



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

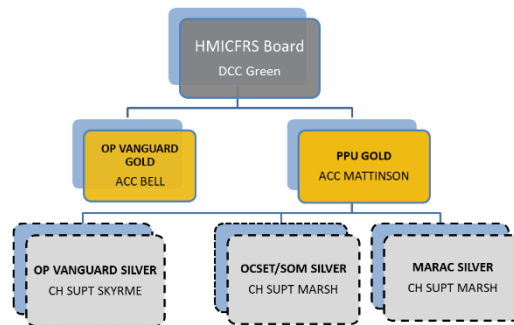
2. HMICFRS issued notice on 23rd January 2023 that WMP would be subject of a PEEL inspection.
3. At the point that HMICFRS give notice, any other inspection work that takes place in force during the inspection period (inspection period is the point from when HMICFRS give notice, until the conclusion 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 described in previous papers have now concluded. A further evening session has been arranged with a target audience of special constables.
- b. A Learning Needs Assessment has been shared with all staff that are involved in investigations, to understand what they need. This survey closes on Monday 26th February, at which point the results will be analysed and inform the next phase of planning.
- c. March 2024 sees the launch of 31 days of action. The ambition with this initiative is that there will be a range of CPD and training during the period (in excess of 20 CPD events already planned) as well as focused activity on investigations and supporting staff at a more local level also. All CPD and training sessions will be recorded so that they are available to all even if not available at the time.
- d. The review to understand the distribution of PIP2 qualified staff has now concluded and again moving to the next phase to then ensure that there is sufficient training provision in place to ensure that we have the right numbers in place.
- e. The Operation Vanguard intranet page continues to grow with new learning material frequently being added.

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

- a. Over 1000 leaders have now attended the Op Vanguard masterclasses. All have been briefed as part of the attendance there to ensure that the learning from the classes is shared with their staff. The principles covered within the masterclasses will support improvements to achieve effective investigations.
- b. A review has been undertaken to seek feedback from stakeholders to understand whether the questions are correct and if any changes need to be made, to ensure that the value is maintained.
- c. Over 4500 QATT reviews have been completed to date.
- d. Below are the gradings in February (compared to January). Each is scored out of 5.
 - i. Overall Grade – 2.7 (2.6)
 - ii. Victim Focus – 2.65 (2.62)
 - iii. Suspect Management – 2.88 (2.81)
 - iv. Investigation Standards – 2.76 (2.71)
 - v. Supervisor Review – 2.32 (2.11)

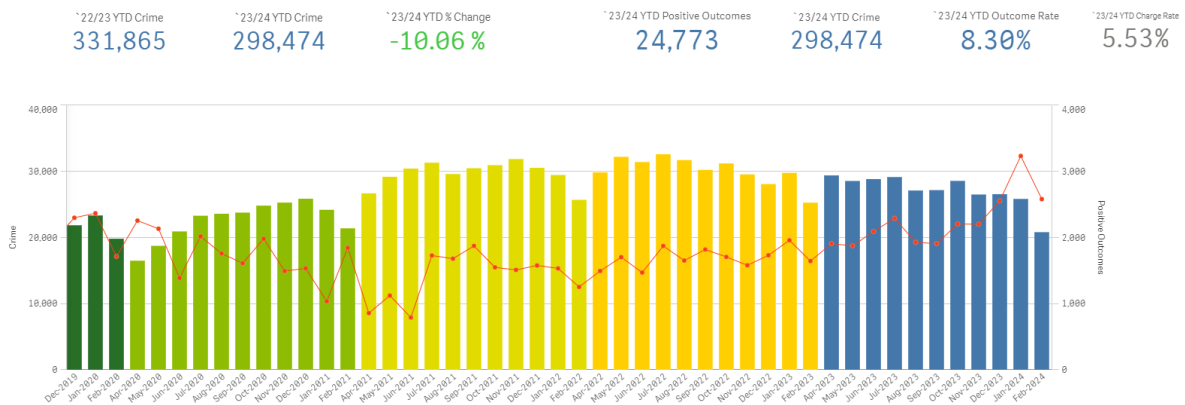
- e. 83% of investigations that are currently open have had a supervisor review completed. This is a slight increase from 82% in the previous paper.

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

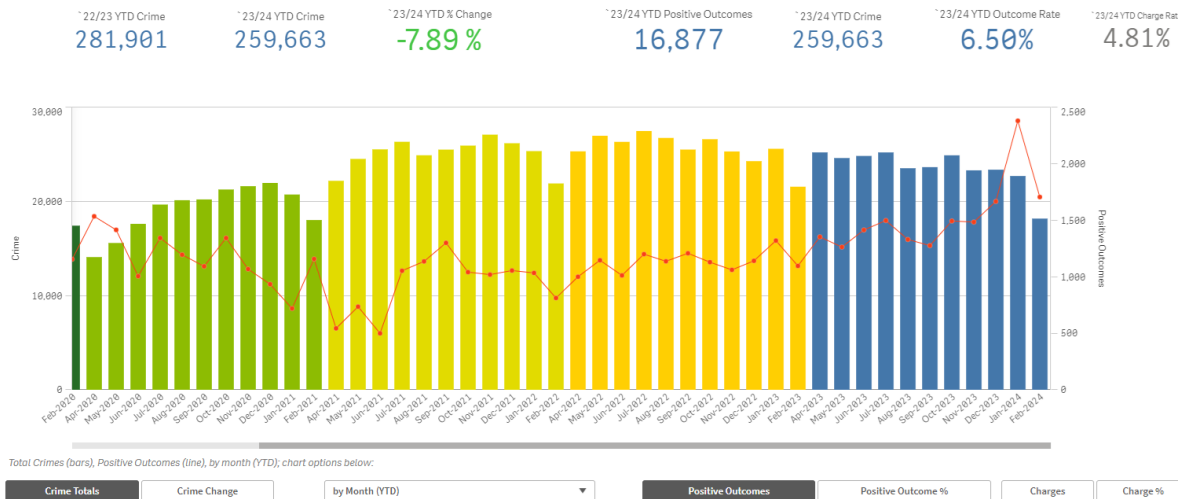
- a. The focus on investigation plans continues, with 93% of investigations having a plan. This is an increase of 1% from the last paper, after going live in early January.
- b. As mentioned in the previous paper, the previous proportionality criteria has been removed, while the Investigations Improvement Unit benchmark with other forces. In the meantime, the removal means that far more investigations are going through to investigators for a further review.
- c. The QATT currently shows the quality of investigations as a score of 2.76 out of 5.

