



Police and Crime Plan Priority: Preventing and Reducing Crime

Title: Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG)

Presented by: Supt. Michelle Davies

Purpose of Paper

The purpose of this paper is to review, and report on, the progress made by West Midlands Police (WMP) in tackling Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG), with a particular focus on work conducted to prevent VAWG crimes during 2023/24 since VAWG became part of the strategic policing requirement.

West Midlands Police VAWG Strategy

The current WMP VAWG strategy covers the period of 2021–2024. The new VAWG Strategy 2024–2027 is in development and follows the principles of the new National Framework for Delivery (NFD) which was endorsed by Chiefs Council in December 2023. The new NFD is anticipated for publication March 2024.

The previous VAWG strategy allowed WMP to drive activity to improve the response to VAWG across six well defined strands which synergised to the three pillars of the VAWG National Framework for Delivery 2021–2024.

The VAWG National Framework for Delivery 2024-2027 uses the 4P principles so that policing will focus on outcomes that make a real difference to tackling the epidemic of VAWG related crime.

The 4P approach is well used in developing policing strategy. It ensures a focus on preparing for VAWG offending, protecting individuals, families, and communities, pursuing perpetrators, and preventing crime.

Alongside the National Framework for Delivery, forces have been provided with a self-assessment template to support them in reviewing and refreshing their local VAWG action plans and conducting a gap analysis of their activity.

The WMP VAWG action plan for 2024-2027 will prioritise activity, recognising that there are competing demands within policing, whilst reflecting the need to respond to VAWG as a national threat.

VAWG Governance

The scope of VAWG is wide and far reaching and therefore governance is executed through a number of Boards, Steering Groups and Panels at operational, strategic, and executive levels. The internal governance docks into partnership governance to drive the necessary whole system approach.

At command level, each command holds a monthly Service Improvement Meeting (SIM); this is supported by a performance side deck. Command dependant and relevant, the slide deck will contain aspects of VAWG. For example, the Public Protection Command SIM focus on DA, RASSO, MARAC, OSCET, Child Abuse and SOMs.

There are a series of cross command thematic Boards such as Op Soteria (RASSO) and DA Strategic Board which scrutinise performance for single thematic.

There a number of FET chaired Boards which executed executive governance over the combination of single thematic and individual command delivery, progress and performance such as the Vulnerability Improvement Board, VAWG Board, Crime Governance Board, Victim Thematic Board.

Overarching all Boards is the Performance Panel, chaired by the DCC, attended by all Heads of Department and supported SDA and performance pack. VAWG is a standard performance item within this including DA and RASSO.

Domestic Abuse

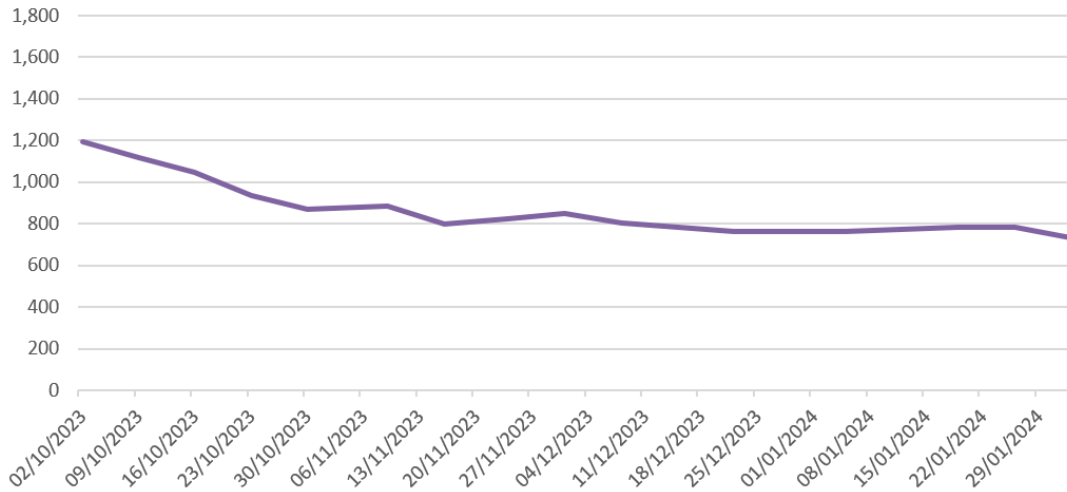
Outstanding Suspects

2023/24 has seen significant process change in how WMP responds to reports of domestic abuse. The introduction of a Domestic Abuse Desk in April 2023 and, from September 2023, the allocation of standard and medium risk domestic abuse investigations to Local Policing Area (LPA) teams to drive local ownership and accountability under Op MODEL. High risk domestic abuse is retained in specialist capability of domestic abuse investigators within the Public Protection Unit (PPU).

Post model change, the reduction of outstanding suspects for domestic abuse offences has been a particular focus of attention and the number of outstanding offenders continually reduces month on month.

