



## **Devon and Cornwall Police and Crime Panel**

**20<sup>th</sup> November 2020**

### **UPDATE ON PREVENTION OF SERIOUS VIOLENCE PROGRAMME**

#### **1 Introduction**

- 1.1 As part of the budget requirement for 2020/21 the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) and Chief Constable (CC) agreed to implement a new programme of work to address the prevention of serious violence. This introduced a £1 million additional investment into tackling violent crime for at least the next four years. Despite the challenges of instigating a wide scale change due to COVID 19 work is progressing well.
- 1.2 Devon and Cornwall is not one of the areas funded by the government to set up a Violence Reduction Unit, however, the learning from these units has been helping to inform the Devon and Cornwall approach.
- 1.3 Panel members will recall the original rationale for the programme was as a direct response by both the Commissioner and Chief Constable to offer joint leadership and investment to tackle our inherent violence within our community. Although there are areas of best practice already within the police, such as the partnership which is Trauma Informed Plymouth and the World Class Policing Award for Operation Encompass achieved in 2019 a more coordinated partnership approach is necessary to turn the tide on this inherent community wide issue.
- 1.4 As part of this approach, Crest Advisory and the Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) have been commissioned by our Pioneer Board – Prevention of Serious Violence, where the Chief Constable and the Police and Crime Commissioner work together to develop a new partnership-based violence prevention approach. These organisations have significant experience of work in relation to tackling violence and have worked for other OPCCs, violence reduction units and local authorities.
- 1.5 Over the course of the next 9 months, they will be undertaking a series of projects to help us define the problem of violence, to understand its drivers, to understand how to prevent violence and to develop a strategy for Devon and Cornwall on violence prevention. This will provide the evidence base for our four year programme and will inform our commissioning decisions going forward.
- 1.6 We have also been working with the Home Office on understanding pathways working backwards from the most serious violence, which is homicide. There are many different forms of homicide and therefore forming one single plan to address and



prevent it is not easy. This also links with the Deep Dive into Domestic Abuse was instigated by discussions with the Commissioner and Number 10 at the start of the pandemic. This created an opportunity taken by the PCC and CC, supported by the Home Office. We anticipate that a report on this work will be available by the end of the year.

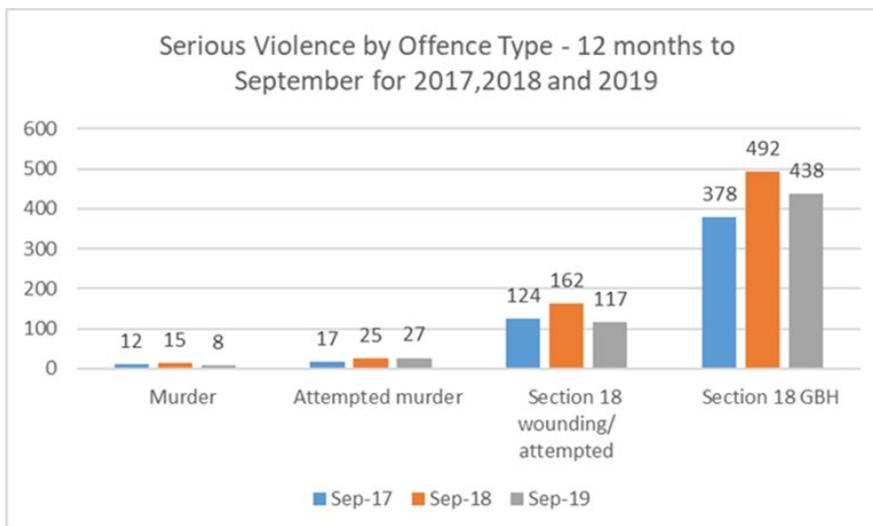
## 2. What is the problem we are trying to address?

2.1 Devon and Cornwall Police's review of serious violence in 2018 highlighted that:

- Most serious violence impacts predominantly on male victims aged between 18 to 36 years old (3 in every 4 crimes);
- Female victims are much more likely to experience most serious violence in a domestic context (50%) compared to males (11%);
- Around a third of offences appear to have been aggravated by alcohol, and three-quarters of offences occur between 6pm and 6am.

