



Devon and Cornwall Police and Crime Panel

28th January 2022

COMMISSIONER'S UPDATE REPORT Safe, Resilient and Connected Communities

This is a report of the Police and Crime Commissioner, Alison Hernandez, drawing the Police and Crime Panel's attention to a number of matters that have arisen, or progress that has been made, since the last Panel meeting in November 2021.

1. SAFE

1.1 Safety of Women at Night Fund

In November 2021, the Home Office announced that Exeter had been successful in its bid to the Safety of Women at Night (SWAN) Fund for 2021/22 and was awarded over £72,000. My office worked with partners across Exeter, including the University of Exeter who have led the bid, to support its development and I am delighted that Exeter has been successful.

My office is now working alongside the university, Devon and Cornwall Police, Exeter City Council and wider partners to deliver a series of projects to improve safety in the city at night. This funding is in addition to the £432,000 awarded to Exeter City Council under the Safer Streets Fund in July 2021, but the two funds will complement and support each other. The SWAN funding is focused on initiatives such as training, education and awareness, while the primary focus of the Safer Streets Fund in Exeter is on enhanced infrastructure, including CCTV.

The project comprises a number of key initiatives, including: bystander awareness training to be delivered to people working in the night time economy, the relaunch and expansion of the city's Best Bar None scheme, the development of a Women and Girls Safety Charter for Exeter, implementing a system whereby people who feel unsafe can call the 24/7 CCTV control room and a programme of education and outreach with girls and women who may be at risk or vulnerable within the city, including women who are rough sleeping. The project will be completed by the 31st March 2022.

1.2 Op Scorpion

All of the South West Police and Crime Commissioners and Chief Constables have agreed to work together to make drugs disruptions a priority to protect our communities. The improved coordination of activity is designed to make the South West of England a hostile environment for those who deal drugs and engage in antisocial drug taking activity by disrupting transport links used for moving drugs into and around the area and have a visible impact on drug dealing and drug taking in identified hot spots. Op Scorpion will harness the collective strength of South West Policing to better coordinate disruptive activity to target and harden the area to protect against criminals engaging in drug activity; improve community confidence by demonstrating to the public that there is a uniform desire and commitment by policing leadership to work together to tackle the impact of drugs in the South West; increase visibility of regional assets, such as the Regional Organised Crime Unit (ROCU); and improve the community's confidence to report drug-related



issues in their community through greater use of confidential reporting lines e.g., Crime stoppers. The first of the coordinated approach is currently being planned and I will be able to update panel members on its effectiveness at the next Police and Crime Panel.

1.3 PCC's COVID Unlock and Summer 2021 Partnership Fund

I have previously updated the Panel on the partnership fund scheme that operated over summer 2021. This scheme was put in place by my office to support local areas to address concerns around antisocial behaviour associated with the lifting of pandemic restrictions and the expected increase in staycations due to international travel restrictions. In particular, the scheme focused on concerns relating to the re-opening of evening and night time economies after 18 months and on preventing antisocial behaviour (ASB) amongst young people by increasing diversionary activities.

The purpose of the *evening and night time economy funding* was to support the pro-active management of hotspots and help prevent anticipated ASB. Twenty hotspots were identified by the OPCC, Devon and Cornwall Police and partners and were subsequently invited in April 2021 to submit bids for up to £10,000 in funding from my office, subject to local match funding. Nineteen locations made bids, for varying levels of funding: Bude, Falmouth, Liskeard, Newquay, Penzance, Truro, St Austell, Bideford, Ilfracombe, Barnstaple, Exeter, Plymouth (3 locations), Exmouth, Tiverton, Newton Abbot, Torquay and Paignton.

This funding could be spent on street/taxi marshals, CCTV infrastructure, additional CCTV monitoring hours and other initiatives which would enhance the safety of night-time economy spaces. Over the summer period the scheme delivered:

- Over 13,000 marshalling hours
- Around 2,300 additional CCTV monitoring hours
- 5 additional CCTV cameras
- 14 nights of Safety Bus provision in Plymouth
- Equipment and support for Street Pastors in Plymouth
- Adoption and roll-out of the DISC information system in St Austell and Truro

I have also made £100,000 available to prevent ASB by young people in public spaces through the provision of diversionary activities for young people. The funding was shared between Torbay, Devon, Cornwall and Plymouth using the standard Community Safety Partnership (CSP) allocation mechanism under my 2021/22 Commissioning Intentions Plan. There was no requirement for local match funding to be provided.