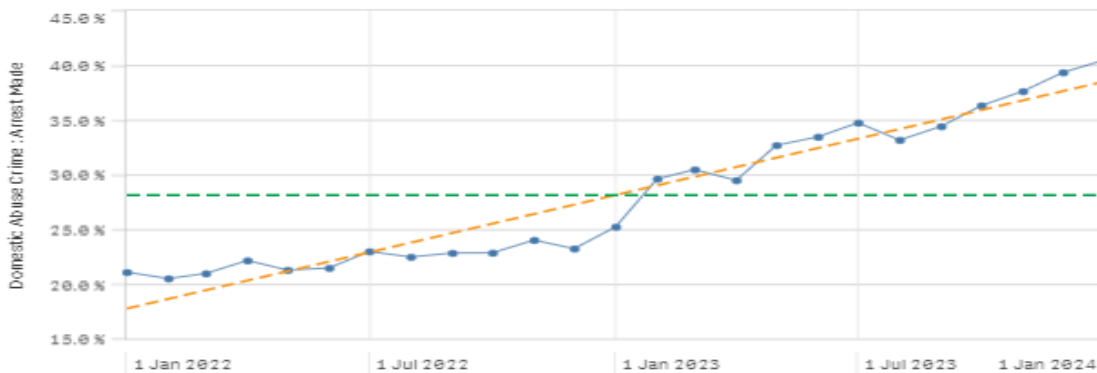
WMP recognises that reducing the number of outstanding suspects for domestic abuse offences plays a considerable part in increasing community confidence, protecting vulnerable victims, and deterring perpetrators from committing further domestic abuse.

Clear identification of outstanding suspects, culture shift, and robust governance has provided improved and sustainable performance. The number of outstanding suspects wanted for domestic abuse offences has decreased from 1,195 in October 2023 to 730 in January 2024, a 39% reduction. This is demonstrated by the below chart.



Outstanding domestic abuse suspects against time.

Furthermore, as can be seen from the next chart, the arrest rate for suspects of domestic abuse related offences has increased to just over 40%, representing a near 100% increase over the last 12 months. This significant increase in performance has been achieved since the implementation of the new model and demonstrates WMP's commitment to increasing community confidence, protecting vulnerable victims, and deterring perpetrators from committing further domestic abuse.



Arrest rate for domestic rate against time.

Domestic Abuse - Repeat Offenders

As above, Op MODEL allocated standard and medium risk cases to local LPA investigators, however an escalation process was introduced to ensure appropriate specialist capability lead investigation for cases whereby:

- any perpetrator that had offended against the same victim on three occasions within a 12-month period
- same perpetrator offends against two different victims in a 12-month period

This highlights the focus that WMP places on ensuring those who perpetrate in such a manner are prioritised appropriately.

For such cases, the appropriate safeguarding support and listing for a MARAC will be considered against risk.

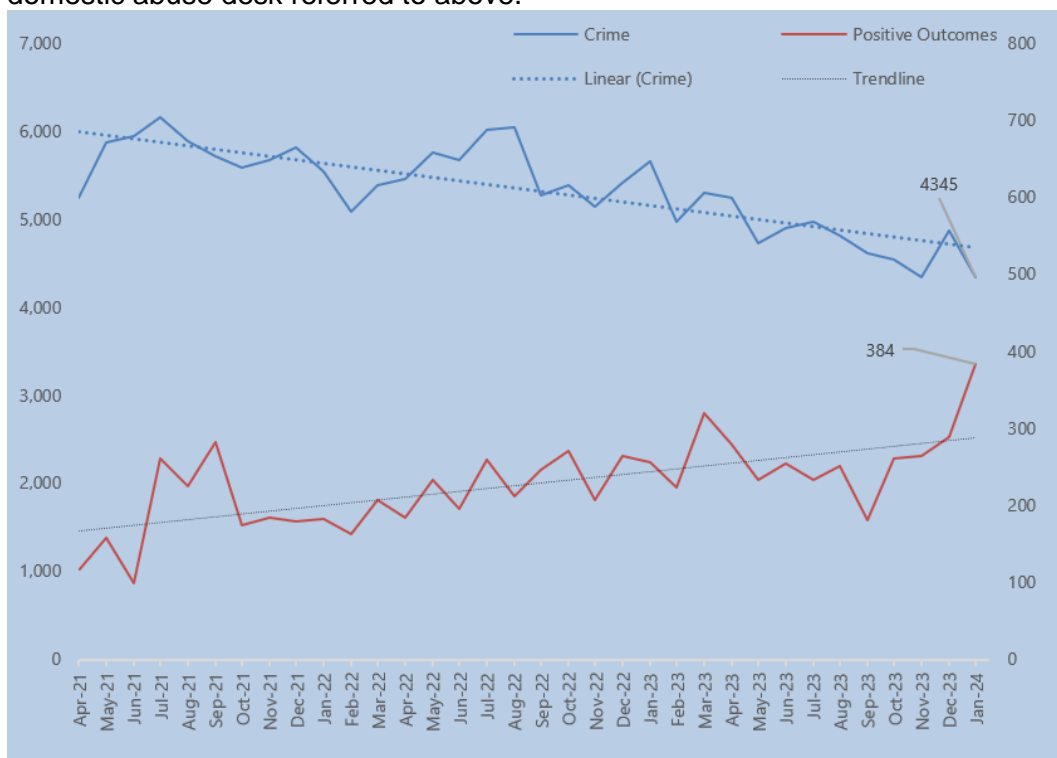
Domestic Abuse - Increasing Positive Outcomes

The below figure shows domestic abuse positive outcome rates against time. The overall trend is an increase in positive outcomes over the last 2 years.