However, Severe forms of violence such as murder, attempted murder, section 18 GBH and wounding have decreased by 13% to 577 incidents (in the year ending March 2020).

The graph below also shows this decreasing trend. For example, in the year ending September 2019, serious violence had decreased over all categories (apart from attempted murder) when compared to 2018.



*This data on serious violence reported above follows the OPCC's current working definition which includes; Murder, Attempted Murder, s18 GBH and Wounding.*

2.2 The Peninsula Crime Analysts Network examined rising levels of serious violence in Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly as part of the development of the 2019/20 Peninsula Strategic Assessment (PSA) which was finalised in December 2019. This looked at recorded crime for the year 2018/19 and observed rises in serious violence in all areas apart from Torbay which remained stable. The PSA informs the work of the Community Safety Partnerships, the police and the activities within the PCC's Commissioning Intentions Plan over the coming year, in key areas including domestic abuse and the collective response to alcohol related violence.

- 2.3 The significant increase in proactive activity right across the geography to tackle organised drug supply, including county lines, can be observed in the increased levels of recorded crime being seen in the areas of drugs offences and possession of weapons. Apprehending offenders and removing weapons from circulation are an important step in keeping our communities safer. Since 2018 we have seen the establishment of dedicated proactive teams in each of the four geographic command units in Devon and Cornwall Police (Cornwall; Plymouth; South Devon and Torbay; and North, East and West Devon) which have played an important role in upscaling activity. This is supported by Devon and Cornwall Police's participation in national county lines operations, local partnership efforts around intelligence gathering and prevention and through work by the National Crime Agency and Regional Organised Crime Unit.
- 2.4 Overall Devon and Cornwall has the lowest rate of crime per 1000 people in England and Wales<sup>1</sup>. Devon and Cornwall rate of violence against the person is 23.5 per 1000 compared to 29.9 per 1000 national average. However, violence against the person offences are notably higher as a proportion of total crime in Devon and Cornwall compared to other police force areas in the South West and the England and Wales average<sup>2</sup> (7% higher than the national average). Torbay has the highest rate of violence against the person offences<sup>3</sup>.
- Notably the rate of DA related offences (18/19) is 8.9 per 1000 compared to 10.3 per 1000 national average. However, the rate of detentions under s136 Mental Health Act per 10,000 is higher in Devon and Cornwall (6.5) compared to national average (5.9).
- 2.5 Whilst we have seen a reduction in levels of serious violence in the most recent data it is important that we are not complacent, and we continue to address the inherent violence within our communities. Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly has a higher rate of violence with injury than the national average and sees significant seasonality peaks as well as increasing levels of rape and domestic abuse. If we are to protect communities and stop these crimes from occurring, we need a significant and sustained partnership focus.
- 2.6 Unlike Devon and Cornwall, the major cities and core centres of knife and gun crime within England and Wales have an opportunity to bid and secure additional funding from central Government. These are colloquially known as Serious Violence Prevention Units and whilst they can be led directly by police, there is an opportunity for co-leadership with the Police and Crime Commissioner having responsibility for victim care and crime reduction, as is the arrangement within West Midlands Police.
- 2.7 Due to the issues of volume rather than seriousness of violence, forces such as Devon and Cornwall will thankfully never meet the threshold for obtaining additional funding through this mechanism. Nonetheless there is clear evidence that serious violence takes place, and more than we are often aware, as a large degree of serious violence is not recorded within police systems although it is captured in health data and within major trauma units. It is evident within the public health Joint Strategic Needs Assessments which are undertaken in each upper tier local authority area (Devon, Cornwall, Plymouth, Torbay). Additionally, there is intelligence and information held by other agencies which is shared with police as part of children and adult safeguarding

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<sup>1</sup> ONS 2020

<sup>2</sup> Open access data

<sup>3</sup> Peninsula Strategic Assessment

arrangements. However, the acquisition and analysis of that data is not conducted within one single repository, whereas the Serious Violence Reduction Units specifically carry that capability and in addition have the capacity to further invest in dedicated prevention subject matter experts.