The CSPs implemented a range of measures based on local need and over the summer period thousands of hours of diversionary projects delivered. This included increased outreach teams to support and engage young people on the streets, activity programmes for sport, music and art and community engagement events and activity days. For example, in Torbay, the Nova and Genesis Street Teams recorded over 1000 contacts with young people throughout their deployment, while Safer Devon CSP used its funding to provide outreach programmes by Space and VYOC Devon in Tavistock, Honiton, Axminster, Crediton, Great Torrington and Holsworthy across the school holidays.

1.4 Home Office DA Perpetrator Funding for Bystander Training

Violence against women and girls is one of my critical concerns. Evidence has shown that bystander intervention can be an effective way of preventing sexual and relationship violence and stalking before it happens. Communities have a significant role to play in preventing this type of violence by calling out negative and unacceptable behaviour.

In partnership with local authorities, my office have secured funding to be able to offer **free** Active Bystander training and events that will encourage people to become "Active Bystanders". This

does not mean physical intervention – but understanding how to react and what to say to challenge others when their words or behaviour demean or are aggressive towards women and girls.

The aim of this training is to raise awareness of the prevalence of sexual violence in society, and other forms of men’s violence against women, and will provide a range of safe options available to bystanders to safely support and challenge others.

In addition, various participants will go on to attend Active Bystander ‘Train the Trainer’ training which will enable them to continue delivering the Active Bystander training in the future to others in their communities, with the aim of bringing about long-term change to this human rights issue, criminal justice issue and public health issue. This training is being targeted at specific cohorts identified by local authority Domestic Abuse Commissioners to maximise impact.

1.5 Commissioner’s Community Grant Scheme – January 2022

In January 2022, the second PCC Community Grant scheme will open for applications. I have made £200,000 available which will be split geographically with £144,000 available for Devon, Torbay and Plymouth and £56,000 available to Cornwall.

The funds are being administered by the relevant Community Foundations for [Devon](#) and [Cornwall](#), and I would like to thank both organisations for their support.

The theme for this scheme is:

“Schemes or projects which are aimed at raising awareness of the risks around drug use or which divert young people and adults from becoming involved in illegal drugs activity (eg trafficking, County Lines and gangs).”

1.6 Serious Violence Update

Since the last panel, the Serious Violence programme has commissioned new interventions to develop and test new preventative initiatives across the Force including:

- A Homicide Prevention Officer/ Lessons Learnt post within the police to deliver Homicide Perpetrator Reviews to learn lessons about the life history of a perpetrator.
- Enhancing the service for 18–25-year-olds through Pathfinder (the evidence-based, voluntary intervention programme which provides an alternative to prosecution), and for those who have previously been looked after children ensuring the specific needs of this cohort can be met with more specialised interventions (total of £322 over two financial years)
- New trauma and shame sensitive training across the force with partners to embed these approaches into core policy and practice

1.7 Serious Violence Prevention – Launch Event 13th January

It was a pleasure to see so many leaders and partners from across the peninsula at our Serious Violence Prevention Partnership Launch Event. The event, opened by myself and the Chief Constable as joint leads for the programme, was an opportunity to brief colleagues from Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs), local authorities, Youth Offending Teams, Criminal Justice and beyond on:

- The programmes strategy, achievements to date and future ambition
- Discuss the impact of the Serious Violence Duty and how we can deliver change together

- Adopt and agree a range of Peninsula wide approaches, including the adoption of a Public Health and Trauma-Informed consensus.

This event also committed additional funding via the respective Community Safety Partnerships to assist in delivering the new serious violence duties to help share the learning from the strategic needs assessment for the peninsula.

1.8 Vision Zero South West – Community Call for ideas

The Vision Zero Community Call for Ideas provided the chance for communities to bid for small grants to improve road safety in their area by supporting costed schemes that had the support of the local council. Of the 82 bids received, 34 bids from across Devon and Cornwall were approved. A further four bids were supported and built into Vision Zeros annual Road Safety Delivery Plan. Details of all the successful bids are [available on the Vision Zero website](#).