WMP are committed to continuing this trend; increasing the number of evidence led prosecutions and reducing the number of cases filed as a result of the victim not feeling able to support a prosecution.

Research shows that one of the key reasons' victims feel unable to support, or feel unable to continue to support, prosecutions is the length of time it can take to take a case from 'report to court'. It can be seen that there is a direct correlation with victims withdrawing when long periods are taken to put the perpetrator before a court.

One of the ways WMP are seeking to reduce that position is via the introduction of the domestic abuse desk referred to above.



Domestic abuse positive outcome rates against time and reported domestic abuse crime.

The purpose of the domestic abuse desk is to deal with criteria identified domestic abuse incidents using a video calling response, referred to nationally as Rapid Video Response (RVR).

The team also retains the review and allocation function for the PPU, in which the majority of non-sexual crime reports with adult victims allocated to the PPU, are triaged. Some are allocated out for further investigation and others filed with suitable safeguarding being put in place.

The domestic abuse desk aims to provide the highest quality of service to victims, using officers who only deal with Domestic Abuse; and who therefore have a specialism in the field, supported by regular continuous professional development.

Furthermore, Birmingham and Solihull Women's Aid are embedded within the team, working alongside the staff at Bournville Lane Police Station on Monday, Wednesday and Thursday.

At other times the team can refer victims to them for support via email. WMP are currently in positive talks with commissioned providers covering the other areas of the West Midlands to partner with the team in a similar way.

Rapid Video Response allows for a much swifter response to a victim's call for service compared with traditional officer deployment.

Victims are transferred through to an officer within approximately 10 mins which affords a handover from call handler to DA Desk Sergeant. By contrast the service level agreement for officer deployment is within 24 hrs.

The faster response time not only prevents unnecessary inconvenience to the victim but allows for a quicker assessment of risk, faster implementation of safeguarding measures and the swifter progression of the matter into further investigation.

There are particular benefits in Domestic Violence situations in dealing with the matter at the time the victim feels able to report it. Such as victims sometimes only have a limited window when it is safe for them to make contact and may lose confidence or suffer pressure from the suspect in the interim, if there is a delay in the policing response.

The domestic abuse desk function will be subject to review using full academic rigour. While it is not possible to report on that review at this early stage it is anticipated that, due to the anecdotal evidence of staff, the domestic abuse desk function will be shown to have had a positive effect on domestic abuse outcome rates and reduced the number of investigations closed as outcome code 16, which refers to when evidential difficulties have prevented a prosecution and the victim felt unable to support the investigation or felt unable to continue with their initial support for the investigation.

The feedback from victims that have utilised RVR has been positive and it has been the preferred method of contact.

Domestic Abuse – Civil Orders

A new search function will be launched on the Business Insights platform to all supervisors and managers across WMP.

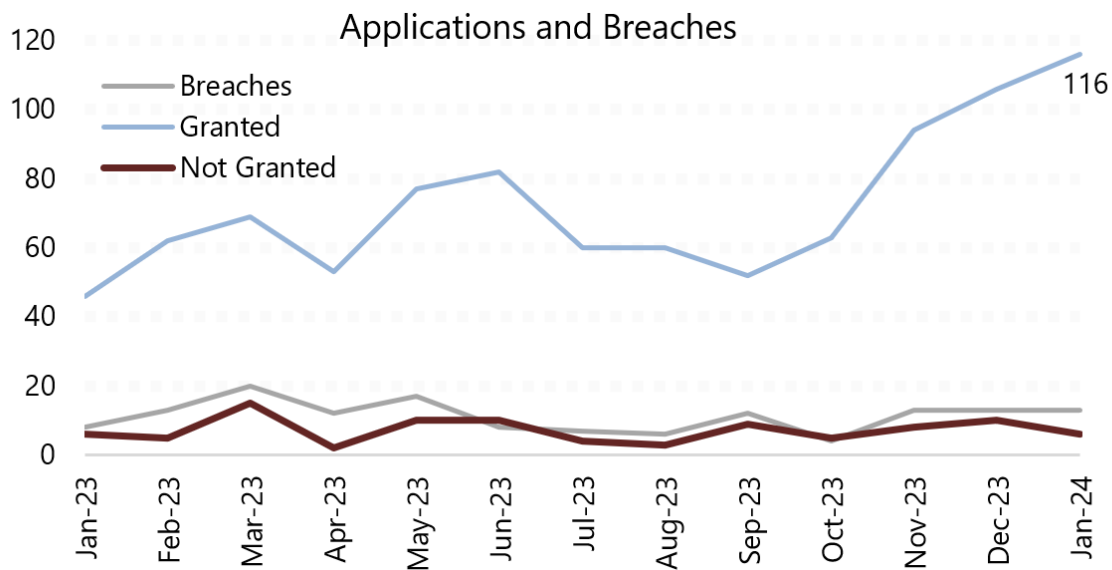
This search function will interrogate Connect to identify which orders and civil interventions are live at a force, LPA, and neighbourhood level. The search prioritises live orders, but historic orders are still retained. It will identify based on where the perpetrator and/or victim reside, enabling LPAs to proactively monitor and manage more effectively. This search function will be available imminently.