- 2.8 The investment in a Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly Serious Violence approach is not only to take an evidence-based approach, founded on the principals set out in the Serious Violence Strategy, but also to provide an opportunity for health and local government partners to work with us on this initiative.

HM Government's Serious Violence Strategy published in April 2018 endeavours to bring in a

*“new balance between prevention and law enforcement. It declares a call to action to partners from across different sectors to come together and adopt a multi-agency public health approach to tackling and preventing serious violence at a local level.”*

- 2.9 The establishment of this new approach further supports the wider policing approach to prevention and critically, the development of information and intelligence. In addition, it will provide a platform for embedding a sustained public health approach to serious violence and create opportunities to invest in preventing and tackling the forms of serious violence that are particularly evident and relevant to our own communities. Such violence includes geographic areas of ingrained domestic abuse which is passed from one generation to another.

- 2.10 Public health approaches look behind an issue, problem or illness to understand what is driving it. These social determinants or structural factors, are the circumstances such as housing, education and income that underpin people's lives and make them more or less likely to experience poor health outcomes, criminal victimisation and premature death; have contact with the police and other services; and enter the criminal justice system. What is already clear is that many service users across the public sector have multiple and complex needs.

- 2.11 Our agreed programme objectives are:

- To develop and implement a new public health and partnership approach to address the causes of inherent violence within our communities;
- To build on proven interventions and implement new preventative and evidenced based approaches to address the causes of violent crime and reduce offending;
- To explore a partnership model to delivering preventative, evidenced based approaches which are known to reduce death/serious injury from serious violence;
- To make Devon and Cornwall more resilient and intolerant to violence in the community;
- To make Devon and Cornwall more unattractive for serious and organised crime groups.

### **3. Why we are addressing it now**

- 3.1 The last few days of the 2019-20 financial year were among the most challenging for Devon and Cornwall Police and its partners, as the enormity of the challenge posed by Covid-19 became clear. While the force rapidly reacted to emergency legislation and society adapted to a host of extraordinary measures designed to save lives, a welcome report from the Office of National Statistics was published. It showed that Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly had the lowest recorded crime per head of population – lower than 42 of the 43 police forces in England and Wales. This was not a total surprise, the force has worked hard and although police performance is part of the picture, other factors have contributed. This improved further during the summer period and Devon and Cornwall became the lowest crime area in the country.
- 3.2 We have spent the last few years building connectivity between organisations and the public they serve to create more resilient communities. Initiatives like Safer Towns have brought police together with councillors, residents, health experts and organised groups, resulting in measurable reductions in crime. Penzance and St Austell stand out as good examples. As well as providing a budget that allowed force strength to grow by 317 by the end of March 2021. The Panel will remember that when we were coming out of austerity the PCC took the opportunity to use the council tax flexibility to create an investment opportunity as none was forthcoming from government. A budget which the Police and Crime Panel agreed as they did not use their veto. In collaboration we have worked to create new emergency services roles. Building on the already successful Tri-service safety officer scheme in Cornwall, last year saw the creation of community responders who are fully trained firefighters with full police powers in Devon.
- 3.3 It is forecast that the number of crimes relating to Violence against the person (Homicide, Violence with Injury and Violence without Injury) that are not domestic abuse related is likely to increase by and estimated 9% annually.
- Serious organised crime shows an increased demand from emerging threat, risk and harm linked to county lines activity, cross border crime and organised drug and cross border criminality (human trafficking, serious violence, kidnap & extortion, money laundering, sexual exploitation, weapons) which cause immense harm to communities. There is already a collaboration with other Police Forces in the South West through the Regional Organised Crime Unit to address this complex area of work.
- 3.4 There are also greater opportunities to utilise civil preventative orders e.g. Domestic Violence Prevention Orders (DVPOs), Sexual Harm Prevention Orders (SHPOs), Sexual Risk Orders (SROs) and gang injunctions, and new orders such as Domestic Abuse Prevention Orders, Knife Crime Prevention Orders and Stalking orders.
- 3.5 However, demand data into policing is only part of the story and as part of the Prevention of Serious Violence Programme a detailed analysis of serious violence across all partners' information in Devon, Cornwall and Isles of Silly has been commissioned. Our learning from leading during COVID has been that swift and decisive decision making has facilitated innovation across the peninsula and the OPCC has facilitated flexible and responsive schemes such as COVID Street Marshals, targeted CCTV and a range of innovations as part of the summer policing plans.

