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National Policing Priorities Statement

2024-25 Q1 Update

Introduction

In 2021, the Home Office established a set of National Policing Priorities, aiming for each police force to achieve significant reductions or improvements in these areas. These measures are designed to complement the local priorities set by Police and Crime Commissioners in their Police and Crime Plans.

National Policing Priorities

1. Reduce murder and other homicides.
2. Reduce serious violence.
3. Disrupt drug supply and county lines.
4. Reduce neighbourhood crime.
5. Improve victim satisfaction, with a focus on victims of domestic abuse.
6. Tackle fraud and cybercrime.

Reduce murder and other homicides.

In the year ending March 2024, there were 43 homicides in the West Midlands, with 17% related to domestic abuse. West Midlands Police (WMP) proactively addresses Domestic Abuse and Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) and recently launched a VAWG 2023-2027 strategy. The Police and Crime Plan emphasises reducing VAWG, with the OPCC commissioning services like Cautioning and Relationship Abuse (CARA), an early intervention programme that offers alternatives to traditional punishment. The CARA programme provides offenders with tools to confront and change their behaviour through counselling and workshops. This approach is part of a broader strategy to reduce violence and support victims. The WMP's VAWG strategy includes educational campaigns, community outreach, and partnerships with local organisations to provide comprehensive support to victims and reduce repeat offences. In addition, 32% of

homicides involve the use of knives. The Violence Reduction Partnership (VRP), OPCC, and WMP coordinate efforts to address knife crime, as detailed further in the "Reduce Serious Violence" section below.

Reduce serious violence.

In the year ending March 2024, 9% of serious offences involved knives, with the West Midlands reporting the highest rate of knife crimes per 100,000 population. However, there has been a 13% reduction in weapon possession offences. The OPCC and WMP have engaged in initiatives such as weapon sweeps and awareness campaigns. In North Birmingham, the PCC joined police officers in a national campaign to tackle knife crime. Officers conducted weapon sweeps, searched for abandoned knives, and raised community awareness about the dangers of knife crime. The OPCC also supports youth engagement programmes to divert young people from violence, emphasising education and employment opportunities to reduce crime. The OPCC funds weapon surrender bins, which collected 1,118 dangerous weapons between April and June 2024. The VRP, funded by the OPCC, launched the My Tomorrow campaign, encouraging young people to share their views on serious violence, informing police practices to reduce crime.

Disrupt drug supply and county lines.

There were 7,497 recorded drug offences in the year ending March 2024, a 6% reduction from the previous year. WMP conducts operations like Operation Elevate, which targets serious and organised crime. Operation Elevate deployed additional officers to disrupt organised drug operations, resulting in significant arrests and seizures, including over £100,000 in illegal vapes and tobacco. The PCC has recently funded a project helping young people launch music careers, part of My Community Fund, which supports initiatives aimed at diverting young people from crime. The My Community Fund provides financial support to community projects that promote safety and prevent crime, offering alternatives to criminal activity for at-risk young people.

Reduce neighbourhood crime.

The PCC has committed to rebuilding community policing to enhance safety and connect WMP with local communities. The new WMP neighbourhood policing model aims to increase police visibility and foster better relationships with residents and businesses. Recently, a police station re-opened in Birmingham to improve response times and crime resolution. Vehicle crime remains a significant issue, with 34,154 offences in 2023/24. However, it is encouraging to note a 12% reduction in vehicle offences. The PCC has recently published a Car Theft Index to help inform the public about the most stolen car makes and

recommends prevention methods. The Index provides valuable information to help drivers protect their vehicles, and the OPCC offers advice on securing vehicles and using technology to deter theft.

Improve victim satisfaction.

With the launch of the new victims' strategy, WMP have been working diligently to ensure victim care is fully compliant with the Victims' Code and to deliver an efficient and effective service to victims. WMP has improved emergency call response times, with 92% of 999 calls answered within 10 seconds and a 20% improvement in 101 call response times by June 2024. Recently, the PCC secured £6.5 million from the Ministry of Justice to enhance victim support services. A recent Fairness and Belonging Public Survey was conducted to gather public opinions on their experiences with WMP, aligning with the Fairness & Belonging Strategy. The OPCC's Fairness and Belonging Strategy promotes diversity, equality, and inclusion within the police force, aiming to ensure fair treatment for all individuals, regardless of race, gender, sexuality, religion, or disability.

Tackle fraud and cybercrime

Fraud and computer misuse crimes increased by 17% since March 2023, with five crimes per 100,000 people. The PCC launched a public health approach to fraud prevention and signed partners to a strategic plan to tackle the issue. The public health approach to fraud focuses on prevention, education, and community involvement. The PCC's Money Mules Campaign educates young people about the dangers of moving cash for criminals, highlighting the legal consequences and personal risks involved. The PCC's strategic plan involves collaboration with financial institutions, schools, and community organisations to create a unified approach to tackling fraud and cybercrime.