29. Make sure it consistently achieves appropriate outcomes for victims

- a. Total Recorded Crime continues to fall (10.06% reduction on 22/23 from 331,865 to 298,474 in the last paper, and outcomes continue to increase with an outcome rate of 8.30% compared to 8.15% in the last paper).



- b. These improvements continue to show when just focusing on victim based crime, with a 7.89% reduction in recorded crime (compared to 7.35% in the last paper) and an increase in outcomes to 6.5% compared to 6.41% in the last paper).



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. Appropriate application of outcomes continues to be a focus throughout the performance framework, from performance day, through to departmental Service Improvement Meetings.
- b. Application of outcomes also sits as a workstream for the revised Op Vanguard work, to ensure that where necessary, revised guidance and training can be pushed out to staff.
- c. The work of the Outcome Review Team continues following on the from the last update paper.

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 22/02/24	Maximum number of working days for a MARAC 22/02/24
Birmingham	285	74	8
Coventry	132	19	14
Solihull	26	12	19
Sandwell	90	20	12
Dudley	91	18	7
Walsall	28	11	13
Wolverhampton	116	19	6

- b. Over the last three months, the numbers have remained within the 28 days that is recommended in SafeLives guidance.
- c. The reductions in the number of cases awaiting a MARAC have continued to see reductions since October 2023 when these measures began being tracked.
- d. 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. As per the update from the previous paper, 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.
- c. Monitoring continues to ensure that the numbers do not increase however the sustained reductions have been seen for a number of months now.

Within six months WMP should:

35. Introduce a multi-agency risk assessment conference structure that can manage current and future demand effectively.

- a. There is a paper that has gone to Chief Officers within WMP and has been signed off with a number of recommendations made about the

next steps for MARAC taking into account the current and future demand.

- b. These recommendations will be tracked through existing governance structures.
- c. An SLA is currently being developed between WMP and the OPCC which will clarify expectations of the MARAC that is hosted by WMP.

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 no changes to the governance arrangements that were detailed in previous papers, for example:
 - i. There are existing partnership meetings in place on each LPA (DA Strategic Group) where MARAC is a standing agenda item.
 - ii. In early 2024, there will be two additional boards set-up to support the governance around MARAC. These are:
 - 1. MARAC Strategic Governance Board (chaired by the OPCC)
 - 2. 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 operating model changes that have been described in previous papers, which mean that SOMs now all fall under a single Senior Leadership team within the PPU, meaning that there is greater oversight and ability to flex resources where needed to meet demand.
- 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. Performance and demand continue to be tracked through the various governance boards in place, which identify where demand is exceeding

current capacity, and also ensure strategic workforce planning is preparing for future needs.

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. Demand has continued to remain at reduced levels, and have been sustained now for a number of months.
 - b. The current position in terms of demand (compared to June 2023 at the time of inspection)
 - i. Outstanding initial ARMS – 6 (52)
 - ii. Outstanding 12-month ARMS – 39 (219)
 - iii. Outstanding RMP Review – 31 (178)
 - iv. Outstanding Visits – 64 (236)
 - c. 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. Compliance with Approved Professional Practise (APP) continues with supervisors reviewing cases at appropriate points.
42. **It supports sex offender managers' wellbeing**
 - a. Further wellbeing opportunities continue to be explored, however the work previously described continues.
43. **Sex offender managers use digital tools effectively to identify offending**
 - a. Work in this area continues as previously described. The review of the functionality of digital tools, utilisation and training needs will continue to improve the use to support the management of sex offenders.

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 fully informed decisions about the current and future capability and capacity it needs to protect children from online child abuse offenders**

- a. The framework that has been implemented is proving effective in ensuring that demand is being effectively managed both currently and adaptable to any future needs.
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 11 packages for enforcement and 50 intelligence packages in development.
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, 1 high-risk packages, 7 medium risk and 3 standard risk.
 - 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. Referrals continue to be made at the earliest opportunity to local authorities. We continue to monitor to ensure that no investigations are compromised as a result of this.
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 devices being triaged has increased to over 1500, but priority reporting remains within its SLA for the second month.
51. **It uses performance information to accurately assess and respond to the demands faced by the online child sexual exploitation team.**

- a. Performance reporting in this area continues to be developed, to ensure that demand continues to be managed effectively.

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 in the middle of March.

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