Furthermore, to ensure that local officers are aware of the all new and currently live orders, Domestic Violence Prevention Orders (DVPOs), Stalking Prevention Orders (SPOs), and non-molestation orders are updated onto the Police National Computer and Connect and a daily email is currently being sent to LPAs listing all live and new orders by area.

SPOs are also reviewed monthly at Local Tactical Delivery Boards (LTDBs) across WMP to ensure that they are being managed appropriately.

As can be seen from the below figure there has been a significant increase in the utilisation of DVPNs and DVPO during Q3 of 2023/24. This is due to the increased awareness of DVPNs / DVPOs as a preventative tactic and an increased level of productivity delivered through investment into the civil orders team. Furthermore, while the volume of applications

has significantly increased, the percentage of those applications not being granted at court has decreased, demonstrating the increased professionalisation of the civil orders team and their effectiveness in securing these orders.



DVPO applications granted and DVPO breaches reported against time.

While the above represents a significant improvement in performance, it is also recognised that there is the potential for even greater levels of performance in this area. Currently, WMP estimate that approximately 5% to 16% of all arrests for violent domestic abuse offences should result in a DVPN being served. The actual rate is currently 7% which is towards the low end of this estimated range, suggesting that there is further opportunity to increase the utilisation of DVPNs and, by extension, DVPOs in the future.

Stalking and Harassment

There have been consistent rises in performance for stalking and harassment cases in the last twelve months and the trajectory is one that will see such increase continue moving forward.

In the performance year 2022/23 there was a positive outcome rate for domestic abuse related stalking and harassment of 4.2%. In the year 2023/24 to date that position has risen to 5.5%.

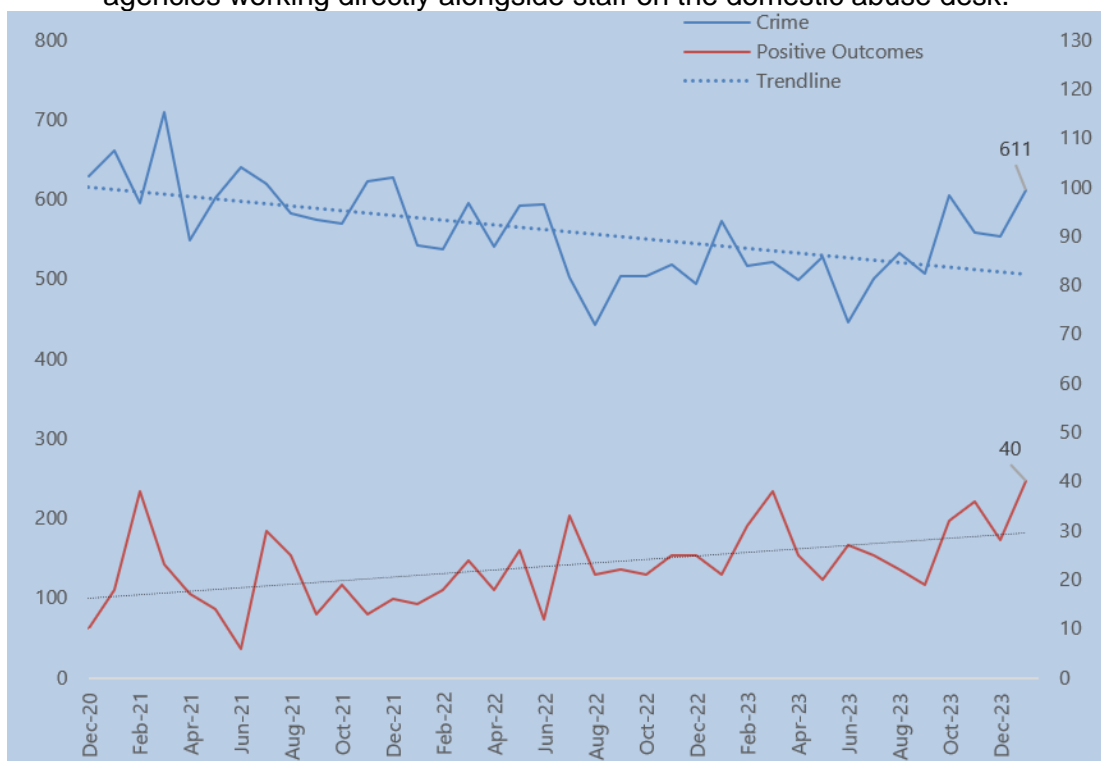
In recent months, the average monthly positive outcome rate was just under 9% and shows that the performance is now consistently outperforming that previously recorded and is on course to finish the year with an overall 6% outcome rate. The outcome rates for non-domestic abuse stalking and harassment are following a similar trajectory.

However, it is accepted while 6% would represent a significant improvement it is still only 6% and this position needs to improve further still.