3.6 Our new preventative approach, grounded in public health principles builds on our track record of successful projects/efforts including innovations such as award-winning, Pathfinder, Make Amends the restorative justice approach which have used for rape and serious violence, and our world class policing award for domestic abuse Op Encompass. And recent successes in achieving Howard League recognition for Make Amends, Circles and Trevi House in Plymouth, who all work within this complex agenda.

#### **4. Current demand**

4.1 There is no single definition of serious violence in terms of crime types and no clear definition across partners, and this is an area which the Pioneer Board will be exploring in more detail.

4.2 Overall, total crime levels have reduced across the year, with the largest reductions in the second half of the year. As at the end of March 2020 there were 57 crimes per 1,000 population.

- The increase of violent offending seen over the past several years has slowed with a slight (0.2%) reduction in violence against the person. However, the focus on tackling serious violence (based on murder; attempted murder; S18 grievous bodily harm and wounding) at its grass roots remains a priority for the PCC and the Chief Constable. In the last 12 months serious violence offences have decreased by 12.6% from 661 to 578. Rape offences have increased by 3.4% from 1,575 to 1,629 over the same period.
- Levels of reported domestic abuse continue to increase with 20,798 domestic abuse crimes recorded in the year, a 4% increase on the previous year. While this may reflect increasing confidence to report these crimes which are often 'hidden' it must remain a significant area of focus to ensure that action is taken against perpetrators and that victims are protected.
- The year saw a 3.4% increase in recorded drug offences to 4,248 which reflects the increasingly proactive response from the force to pursue drug supply chains. While numbers remain low compared to other parts of the country there was a 13% increase in possession of weapons offences to 1,090 many of which are related to the drug supply chains being actively targeted. There were 300 organised crime group disruptions in the year which led to 43 convictions and nearly 300 years' imprisonment.

4.3 The national comparators from the Office of National Statistics relate to the 12 months up to the end of March 2020. Devon and Cornwall's crime rate for that period was 57.0 per 1,000 population which was significantly lower than the national average of 88.9 per 1,000 population. Devon and Cornwall have:

- the lowest recorded crime rate in England and Wales, and the lowest crime rate for crimes where there is an identified victim.
- one the lowest rates of acquisitive crime out of all force areas with the lowest rate of residential burglary, second lowest rate of theft offences, the lowest rate of robbery and the third lowest rate of vehicle offences.
- Comparing March 2020 with a year earlier, there were decreases in both domestic and non-domestic burglary offences, vehicle offences, shoplifting, other theft and criminal damage although there was a small rise in robbery across the year.