Vision Zero partners were really impressed with the range and quality of the applications and, as a result, increased the level of funding available in order to deliver as many ideas as possible. I have been overwhelmed by the enthusiasm and attention to detail that residents have displayed in preparing their bids and it underlines what we already knew – that many communities are determined to improve the safety of the roads where they live.

On 23rd November, I was fortunate enough to meet several recipients of the Call for Ideas grants when I, and Cllr Stuart Hughes the Vice Chair of the VZSW Board, visited Holsworthy and Milton Abbot near Tavistock. Both communities already have excellent approaches to address road safety concerns, such as Community Speedwatch, in place and the new funding will them to go further by investing in vehicle activated signs. In Milton Abbot, I met representatives from the local road safety action group, who have been calling for some time for improvements to a stretch of road that extends from the centre of the village to the local school. This is used daily by children and parents – two of whom I was delighted to meet during my visit and join on their walk to experience what they face each day. Milton Abbot is a great example of a community that is doing all it can to improve the safety for their residents.

I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of the Vision Zero South West Board to thank all those who took part in this scheme and the great work of local road safety groups across Devon and Cornwall.

1.9 APCC Road Safety Portfolio

On 6th December, I chaired a meeting of the group that brings together Police and Crime Commissioners and their officers across the country to discuss issues relating to roads policing and road safety. In excess of 30 PCC's offices were represented on the call, demonstrating the importance given to road safety across England and Wales.

The portfolio reviewed and discussed the National Police Chiefs Council's (NPCC) draft Roads Policing Strategy, having been specifically invited by Chief Constable Jo Shiner, the NPCC's Roads Policing lead, for the APCC's comments. The Portfolio also discussed Smart motorways, Safety Camera partnerships and examined the Government's proposals to establish a Road Collisions Investigation Branch, see below.

1.10 Vision Zero South West videos

In late November, my office worked with partners to produce a series of [hard-hitting videos](#) under the Vision Zero South West banner. These five videos featured testimony from victims and members of the blue light services as they outlined how their lives were affected by their experiences. The videos have been watched more than 50,000 times since being published.

1.11 ShopKind

I am a supporter of the #ShopKind campaign, which is jointly funded by the Association of Convenience Stores and the Home Office. This campaign aims to promote positive behaviour in retail environments, particularly in the run up to Christmas when Covid-19 restrictions were in place. During #ShopKind awareness week, I visited a number of stores in Exeter to promote the campaign and my office's social media posts on this topical subject were among the most engaged with of recent months.

1.12 Public protection programme for sex offenders

My office has commissioned a new service offering support to sex offenders. This is being supplied by the South West Community Chaplaincy, which will provide support to registered sex offenders and will go live in February. It enables Devon and Cornwall Police's Public Protection Team to refer offenders motivated to change into a structured programme. South West Community Chaplaincy will work with individuals referred by the force's Sexual or Violent Offender Managers (MOSOVOs). It is open to those no longer subject to Probation but who remain under the statutory supervision of the police and who present a risk of re-offending. The project will provide force resilience by ensuring additional contact and work with the individuals concerned (up to an additional 20 hours).

This service will complement existing commissioned services, which are currently only available to those on probation and on licence. The three-year contract will be subject to an academic evaluation to ensure that learning is captured so as to inform similar pieces of work in the future.

1.13 Torbay Substance Misuse and Antisocial Behaviour Subgroup

I am supporting Torbay Together to deliver its strategic ambitions for the Bay. As part of this support, the Chief Executive of the OPCC will be chairing a newly established Substance Misuse and Antisocial Behaviour Subgroup which has been convened specifically to look at new ways of reducing issues within the town centre areas. I am investing £200,000 to support this activity.

1.14 Antisocial behaviour in Exeter City Centre

I am continuing to work closely with Exeter Council and other partners to address the concerns the public have raised with me about ASB in Exeter City Centre. In December, I responded to a Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) consultation for Exeter City Centre, providing support for tougher measures to prevent antisocial behaviour (ASB). A PSPO covering large parts of Exeter City Centre has been in place since 2017 and the Council have recently conducted a consultation, seeking views on amendments to the current Order to make it easier for the Police and Council Officers to disperse offenders who persistently engage in antisocial conduct. This includes a proposal to ensure that individuals who are not acting in groups can be effectively dispersed and a proposal to increase the period that a person cannot return to the area once asked to leave from up to 6 hours to 24 hours.