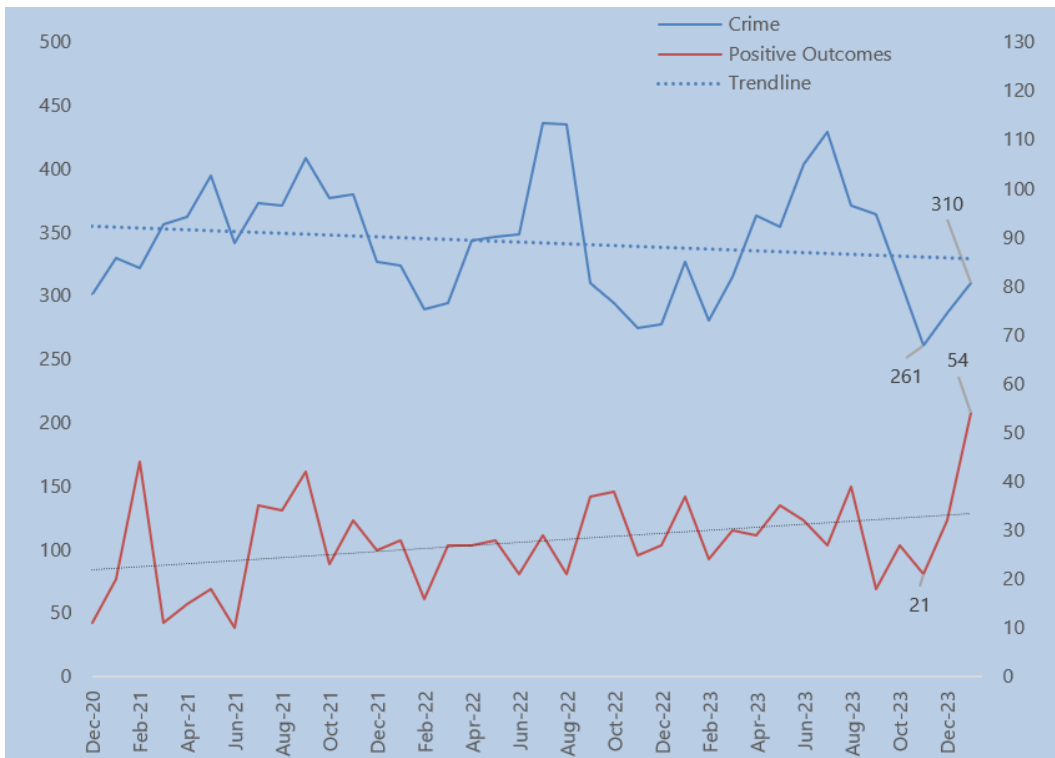
It is believed that the structural and process changes implemented over 2023/24 have contributed to the increases in performance and have laid the foundation for sustainable and continuous improvements.

This is due to a number of factors including:

- Much wider ownership and responsibility across both PPU and LPA's for all domestic abuse investigations;
- Increased knowledge and partnership working with CPS that is seeing month on month increases in evidence led prosecutions;
- Increased use of Domestic Violence Prevention Notices (DVPNs) and other civil orders, protecting victims and putting greater control over perpetrators;
- Increased use of Out of Court Disposals (OOCs) that is seeing more offenders undertaking behavioural change interventions that research shows reduces offending;
- Force-wide culture of protecting vulnerable victims and tackling outstanding offenders.
- Increased partnership working that is strengthening relationships and bring all parties closer together to support victims and tighten the grip on offending, such as the use of Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVAs) at court and specialist support agencies working directly alongside staff on the domestic abuse desk.



Positive outcome rates for domestic abuse related stalking against time and overall reported domestic abuse related stalking.



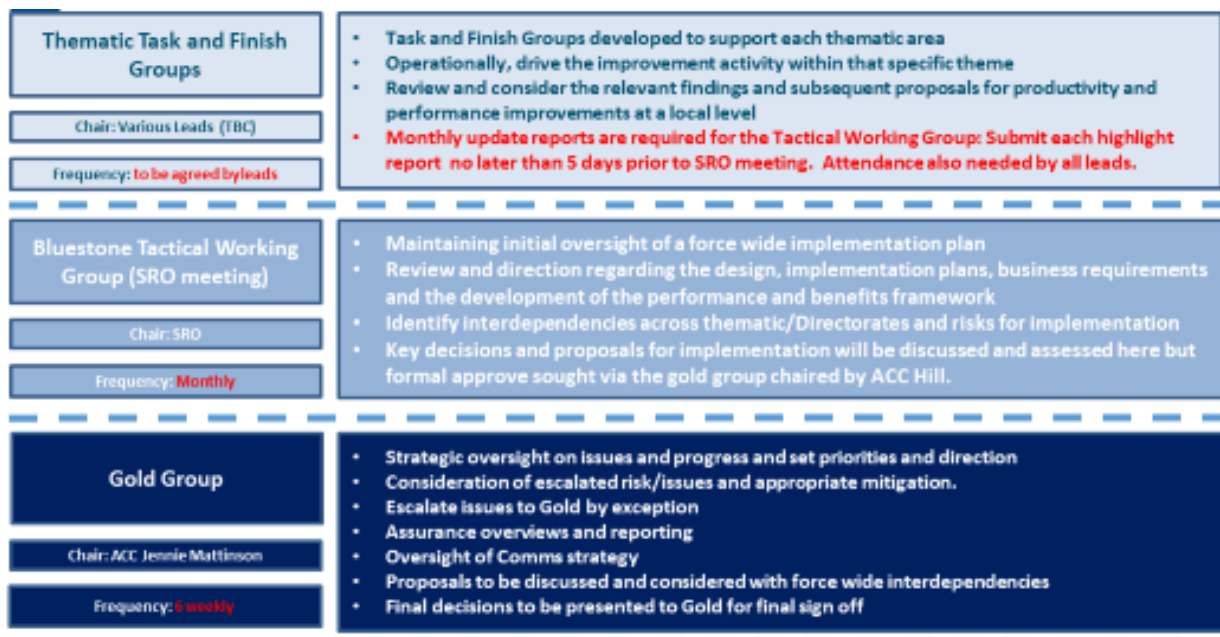
Positive outcome rates for domestic abuse related harassment against time and overall reported domestic abuse related harassment.