## 5. Our track record in Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly

- 5.1 Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly has existing partnership structures and commissioned services that already work towards these types of approaches. However, these are currently fragmented and complicated by the myriad of differing partnership boundaries across other statutory services. Good examples are the Trauma Informed City approach in Plymouth <http://www.plymouthscb.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Trauma-Informed-Plymouth-Approach-FINAL-April-2019.pdf> and the Turning Corners Project in South Devon which achieved government funding and which was externally funded by the Home Office and facilitated by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner.
- 5.2 The Prevention of Serious Violence programme cannot be considered in isolation and must be seen in addition to a wide range of commissioned services already in existence as well as the breadth of policing currently undertaken to address this issue. Domestic abuse and sexual violence are a significant element in the delivery of the current police and crime plan and demand on Devon and Cornwall police. In 2019/20 21,185 instances of domestic abuse were reported to the police. The Victim Care network received 11,177 referrals of which just over 1000 were specifically DA related. Many of the DA related interventions are for high and medium risk victims which are managed within the Sexual Offence and Domestic Abuse Investigation Teams (SODAITs). SODAITs are pivotal to providing the overall objective of a single process for safeguarding; where all cases are researched, risk assessed and considered for multi-agency information sharing. The creation of SODAITs has developed Force expertise in dealing with domestic abuse and sexual offences giving a specialised, professional service to vulnerable victims.
- 5.3 Specialist Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence services account for £1,945,275 (35%) of the PCCs total commissioning budget. This includes the £630k contribution to domestic services in local authorities through the CSP grants to Community Safety Partnerships.
- 5.4 A Domestic Abuse Bill has been reintroduced to Parliament and is progressing quickly through the legislative process. Among the many measures affecting the national policy agenda and criminal justice system, the Bill proposes two new measures which may have a direct impact on the way in which domestic abuse support is commissioned in local areas. These are:
- placing a statutory duty on tier 1 local authorities (i.e. Devon County Council) to “assess [...] the need for domestic abuse support in its area, prepare and publish a strategy for the provision of such support [...] and monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the strategy.” Monitoring and evaluating includes submitting an Annual Report to the Secretary of State on the local authority’s exercise of its functions.
  - the appointment of a Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board (with specified membership) to advise the local authority in carrying out these functions.
- 5.5 The scope of “domestic abuse support” in the Bill is quite narrowly drawn: “support, in relation to domestic abuse, provided to victims of domestic abuse, or their children, who reside in relevant accommodation”. The meaning of “relevant accommodation”

will be set out in regulations, but is intended in a broad sense: “dedicated specialist services which provide a safe place to stay for victims and their children fleeing domestic abuse.”

- 5.6 The Victims Commissioner and Domestic Abuse Commissioner both expressed a desire for the duty to be extended to support services in the community, though this is not (yet) reflected in the Bill.
- 5.7 The government is also due to refresh the National Statement of Expectations (NSE) for Violence against Women and Girls originally published in 2016, now that the corresponding strategy has been refreshed in 2019. The NSE will be the basis for the Domestic Abuse Commissioner to hold local areas to account. The original NSE from 2016 recommended that local areas should take ‘a strategic, system-wide approach to commissioning (for VAWG)’. The updated NSE will be published this year and will set out best practice for commissioning all VAWG services locally, both accommodation- and community based.
- 5.8 The Police and Crime Commissioner also successfully facilitated an investment of over £500,000 into a Safer Streets Intervention in Stonehouse in Plymouth this year. This national funding was specifically to address areas with high acquisitive crime rates but will have impacts across the wider crime levels in the area. The intervention, being delivered in partnership with Plymouth City Council and the local community will see a range of improvements in the area which will all impact on reducing overall crime rates.
- 5.9 As detailed in November’s PCC update to the Police and Crime Panel the OPCC has secured additional government funding to intervene and change behaviours with domestic abuse perpetrators. In mid-August 2020 the Home Office announced that £5 million was available to Police and Crime Commissioners to support the introduction of perpetrator-focused domestic abuse programmes in their area. The grant stipulated that all funds secured from the Home Office must be spent by 31 March 2021. The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly submitted a bid for £417,395 which has been approved. With total local match funding secured of £215,959 this amounts to an overall programme total of £633,354.

## **6. Immediate Next Steps**

- 6.1 One of the aims of the programme is to commission evidence-based services with partners to reduce the overall levels of serious violence across Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly. This may be by creating new services; decommissioning services known not to be very effective; amending existing practices within policing or challenging practices delivered by partners. All decisions will be based on robust whole population data and not limited to police or partners demand data. There will be clear outcomes defined for any commissioned service to inform the overall success metrics for the programme.