My response to the Council strongly supported these proposed amendments and I look forward to hearing the results of the consultation in February.

My office is continuing to work closely with the Exeter Neighbourhood Policing Team and Exeter City Council to address ASB concerns in the city centre. This has included supporting the Safer Streets and Safety of Women at Night (SWAN) projects. This week we attended the Exeter Urban Antisocial Behaviour Review Summit 2022 hosted by Exeter City Council and the University of

Exeter and I look forward to hearing the outputs of that event.

1.15 Roads Policing Fact Finding Exercise

I spent an evening shift with Road Casualty Reduction Officer Sergeant Owen Messenger and the Torquay roads policing team on Wednesday 22nd December. The purpose of the visit was to further my understanding of the challenges that frontline roads policing teams face and to gain an understanding of the work officers are carry out as part of the Christmas period drink and drive campaign. Several incidents were dealt with over the course of the evening. A driver with dangerous and illegal tyres was apprehended, as was a delivery driver who had no business insurance. The team also dealt with a car crash and seized a vehicle which was being driven with no insurance or tax. It was an informative and worthwhile evening and I extend my thanks and appreciation to the officers who took time to accommodate me.

2. RESILIENT

2.1 Keyham Recovery Update

Supporting the communities of Keyham to recover from the tragic events in August 2021 continues to be a priority. The grant from the Home Office was officially signed on 16th November 2021 and covers a range of investment activity including; Neighbourhood Policing; Youth Engagement; Problem Solving Activities; Independent Evaluation and Data Collection and Analysis. The work continues to be delivered through the “Safer Keyham Operational Delivery Group” chaired jointly by Plymouth City Council, the OPCC and the Force. A full-time Project Manager will oversee the work for the remainder of the grant delivery period.

The Keyham Policing Team continues to work in partnership to promote the recovery and resilience of the community. Activities include daily foot patrols / regular visits to the community hub and Wolsley trust locations.

Alongside the programme of work led by my office on Keyham Community Policing, I am continuing to support Plymouth City Council in its delivery of the Safer Places Programme for Keyham. The Safer Places Programme funding from the Home Office is focused on strengthening the community safety response within Keyham, including investment in infrastructure such as CCTV, as well as funding for crime prevention training, security measures within properties and projects to support community strength. I remain committed to Plymouth CC strategic recovery group and the oversight of all the work in Keyham including the Safer Places activity.

2.2 Mental Health Treatment Requirements (MHTR)

I have secured financial support for the implementation of MHTR across the whole peninsula to deliver equality of access to our communities, putting the existing services (Cornwall and Plymouth) on a sustainable footing and facilitating the expansion to Devon and Torbay. We know that mental health and substance misuse issues are linked to the behaviour of many offenders. Treatment requirements offer courts an alternative to custodial sentences (especially short custodial sentences) and seek to prevent reoffending by addressing underlying vulnerabilities.

All MHTR Sites must be developed and delivered in partnership with local commissioners, to ensure that:

- Service delivery is aligned with existing pathways, including for community mental health provision and substance misuse services.
- Collaborative decisions can be taken about service models and contracting.
- Services can be put on a financially sustainable footing in the context of funding available from the national programme.

A multi-agency Steering Group has been formed to develop an MHTR Service that covers these Service gaps. This Steering Group is currently in the process of:

- Exploring the demand on local courts and prioritising Service mobilisation.
- Localising the national service specification for MHTRs to suit the local landscape.
- Evaluating and selecting an option for procuring and contracting an MHTR Service.

2.3 Victim Codes of Practice (VCoP) and Scrutiny

The Local Criminal Justice Board is overseeing a scrutiny process to assess compliance with the Victim Code of Practice (2020). The purpose of this VCoP scrutiny panel is to independently scrutinise, recognise and promote good practice, and robustly challenge areas for improvement so that the public can be assured and confident in their local criminal justice system. It has been agreed that, in working jointly with our partner agencies, the initial focus will be in relation to Domestic Abuse, Rape and Serious Sexual Offences and Violent Crime, including Violence against Women and Girls. The first panel was held in January 2022, with the findings due to be reported to LCJB on 1st March.

2.4 Make Amends

The communications and engagement team produced a series of [videos](#) to support Restorative Justice Awareness Week, which ran from 21st to 28th November. These [videos](#) featured people who had been harmed by a crime and had used the services of my Restorative Justice partner 'Make Amends'. I feel it is important that we further the public's understanding of these services.

