that has been developed allows supervisors to easily review workload of their teams and understand where work is due, or overdue.

42. It supports sex offender managers' wellbeing

- a. All SOMs have recently been offered psychological clinical screening and where necessary subsequent referrals have been made.
- b. Where officers have had cause to view indecent images of children as part of investigation, proactive TRIM referrals are made.
- c. There is a bi-monthly SOMs wellbeing forum that is chaired by CI's with representatives from across SOMs. Items raised through this are tracked through an action plan as part of the group.

43. Sex offender managers use digital tools effectively to identify offending

- a. A working group has been established with SOMs and digital forensics to improve confidence in the use of available tools as well as opportunities for closer working and best practise.
- b. The working group is chaired by a Detective Inspector who also attends the National Digital Forensics MOSOVO working group and the WMP Digital Forensics Board to ensure a flow of information.
- c. A review has been completed of the available tools, their functionality, utilisation and training needs and next steps are currently being developed.

Managing Offenders and suspects – OCSET

- 44. This cause of concern states '**The force doesn't manage the risk posed by online child abuse offenders effectively**'.
- 45. HMICFRS made eight recommendations in relation to this cause of concern.

46. **Implement an effective management framework so it can make full informed decisions about the current and future capability and capacity it needs to protect children from online child abuse offenders**
- a. A review that has been completed with the support of business analysts based on demand and time taken to complete each aspect of an OCSET investigation. This work resulted in an uplift to the establishment of 1 sergeant and 7 constables.
 - b. Staff joining OCSET commit to becoming PIP2 qualified as well as SCAIDP to allow a greater flex of resources to manage demand. Over half of investigators within the existing establishment hold both PIP2 and SCAIDP and the remaining staff are already making progress to complete.
 - c. Demand within OCSET is reported on during monthly SIM within the PPU as well as QPR with the ACC for crime.
 - d. In addition to the above structures, the demand is reported on a weekly basis to PPU SLT and ACC crime to ensure that the improvements made are sustained.
47. **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.**
- a. During the inspection, there were over 80 packages awaiting enforcement, and over 100 intelligence packages in development.
 - b. This number has now reduced to 13 packages for enforcement and 32 intelligence packages in development.
 - c. An escalation process is in place where there are packages that are outside of the nationally recognised timescales.
 - d. Weekly performance reports are used to ensure that numbers do not begin to increase again and that demand is being managed appropriately.
 - e. Overtime has been used where necessary to manage demand, whilst the recruitment of new staff as part of the agreed uplift into this area continues.
48. **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.**
- a. The timescales for enforcement are set in line with national standards:
 - i. Very high risk – 48 hours
 - ii. High risk – 7 days

- iii. Medium risk – 21 days
 - iv. Standard risk – 60 days
 - b. There are currently no very high risk or high-risk packages, 5 medium risk (oldest 7 days) and 5 standard risk (oldest 35 days).
 - c. Performance monitoring in this area continues to be developed.
- 49. **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.**
 - a. A pilot has been run within Birmingham, that makes referrals at a much earlier stage, and therefore complies with the national OCSET plan.
 - b. The reason for delaying notification earlier was due to the risk of partners inadvertently altering suspects of the intelligence and therefore impacting the investigation.
 - c. During the duration of the pilot, no investigations were compromised, and also lead to better information sharing with partners.
 - d. As a result of this successful pilot, this has now been rolled out to all 7 local authorities.
 - e. Weekly audits take place to ensure compliance and no adverse impacts.
- 50. **To assess the demand faced by the digital forensics unit and mitigates the effect of any delays caused by evidence not yet being available.**
 - a. The total number of unallocated cases has continued to decrease, currently at 89 down from 110 in December.
 - b. The number of cases received has continued to increase with 251 received in January 2024.
- 51. **It uses performance information to accurately assess and respond to the demands faced by the online child sexual exploitation team.**
 - a. A new process has been introduced to track and report a number of areas of OCSET demand. This process will allow WMP to better understand and respond to the demand.
 - b. As well as the volume and overall timescales that are currently available, this new process will allow the entire process to be broken down to understand the timeliness at each individual stage and also tie in the outcome of the activity.

Next Steps

52. The Chief Constable and the Police & Crime Commissioner attended the Police Performance Oversight Group on the 16th January. The feedback was positive with recognition of the significant amount of work that has been done.
53. WMP continues to engage with HMICFRS to establish a timeline to remove the force from its engage status.
54. The next meeting with HMICFRS, specifically in relation to our engaged status takes place at the beginning of March.

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