Rape and Serious Sexual Offences (RASSO)

As one of the pathfinder Forces WMP underwent the academic review as part of Operation Soteria in 2022. The Soteria findings along with the recommendations from an external review conducted by PWC and later internal business transformation review were translated into 52 initial recommendations and developed the first iteration of the RASSO transformation plan.

These recommendations spanned across the 6 Pillars identified from the Phase 1 research and helped to shape the strategic vision, providing clarity and focus on specific areas of priority.

A new governance and performance framework were implemented to provide strategic oversight and ensure operational delivery.



Over the last year the majority of these have recommendations have been completed with other actions generated showing continuous improvements made.

The Strategic Police & Crime Board RASSO audit recommendations have just been submitted for finalisation. Again, this audit recognises the good progress made with the majority of recommendations being considered implemented, two considered partly implemented and one superseded by the Op Vanguard QATT process.

In October 2023, WMP was inspected as part of the Soteria Thematic Inspection and received excellent feedback across the 6 pillars.

WMP await the formal report and recommendations. WMP is awaiting feedback from the Op Soteria self-assessment submitted in December 2023 (expected imminently) and is currently completing the second version of the transformation planning tool / national operating model implementation plan.

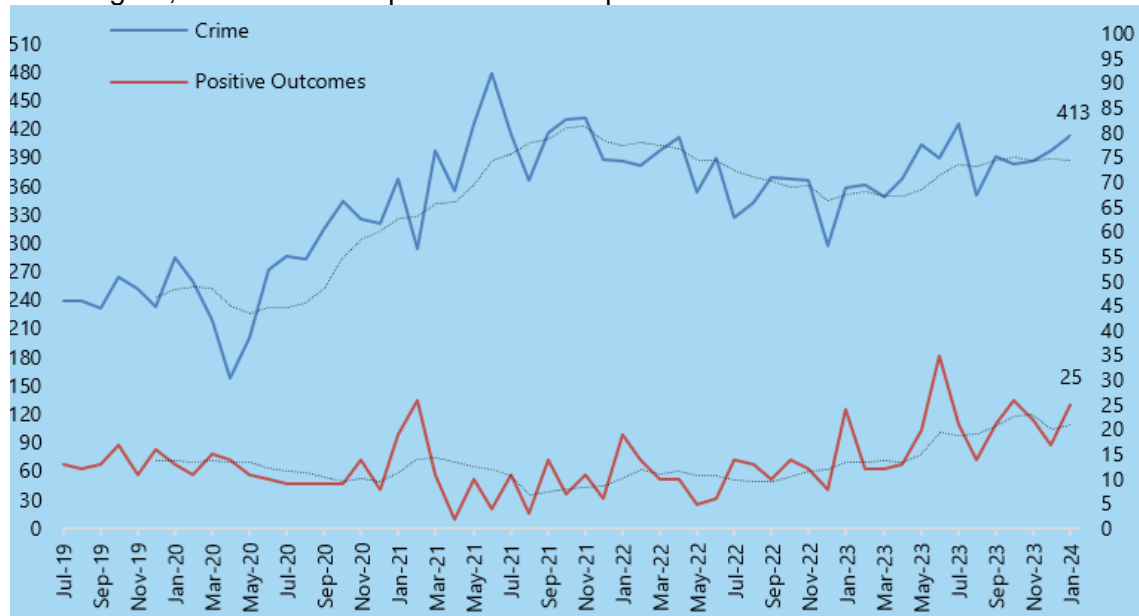
Work conducted in this area over 2023/24 includes:

- Op Soteria delivery plan – leading the way on a number of areas;
- Op Iridium review of outstanding investigations;
- Review of workloads levels and the impact on the victim;
- Realising the benefits of the new shift pattern and investment in the non-recent team;
- Home Office Special Grant Funding;
- Supporting national work on Outcome 15/16;
- Improved early advice process with CPS;
- £200K funding of posts and wellbeing program;
- New performance framework and victim focused KPIs;
- Qualitative audits introduced with continuous learning taking place;
- Op Soteria webpage and comms campaign;
- Wellbeing as a critical part of continuous professional development;
- Inspire wellbeing initiative with further academic funding;
- Improved training offer and support for students.

All of this work has led to demonstrable improvements in outcomes, despite an 8.4% increase in reporting in 2023/24 when compared with the same period in 2022/23.