2.5 HMIC Joint Thematic Inspection of the criminal justice journey for individuals with mental health needs and disorders

Since the last Police and Crime Panel, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation has published a report following a Joint Thematic Inspection supported by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services, Her Majesty's Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate, the Care Quality Commission, Healthcare Inspectorate Wales, and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons. The inspection assessed the progress of individuals with mental health needs and disorders through the criminal justice system, from first contact with the police to release from prison.

[A joint thematic inspection of the criminal justice journey for individuals with mental health needs and disorders \(justiceinspectors.gov.uk\)](https://www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/joint-thematic-inspection-of-the-criminal-justice-journey-for-individuals-with-mental-health-needs-and-disorders)

Inspectors looked at more than 300 cases from six regions, interviewed 550 professionals, and heard from 67 people with mental health issues who had been through the criminal justice system. Exeter Custody Suite was visited as part of the inspection and was highlighted as a 'good practice example', identifying that it had been purpose-built and designed with Liaison and Diversion services in mind, with excellent facilities to promote joint working.

The report concluded that the criminal justice system is failing people with a mental illness and that not enough progress had been made since the last joint inspection 12 years ago to put right critical shortfalls.

However, I am encouraged to see that improvements to the police handling of mental health have been recognised, highlighting the national coverage of liaison and diversion schemes and better availability of section 136 beds as an alternative to police custody as a "place of safety" for people in a mental health crisis.

The report made 22 recommendations in total, 7 of which are directed at police forces. I have

published my formal response to this report and recommendations on the [OPCC website](#).

2.6 Estates

The Estates team are currently delivering a £16m annual revenue programme of maintenance, compliance and facilities management activity across Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly, covering 92 individual sites and over 160 buildings.

In addition, this year the Estates team will be delivering a range of refurbishment, new build, and remodelling capital projects across the peninsula, plus a significant amount of demolition activity.

The team have had an incredibly challenging year due to G7, operational activity, external market challenges and staffing shortages, however, despite these issues, I am pleased to report the following key highlights have been achieved so far this year:

1. The delivery of a newly centralised Forensics service building on the HQ site at Middlemoor.
2. Secured a National Police Estates award for the best non-construction project 2021, based on preparing the Police Estate for G7.
3. The sale of the under-utilised St Ives Police Station building located on Dove Street and relocation to an alternative site within the town centre.
4. Completion of a comprehensive space Audit of our new Exeter Police Station, ensuring occupancy levels are maximising the efficiency of this building.
5. Delivery of the Compliance framework in relation to asbestos, fire, legionella and electrical safety, which included the lifting of the Fire Safety 'Health and Safety' Warning notice.
6. Commenced the new Devon Property and Information Store build project.
7. Completed the phase 2 demolition works at Middlemoor.

3. CONNECTED

3.1 Budget survey

I have a statutory duty to seek the views of residents of the force area in relation to the totality of the policing budget. In order to meet this obligation, my communications and engagement team have conducted comprehensive qualitative and quantitative research exercises, with the details of these reported to the panel in this meeting (January 2022). This process seeks to understand sentiments on policing and expenditure plans from a wide range of individuals and this year I was pleased to see that over 5,300 people took part in the online survey, with a further 15 engaged through our focus groups. My office has become a member of the Market Research Society and undertaken training in order to maintain high levels of professionalism in this annual exercise.

3.2 Easy Read Police and Crime Plan

I have published an Easy Read version of the Police and Crime Plan 2021-25. Easy Read is a method of presenting written information to make it easier to understand for people with difficulty reading. Both the [regular](#) and [Easy Read](#) versions of the plan are available to download from my office's website and printed versions are available on request.

3.3 Altered Not Defined: a trauma informed guide to communicating on sexual harm

My office has been working with a lived experience advisor in order to improve the way we and Devon and Cornwall Police communicate about sexual harm. All too often campaigns designed to reduce or raise awareness of these issues take little or no care to reduce the trauma felt by those affected by these crimes. This work has two guides; one for communications professionals and one for journalists. I am grateful for the commitment of our lived experience volunteer and expert industry advice to bring this work forward. A website to host the guidance has been commissioned and is in the final stages of production. The guidance will be launched in the spring of 2022.