The programme is running several projects in parallel with the collection of additional data to understand the complexity of commissioning in this space. These include:

- The development of a Hot Spot Policing Pilot to assess the impact of high profile, visible policing on high crime areas. This pilot is being delivered in partnership with academic research from Exeter University. This has been delayed due to Covid and the capacity of partners.

- Recommissioning targeted preventative activities in South Devon as part of Turning Corners Phase 2. This partnership approach will reduce the risk of young people in Devon becoming involved in violence, ASB and crime through early intervention and prevention. Phase 2 will build on the evidence and learning from the initial Turning Corners Project around ACE's, early intervention, maintaining trusted relationships and strengthening knowledge and understanding across multi-agency partnerships. The original scope of the project was detailed in last year's PCC Annual Report.
- Commissioning of services in Plymouth in partnership with Street Games to provide interventions to divert young people away from crime at a critical time in their lives;
- Undertaking an assessment of the outcomes of all Domestic Homicide Reviews across the areas to identify commonalities and opportunities to drive a system change in how preventative approaches can be identified;
- Undertaking an analysis of what currently works in terms of policing and partnership practice to reduce serious violence and identifying areas to challenge and change to meet the identified needs. We are revisiting the lessons from previous interventions which may no longer be being delivered but identified good practice. For example, working with the partners who were previously involved in delivering Turning Corners interventions in South Devon to determine whether there are opportunities to share the learning from this work more widely and to reinstate the evidence based interventions in a more targeted way;
- Exploring opportunities to work with Youth Offending Teams to identify a wider range of opportunities to reduce the unnecessary criminalisation of young people through a range of alternative arrangements for rehabilitation;
- Exploring the options to extend the current arrangements for Restorative Justice to specifically address serious violence, which has a clear evidence base for reducing reoffending;
- Piloting the interventions of a domestic abuse response car as well as a mental health response car as part of this year's summer policing approach;
- Commissioning of a teacher's helpline as part of Operation Encompass to provide access to a child Psychologist by teachers to help support those children in need. This service started in Devon and Cornwall and has now been made available nationally.

6.2 The programme has developed an interim board to direct the scope of the project, which will shortly be extended to a wider group of stakeholders following the appointment of a Programme Director. The Board has commissioned Crest Advisory to work with us over the next nine months to provide a baseline for serious violence in Devon and Cornwall and develop a serious violence strategic needs assessment to allow all partners to understand the scale of the problems we face and come together to address them. Crest Advisory will be working with the Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) to advance this. SCIE brings significant experience and knowledge in the field of child maltreatment and safeguarding adults: their 'Learning Together'

systems approach, developed in 2015, has been used in over 80 local authorities in England and Scotland as well as internationally.

- 6.3 The serious violence strategic needs assessment to understand the nature and scale of violence in Devon and Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly. This will enable us to explore the potential drivers of serious violence in Devon and Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly. The final output from this element of the work will be a detailed report which sets out in full the evidence for use by the OPCC and Devon and Cornwall Police, using a range of data sources, qualitative and quantitative analysis and the voices of those affected by violence.
- 6.4 It is easy to forget that there is no single solution to escalating serious violence. Decisions made elsewhere in policing and across stakeholders such as the national and local uplift in police officer numbers and existing work of the Forces Prevention Department, services commissioned across partners in the peninsula to support both victims and perpetrators of domestic abuse and sexual violence will all play a contributing factor.
- 6.5 The appointment of a Programme Director for Serious Violence in October 2020 with a start date of January 2021 will provide the focus for the work in the coming months and enable a more detailed programme of interventions and evaluation to be implemented and a robust governance framework to be embedded.
- 6.6 In addition, the Force is currently redesigning its operating model. Within that redesign process, it has already been agreed that a new 'Vulnerability' Command will be created, providing an opportunity to draw together centrally the functions that provide strategic and organisational wide prevention, safeguarding and vulnerability reduction interventions. An overarching Vulnerability Reduction Strategy (VRS) is also in the process of being agreed, which driven by a Vulnerability Reduction Board, will focus organisational thinking in embedding on a public health approach to prevention and early intervention.

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Report prepared on 12<sup>th</sup> November 2020