



POLICE AND CRIME PANEL MEETING

REPORT TITLE	VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS
REPORT OF	POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER FOR DERBYSHIRE
DATE	17TH NOVEMBER 2022

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To provide a general update to Police and Crime Panel members concerning work on Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) as depicted within the Police and Crime Plan.

The Commissioner's annual report and interim delivery reports formally submitted to Police and Crime Panel meetings, have previously reported on some of the content within this report.

2. **BACKGROUND**

The Police and Crime Plan for Derbyshire 2021-2025 highlights VAWG within two of the six priority areas, 'Strong Local Policing' and 'Victim Support and Safeguarding'.

Commitment to delivering a Derbyshire specific VAWG strategy, working with police and partners to prevent VAWG and providing help for all victims of domestic abuse, sexual abuse, harassment, and stalking are all sub-delivery points stated within the Plan.

3. **POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER DELIVERY AGAINST VAWG**

3.1 **Police and Crime Plan Priority - Strong Local Policing**

'Commitment to delivering a Derbyshire specific VAWG strategy'

Following the launch of the Police and Crime Plan in November 2021, the Commissioner and her office have worked extensively with partners on developing a new countywide multi-agency strategy designed to consolidate and boost the work to reduce violence against women and girls.

The strategy was finalised and signed by key partners including Derbyshire Constabulary, Derbyshire County Council, Derby City Council and the eight district authorities in May 2022. It was formally launched during the same month and is available for the public to view on the Commissioner's website.

The strategy was co-produced with the public and victims from across the county, taking account of feedback collated by the Commissioner's office through focus groups and a specific survey aimed at women and girls which was launched by the Commissioner and carried out between November 2021 and January 2022.

The strategy outlines keyways in which Derbyshire's public sector agencies will work together to deliver change, seeking support from charities, the private sector, local communities and most importantly, residents from across Derby and Derbyshire.

Since the Strategy was launched, a dedicated VAWG partnership board has been formed comprising of key agencies who signed the strategy including the Police, Derby City and Derbyshire County Council, district and borough councils, Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Service and the Integrated Care Board. This board will report to the respective Derbyshire Safer Communities Board and Safer Derby Board. Progression against the strategy will be tabled at these meetings.

A Derbyshire partnership VAWG action plan is being devised amongst partner agencies of the newly formed VAWG board which will soon be put in place to deliver against the strategy. When developed, the coordinated plan will then be implemented to tackle VAWG related offences across Derbyshire.

A Derbyshire Constabulary specific VAWG action plan has been developed and put in place to complement the strategy. As part of this work, Neighbourhood hotspots for VAWG related crime and incidents will be analysed to inform operational delivery including deployment of resources. The action plan also aligns to a national framework which is consistent with how all forces across England and Wales will tackle VAWG.

3.2 **Police and Crime Plan Priority - Victim Support and Safeguarding**
'Working with police and partners to prevent VAWG'

To help inform the newly published VAWG strategy, the Commissioner launched an online specific VAWG survey in November 2021 to identify what makes women and girls feel unsafe in Derbyshire, where their fear of crime is greatest, and what would make them feel safer. The purpose of the survey was to gather

vital information from the public which could be used to inform both the police and partners on future preventative measures in addition to themes which may feature within the strategy.

The survey invited women, girls, parents, and guardians to share their views anonymously about sexual violence and sexual harassment. In total, over **1,400** responses were received from residents across Derbyshire. The feedback has enabled the Commissioner and partners to better understand concerns in different communities, which will help target initiatives aimed at improving women's safety, and to better understand what action is needed to reduce their vulnerability and keep them safe. Results of the survey are available to view on the Commissioner's website.

In addition to the consultation, the Commissioner and her office facilitated several online focus groups specifically for women and organisations representing women (including women who had been victims of crime), to discuss their concerns regarding VAWG to complement the wider survey which was launched in November 2021. These focus groups enabled detailed discussions to take place, and for the Commissioner and her office to hear first-hand concerns of women, to help inform and shape future work.

The Commissioner and her office are making plans to facilitate a multi-agency VAWG conference in conjunction with partners and the police next year. The

intention of this conference will be to assess progress made against the strategy, monitor performance, and ensure VAWG remains a key priority across agencies within Derby and Derbyshire.

The Commissioner chairs the Derbyshire Criminal Justice Board along with key partners including the police and local authorities. The Board seeks to improve trust and confidence in the Criminal Justice System across communities in Derby and Derbyshire. It particularly focuses on the effectiveness and efficiency of the court process, supporting victims and witnesses, and reducing offending and reoffending.