3.4 Councillor Advocates

I continue to work closely with my Councillor Advocates, and am delighted to have 370 Councillors working with me and my office (as of December 2021). Since I launched my Police and Crime Plan, the Advocates have been encouraged to engage in delivering the plan, and the Councillor Advocate Handbook has been refreshed to reflect plan priorities.

Since the last meeting of the Police and Crime Panel, councillor advocates have been involved in community engagement activity in areas where Safer Streets programmes are operating and in the response to the Keyham shooting.

On Tuesday 23rd November 2021, several OPCC Councillor Advocate Volunteers were shown around the Contact and Resolution Command's Police Control Room at Middlemoor Exeter. They spoke with staff and saw for themselves how the Control Room operated. Feedback from Cllrs showed that this exercise was very much appreciated. One Councillor said:

"I was really pleased to have attended today. I have learnt so much from my visit today, the amount of information was overwhelming. I was impressed with the amount of work carried out and now completely understand the frustrations and stresses involved with police work. I will be feeding back to full council next week and hopefully get them to understand the demands on our police force. I think these tours will help to give people a better understanding of how hard your role is".

We hope to arrange more of these opportunities in the future.

3.5 Marketing award

On 8th December 8, 2021, Devon Together, the collaborative newspaper project that I joint commissioned with the NHS and Devon County Council to provide information on victim care services and vaccines during national lockdowns in 2020 and 2021, was Highly Commended in the Drum Awards Social Purpose category. The Drum Awards is a global awards program which recognises best practice, the best companies, and the best people from across the marketing and communications industry. In October, the publication won 'Best Publication' in the Chartered Institute of Public Affairs regional awards.

3.6 Commemoration to PC Dennis Smith QPM

On 2nd December I was honoured to attend the memorial plaque unveiling to PC Dennis Smith QPM. PC Smith lost his life whilst on duty in 1973 in Torquay when he was shot in the course of his duties. PC Smith had confronted a suspect following a high speed chase. The suspect would then go on to kill three other people that evening. PC Smith was 44 years old. The plaque was

unveiled by Mrs Geraldine Winner, Chair of the Police Memorial Trust and wife of its founder, the late Michael Winner. The ceremony was also attended by the Chief Constable, local MP, Mayor and Leader of Torbay Council.

3.7 Annual assessment of police complaint and conduct performance 2020/21

One of my statutory functions is to monitor all complaints against the police force, its officers, and staff, and to hold the Chief Constable to account for the exercise of the Chief Constable's functions under Part 2 of the Police Reform Act 2002 in relation to the handling of complaints and conduct matters.

I have put in place a number of mechanisms to fulfil this duty which includes:

- Undertaking police complaint reviews. Through this mechanism, I am able to identify areas for improvement and learning from police complaints.
- Formal reporting by the Deputy Chief Constable about performance relating to police complaints, police complaint handling and police misconduct on a quarterly basis.
- Monthly meetings between my Executive Team and Head of PSD to oversee the police handling of complaint and misconduct investigations, in particular to consider timeliness of investigations, identifying where investigation delays are and the reasons behind these delays, in addition to making reasonable and proportionate recommendations where necessary for those approaching or exceeding 12 months.
- Monitoring of Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) national comparison data of police complaint and misconduct performance. The IOPC collects data directly from police complaint and misconduct databases and reports them quarterly and annually. Where a report highlights performance that is of concern, I will require the Chief Constable to provide a response to this.

My assessment of performance in 2021 was [published on my office's website](#) in December.

3.8 Customer Contact and Complaint Reviews

The volume of correspondence and phone calls into my office's public inbox and switchboard increased in 2021 compared with 2020. By the end of November 2021, our main contact lines had been used by 6516 more people than in the whole of the previous year (an increase of 180%).

Contact includes police complaints, police complaint reviews, people struggling to get through to the police, or who are experiencing delays in receiving a response from the police and people contacting the PCC as the first point of contact to report a matter to the police. I and my office have provided reassurance to people when possible, and have intervened when possible - liaising with the police, providing updates and signposting to support services such as victim care where appropriate.

When a member of the public is dissatisfied with how their complaint has been handled by their local police force, my office may be contacted to conduct a police complaint review to determine whether the police's handling of the complaint and the outcome was reasonable and proportionate. Where mistakes are identified, and the review is upheld, I will make recommendations to the police to rectify the issue.