The year to date positive outcome rate is currently 5.5% compared to 2.3% in June 2022, with a 105% increase in cases being referred to the CPS for early advice. Furthermore, the days taken between report and charge is significantly lower than the national average, as is the number of days between referral to CPS and a charging decision.

Currently, 92% of rape investigations are concluded within 12 months by WMP. The year-to-date positive outcome rate for rape investigations is 5.5% and as can be seen from the below figure, outcomes for rape continue an upward trend within normal variation.



Positive outcomes for rape investigations against time and total recorded rape offences. While there is no specific performance target for RASSO, WMP has developed a performance framework aligned to the victim’s journey and the investigation map. This has been key in influencing WMP performance measures with multi-dimensional performance measures that look more broadly at quality investigations, staff wellbeing and procedural justice as opposed to just criminal justice outcomes.

This continues to be enhanced, with partnership data, victim feedback and a holistic view across investigations and support for victims to understand effectiveness/gaps in commissioning.

For example, WMP monitors performance against the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime with a contact plan being agreed and recorded for over 80% of rape investigations and over 80% of victims being interviewed within 30 days of making a report to WMP.

WMP anticipate further improvements in compliance with the introduction of a dedicated victim engagement officer for RASSO, funded through Op Soteria.

Through Op Soteria methodology, WMP are able to identify the most vulnerable and repeat victims of sexual abuse. MARAC style multi agency case conferences are now delivering the right approach to enhance support and interventions to protect and safeguard this cohort.

Engage

On the 24 November 2023, HMICFRS placed WMP into ‘enhanced monitoring’ otherwise known as ‘Engage’.

One of the causes for concern related an area of business within the definition of VAWG.

Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC)

This cause of concern stated 'The force needs to make sure that its multi-agency risk assessment conferences work effectively to keep vulnerable people safe.'

Immediately, West Midlands Police should: 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 they need;

Op WILLOWBAY was WMP MARAC Rapid Improvement Plan and went live prior to HMIC reporting.

The headline of OP WILLOWBAY activity was:

- Completed a scoping exercise to understand the approaches of those forces identified in the Linxs report, forces in our most similar group and a national benchmarking exercise; this has been completed across 22 Forces. The scoping exercise has been conducted by a dedicated resource created under Op WILLOWBAY.

Most forces describe an uplift of MARAC cases that exceeds Safelives guidance – scoping document available

- Mapped safeguarding interoperability to ensure correct and most appropriate safeguarding pathways are being utilised
- Commissioned analytical capacity to understand the MARAC volume and impact of a series of business rules contained within interim guidance and developed a MARAC Team model to meet demand.
- Developed and adopted interim guidance which adopts and adapts best practice threshold testing for referral high risk. This has been tested as proof of concept and is anticipated to reduce MARAC volume by 21%.
- Developed tolerance measures with trigger plans to address breaches of upper and lower control limits.

The above activity has driven 2 metrics:

1. Significant reduction in time from referral to hearing:
 - Data from 08 December reports 4-11-week timeframe across 7 LPAs
 - Data from 29 February reports maximum of 3-week delay (varies across 7 LPAs from 8 to 20 calendar days).
2. Reduction in volume of cases:
 - Data from 08 December reports 591 cases
 - Data from 29 February reports 170 cases

The impact is summarised in the table below

MARAC															
	08/12/2023	14/12/2023	21/12/2023	28/12/2023	04/01/2024	08/01/2024	11/01/2024	15/01/2024	18/01/2024	25/01/2024	01/02/2024	08/02/2024	15/02/2024	22/02/2024	29/02/2024
LPA	Cases awaiting MARAC	Cases awaiting MARAC	Cases awaiting MARAC	Cases awaiting MARAC	Cases awaiting MARAC	Cases awaiting MARAC	Cases awaiting MARAC	Cases awaiting MARAC	Cases awaiting MARAC	Cases awaiting MARAC	Cases awaiting MARAC	Cases awaiting MARAC	Cases awaiting MARAC	Cases awaiting MARAC	Cases awaiting MARAC
Birmingham	183	163	148	129	95	105	85	86	85	69	65	78	86	74	75
Coventry	138	106	41	27	20	32	35	39	45	34	17	29	20	19	10
Solihull	9	15	5	7	9	15	17	16	3	5	3	5	6	12	6
Sandwell	119	94	80	88	33	23	12	18	27	16	30	14	34	20	39
Dudley	71	36	17	25	5	14	15	20	12	18	8	18	27	18	12
Walsall	41	42	7	10	6	19	4	6	10	8	13	7	11	11	22
Wolverhampton	30	36	22	14	11	32	21	28	15	20	8	12	18	19	6
Total	591	492	320	300	179	240	189	213	197	170	144	163	202	173	170