VAWG is an important business area which is considered across these priority areas. The Commissioner proactively challenges and holds the police accountable to ultimately ensure outcomes are improved for both women and girls. This is achieved through the Commissioner's Performance Scrutiny Meetings (PSM), which is the forum in which the Commissioner holds the Chief Constable to account for delivery surrounding her Police and Crime Plan.

3.3 **Police and Crime Plan Priority - Victim Support and Safeguarding**

'Providing help for all victims of domestic abuse, sexual abuse and violence, harassment, and stalking'

The Commissioner's budget for 2022-23 enabled the creation of a new role within Derbyshire Constabulary. The addition of a Stalking Co-ordinator post was included within the budget by the Chief Constable and the Commissioner in response to an increase in reported incidents within the county. The post has been developed to ensure the quality of investigations across the force, whilst providing increased support for victims of stalking or harassment. This new role will also work with police and partners to increase powers to deal with offenders. The role was filled internally temporarily during the recruitment process. The role was fully operational in the early part of the 2022-23 financial year.

Additionally, as a separate project, funds have been secured for an independent stalking advocate for the county from the Home Office, and an additional stalking advocate to cover the city area has been funded by the Commissioner.

The Commissioner also funds and actively supports 'The Willow Project', which is delivered by Rural Action Derbyshire. The service provides vital support to victims of domestic abuse in rural communities. The initiative was introduced to further inform and enhance understanding of domestic abuse, and to design services appropriate to rural communities. During the year, through social media,

the initiative has been successful in raising awareness of the campaign. In addition, the initiative has been promoted at several rural shows across the county, which have been supported by the Commissioner.

The Commissioner secured additional funding from the Ministry of Justice and Home Office for additional support for existing domestic abuse and sexual abuse providers, as well as investment in additional needs-assessed provision for supporting victims and working with perpetrators of domestic abuse. In addition to the annual core grant of £1.2 million, that supports all victims of crime through different service providers, a further £1.2 million was secured by the Commissioner.

The Commissioner has been awarded a new contract worth over £583k for Refuge, to deliver domestic abuse services over the next three years following a competitive tender process. The newly funded outreach service will deliver tailor-made support packages to help victims of low or medium risk domestic abuse to cope and recover from their experiences. It also aims to protect them and their families from further harm, and to prevent the escalation of abuse as well as reduce the risk of domestic-related homicide.

This is in addition to a range of specialist domestic and sexual abuse victim support services, which are commissioned by the Commissioner, some in partnership with local authorities. The services offer support from standard to high-risk cases. The services provide free confidential, non-judgemental and independent support and advice for any victims residing in Derby and Derbyshire, including children where needed. Referrals to services can be made by individuals, friends, family and/or professionals. Provision includes safe accommodation, outreach, and resettlement support to victims. Children are considered to be victims in their own right under the Domestic Abuse Act. The services can support people who have experienced all forms of domestic and sexual abuse, including stalking, honour based violence, trafficking, forced marriage and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). Personalised support is available

to help with safety plans and through the court process for those who need it. Independent Domestic Violence Advisor's (IDVA's) are commissioned to support all high-risk cases and where necessary those at lower risk levels. A range of additional domestic abuse workers and support services are also funded through extra grant programmes, including educational and intervention programmes for domestic abuse perpetrators.

4. PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY MEETING – VAWG

To increase the level of scrutiny of force performance and provide reassurance to the public, the Commissioner hosted a virtual scrutiny meeting in October 2021 focused specifically on VAWG. The Chief Constable and her senior command team were asked to present a detailed report on the current approach and future plans, which Derbyshire Constabulary have to improve the safety of women and girls in Derby and Derbyshire.

In addition to the report, which was scrutinised by the Commissioner, members of the public and community groups were encouraged to submit questions prior to the meeting focused on women's safety. An unprecedented 52 questions were

received and directed, by the Commissioner, to the Chief Constable. A copy of the report, recording of the video and transcript of all 52 questions and responses are available on the Commissioner's website here:

<https://www.derbyshire-pcc.gov.uk/public-information/public-assurance-meetings/pam3nov21/>

The Commissioner hosted a further scrutiny meeting on 3rd November 2022 to revisit the progress being made by the force surrounding VAWG. A detailed report was requested by the Commissioner concerning the current force plans along with performance data. This is part of the Interim report.

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