In the calendar year 2021, we received 172 requests for a review, conducted 156 complaint reviews and upheld 22. Forty-one were invalid / wrong review body or withdrawn in the same period.

This is a relatively new area of work, and I was pleased to receive confirmation from an audit inspection of the Complaint Review Handling Services in November 2021, that their assurance opinion was substantial, and no recommendations were raised as part of their review.

4. National Updates

4.1 Victims Law

In December 2021, the Government launched a consultation on improving victims' experience of the justice system. The consultation, which covers a wide range of issues relating victims is the first step towards a new 'Victims' Law' - which will build on the foundations provided by the Victims' Code to substantially improve victims' experiences of the criminal justice system.

The consultation looks at how to make concrete improvements to victims' experience of and confidence in the criminal justice system, and the support they receive. The consultation asks questions across five key issues, focusing on: what victims should expect; performance and accountability; increasing the current levels of the Victim Surcharge; community-based support services; and possible improvements to advocacy support. The consultation will run until 3 February 2022.

https://consult.justice.gov.uk/victim-policy/delivering-justice-for-victims/supporting_documents/deliveringjusticeforvictimsconsultation.pdf

4.2 New 10 Year Drug Strategy

In December 2021, the Government published 'From Harm to Hope: a 10 Year Drugs Plan to Cut Crime and Save Lives'. The Strategy's priorities are driven by the landmark review carried out in 2020 and 2021 by Dame Carol Black which focused on the need for a government and system wide response to tackling drugs underpinned by increased investment in treatment and recovery services.

The strategy sets out three key areas of focus:

- Targeted enforcement to break the business model of criminal supply chains
- Developing world class drug treatment and recovery services which provide a full range of evidence-based interventions to people dependent on drugs
- Addressing all drug use through meaningful consequences for drug use and a greater focus on prevention to shift behaviour and attitudes to drugs.

The Home Office has committed £300 million from its 3-year Comprehensive Spending Review funding to tackling drug supply, with a particular focus on enhancing existing county lines activity and Project ADDER.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1039240/From_harm_to_hope_PDF-final_bookmarked_v3.pdf

4.3 The Government's End to End Rape Review – Six Monthly Progress Report

The Panel received a detailed report at its meeting in November 2021 on the government's End to End Rape Review which was published in June 2021. In December 2021, the government published its first 6 monthly progress report on the action plan set out in that review and also published its first Rape Scorecard which will be used to track progress against the government's stated ambition to return rape prosecutions to the levels seen in 2016.

The Progress Report sets out a number of developments that have taken place since publication,

but highlights that there is still much more to do. This includes progress on the recruitment and training of Crown Prosecution staff and a firm commitment to roll out section 28 of the Youth Justice and Criminal Evidence Act 1999 which will enable all victims of sexual offences to pre-record their evidence (subject to judicial discretion). The first Rape Scorecard has also been published which provides information at a national level. The government has also committed in the progress report to publishing regional scorecards from early 2022 on a quarterly basis.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1040957/rape-review-progress-update.pdf

4.4 Policing, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill

The Policing, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill is currently under consideration in the House of Lords, having completed its passage through the House of Commons in June 2021. The Bill is currently in Report Stage which commenced in early December 2021 and is expected to conclude this stage by the end of January 2022. A number of government amendments have been tabled for Report Stage which include: amending the definition of 'serious violence' for the new Serious Violence Duty to clarify that this can include domestic abuse and sexual violence; new provisions to strengthen police powers on protests, including a new criminal offence of 'locking-on'; and new offences relating to voyeurism of breastfeeding. It is currently expected that the Bill will receive Royal Assent in early 2022.

4.5 Government proposals to establish a Road Collisions Investigation Branch

In October, the Department for Transport published proposals to establish a Road Collisions Investigation Branch. This would be similar in role and remit to the equivalents in the rail, air and maritime sectors. The purpose of the RCIB would be to examine the cause of fatal and serious road collisions with the aim of learning and prevention. The intention would not be to find blame or apportion liability as this sits with the police and others, but to analyse the causes of, and determine the most effective measures to, tackle road traffic collisions. The consultation was open from 28th October till 9th December. Both my office and the APCC have indicated support for these proposals as long as lines of accountability remain clear.



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