	08/12/2023	14/12/2023	21/12/2023	28/12/2023	04/01/2024	08/01/2024	11/01/2024	15/01/2024	18/01/2024	25/01/2024	01/02/2024	08/02/2024	15/02/2024	22/02/2024	29/02/2024	
	Time from New Referral to Hearing in Weeks	Time from New Referral to Hearing in Weeks	Time from New Referral to Hearing in Weeks	Time from New Referral to Hearing in Weeks	Time from New Referral to Hearing in Weeks	Time from New Referral to Hearing in Weeks	Time from New Referral to Hearing in Weeks	Time from New Referral to Hearing in Weeks	Time from New Referral to Hearing in Weeks	Time from New Referral to Hearing in Weeks	Time from New Referral to Hearing in Weeks	Time from New Referral to Hearing in Calendar Days CHANGE IN MEASURE	Time from New Referral to Hearing in Calendar Days CHANGE IN MEASURE	Time from New Referral to Hearing in Calendar Days CHANGE IN MEASURE	Time from New Referral to Hearing in Calendar Days CHANGE IN MEASURE	Time from New Referral to Hearing in Calendar Days CHANGE IN MEASURE
Birmingham	4	3	3	3	2	2	2	2	2	1	7	12	8	8	8	
Coventry	9	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	13	21	14	14	15	
Solihull	0	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	11	19	12	19	12	
Sandwell	11	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	2	18	12	19	12	19	
Dudley	4	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	2	2	13	21	14	7	14	
Walsall	6	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	2	19	13	20	13	20	
Wolverhampton	4	2	2	2	2	2	3	3	2	2	12	20	13	6	13	

MARAC affords opportunity to discuss and identify additional multi agency action. This is **in addition** to addressing any immediate safeguarding concerns. Immediate safeguarding concerns are addressed by response officers on attendance. These immediate actions include taking positive action in arrest of offender, safeguarding victim and children and appropriate referrals to both statutory and non-statutory services.

Immediately, West Midlands Police should: *prepare a plan for how it will reduce the backlog of multi-agency risk assessment conference cases.*

As above.

Within six months, West Midlands Police should: *introduce a multi-agency risk assessment conference structure that can manage current and future demand efficiently;*

SDA have completed the modelling work based on 3 years of MARAC data and has prediction modelling up to 2026 end.

The modelling predicts a 5% increase in high risk domestic abuse per year over the next 3-year period. The report provides insight on seasonality and proposes the required frequency and cases per meeting to meet demand.

It is through the modelling that the capacity and capability of the MARAC Team has been reviewed and options for a new Team structure considered.

The OPCC has agreed £50k and annual 2.5% per annum uplift to Service Level Agreement with WMP which will enable greater capacity within the Team.

Within six months, West Midlands Police should: *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.*

MARAC governance is executed through a new 3 tiers structure.

The West Midlands Strategic Safeguarding Forum provides executive governance through bi-annual reporting. Representation at this meeting includes Chair of 3 ICBs operating across region, the Director of Children Services and Adults Services from each of 7 LPAs and the ACC for Crime. Chair is

Single thematic strategic governance is executed through the MARAC Strategic Governance Group. This meeting occurs quarterly and is chaired by the Deputy Chief Executive of the OPCC and attended by LPA strategic representative, WMP Supt with responsibility for MARAC and Regional MARAC Lead who chairs the Operational Group. The LPA strategic representative provides the conduit to wider LPA (local) partners through Community Safety Partnerships.

Single thematic operational governance is executed through the MARAC Operational Group.

Managing Offenders and Suspects – Sex Offender Managers

This cause of concern states 'The force does not manage the risk posed to the public by Registered Sex Offenders effectively. HMICFRS made six recommendations in relation to this cause of concern:

- Ensure the operating model supports the robust management of registered sex offenders by trained staff to minimise the risk to children
- 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
- 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
- Supervisors review cases at appropriate intervals in line with expected standards
- It supports sex offender managers wellbeing
- Sex offender managers use digital tools effectively to identify offending

Operation Rosaria has been set up to address the required improvements within sex offender management.

As part of the changes to the force operating model in 2023, SOMs moved from LPA ownership to Public Protection. An uplift of 2 sergeants and 12 officers was agreed for the management of registered sex offenders and this recruitment has now taken place.

Furthermore, an additional uplift of a further 10 detective constables into sex offender management teams will take place over 2024/25.

Over the last four weeks, until 8th January 2024, there has been a significant reduction across all areas:

- ARMS – 22 (down from 219)
- RMP's - 20 (down from 178)
- Visits – 56 (down from 236)

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.

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.

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.

Psychological screening has taken place for all sex offender managers and where necessary, referrals have gone in for further support to be offered.

A digital forensics strategy is being developed between SOMS and digital forensics to enhance the opportunities available.

Managing Offenders and suspects – OCSET

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

- 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
- 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.
- 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
- 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
- To assess the demand faced by the digital forensics units and mitigates the effect of any delays caused by evidence not yet being available
- It uses performance information to accurately assess and respond to the demands faced by the online child sexual exploitation team

Around 70% of work into OCSET comes from the NCA, with the remainder being through partners, referrals into Force Contact or through CPSYS to take proactive action.

An uplift of one sergeant and seven officers was agreed for OCSET and this recruitment has now taken place.

HMICFRS also identified when coming into force that WMP was not using Child Abuse Image Database (CAID) enough. WMP now have the 4th highest number of submissions.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

Referrals are now being made to MASH at the earliest opportunity rather than waiting for enforcement to happen.

A single guidance document has been created, that takes into the new Hydrant guidance.

WMP are seeking support from the Hydrant Programme for a peer review in 2024.

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