



Devon and Cornwall Police and Crime Panel

8th July 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 January 2022.

Chief Constable's Retirement

At the end of April 2022 the Chief Constable of Devon and Cornwall Police, Mr Shaun Sawyer QPM formally announced that he would be leaving Devon and Cornwall Police after nine years of service with his last day being in mid-August 2022.

Mr Sawyer has led the force since 2012, and before that served as Deputy Chief Constable. During his tenure the force has been consistently one of the lowest crime areas in the country and is on target to reach record police officer numbers.

I wish to formally record my thanks to the Chief Constable for his years of exceptional service, for his support in delivering the strategic aims of my Police and Crime Plan and for his unrelenting focus on delivering world class policing. Devon and Cornwall is the largest policing area in England; whilst many of our communities benefit from comparatively low crime rates, they also face many unique problems. The Chief Constable has understood those challenges and led a number of changes to create a force that is in good shape to rise to them.

One of my statutory duties is the appointment of a Chief Constable and I have commenced the recruitment process for Mr Sawyer's successor. Mr Sawyer will continue as Chief Constable until mid-August, after which time Deputy Chief Constable James Colwell will be Temporary Chief Constable until a new Chief Constable is appointed.

Note: The recruitment process for a Chief Constable is prescribed by regulations and College of Policing Guidance. This process will run over the summer months and at the point that the Police and Crime Commissioner selects a preferred candidate then this triggers the Police and Crime Panel to hold a confirmation hearing. The confirmation hearing is scheduled to occur on Friday 16th September 2022.



1. SAFE

1.1 Operation Scorpion

In March, the other four South West PCCs and I launched one of the biggest and most significant drug operations of my time in office to date.

Op Scorpion is a huge joint project which will see the entire South West of England become a hostile environment for anyone trying to deal drugs.

This ambitious project has come to fruition thanks to close working with my fellow Police and Crime Commissioners and their respective Chief Constables in Devon and Cornwall, Dorset, Avon and Somerset, Wiltshire and Gloucestershire, as well as the British Transport Police, South West Regional Organised Crime Unit and CrimeStoppers.

Op Scorpion is about tackling this issue head on by disrupting drug networks and county lines operations through intelligence, technology, joint innovation and robust policing to hit drug dealers where it hurts. However, it is also about identifying and offering help to the people who get caught up in the poisonous web of exploitation, drugs and addiction.

The police have been building their intelligence picture and identified community hot-spot areas of anti-social, problematic drug using and taking that are causing the most community concern. Op Scorpion coordinates the arrest of local dealers, disrupts anti-social behaviour and provides prevention advice/referral where appropriate. In the first Op Scorpion phase we have had some incredible results in Devon and Cornwall, with officers seizing more than £432,000 worth of drugs and arresting 172 people. They have also seized money, weapons and vehicles belonging to those involved in the supply of drugs and helped to safeguard 297 vulnerable people.

People in Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly, as well as throughout the entire South West can expect to see more hard-hitting operations like this over the coming months.

1.2 Operation Medusa

As part of its commitment to tackle my Police and Crime Plan priority of 'drugs', Devon and Cornwall Police is working with Merseyside Police's County Lines Task Force to reduce the drugs supply from that force area into ours, disrupt street level dealing and offer treatment solutions and support to drug users. The task force consists of a team of policing officers with additional Home Office funding and additional specialist capabilities. They have a focus on detecting and disrupting activity related to 'county lines' drug dealing activity emanating from the Liverpool area. This is a significant trade, with Devon and Cornwall ranked eighth in terms of force areas importing drugs from Merseyside.

The task force has run two operations in the Devon and Cornwall Police area in recent months supported and planned by Devon and Cornwall Police officers and using both covert and overt tactics. The first, from March 1 to 2, focused on Plymouth and South Devon. A total of 46 arrests were made with significant amounts of suspected class A drugs and weapons including imitation firearms, knives and crossbows seized. The second operation focused on Torquay and Teignbridge and took place on June 14 and 15; 40 people were arrested and items seized included: multiple kilograms of suspected class A and B drugs in a range of forms (heroin, cocaine and amphetamines), electronic scales, multiple bladed weapons, mobile phones, a significant quantity of cash and 12 vehicles. I accompanied officers on operations in Torquay and my office provided communications and engagement support to both operations to reassure the public and explain the high levels of police activity to our communities. This support resulted in widespread media coverage including in the Times newspaper, which in turn led to considerable positive feedback from these communities.

The operations brought to my attention areas of technical capability within the task force that are not currently held by Devon and Cornwall Police. I hope to make available additional Home Office monies so these tools are permanently available to Devon and Cornwall Police officers.

1.3 Vision Zero South West

The Vision Zero South West Road Safety Partnership continues to go from strength to strength with increased enforcement from roads policing officers combined with education from our theme lead partners.

Since our last Panel meeting, I am delighted to report that the core employees of Vision Zero South West have now been appointed.

Natalie Warr, who has been involved in the partnership since its conception as Local Transport & Road Safety Lead for Cornwall Council, has been appointed as project coordinator. Natalie will oversee the work of the other permanent employees – Joel Cooper (Communications and Engagement Coordinator), Candice Gerken (Strategic Analyst) and Helen Galligan (Project Support Officer).

The team have been working with the Cabinet Office's Behavioural Science Team to learn more about Behaviour Change techniques which will guide all of Vision Zero's education and communication work moving forward.

They have also been supporting partners with the launch of Devon and Cornwall Police's Summer Drink Driving campaign, promoting Cornwall Council's advanced training scheme for motorcyclists and assisting with a multi-agency plan to help reduce motorcyclist deaths on our roads following a spate of tragic recent incidents.

Most recently, my team went to Westminster for a Vision Zero South West showcase event which allowed us to demonstrate some of the great work we are doing to reduce road deaths in Devon and Cornwall to MPs, ministers, members of the Transport Select Committee and the Parliamentary Advisory Council for Transport Safety (PACTS).

1.4 Community Speedwatch events

Enhancing Community Speedwatch (CSW) is one of the key commitments in my Police and Crime Plan so I was pleased to meet dozens of our CSW volunteers at recent engagement events. The events were organised by Devon and Cornwall Police and held in Exeter on 14th April and Wadebridge on 17th May. CSW co-ordinators from across the two counties gathered together to hear of the recent developments to improve support for CSW volunteers and hear about how their volunteering fits in to the wider effort to reduce the harm on our roads.

Talks were given by members of the Op Snap, No Excuse and CSW teams to keep co-ordinators updated on the investments being made by the police to enhance CSW and provide better back-office support. I spoke to the community on the importance of road safety and personally thanked the co-ordinators for their contribution and their hard work particularly during the pandemic which impacted their work significantly. I was also able to present certificates to a number of our co-ordinators in recognition of those schemes that had carried out one hundred or more deployments over the last twelve months.

Devon and Cornwall Police is planning to run similar events for all CSW volunteers later in the year.

1.5 Town centre safety, Torquay

In partnership with Torbay Council and their Community Safety Partnership to support their focus on anti-social behaviour and substance misuse South Devon residents were asked to complete a short survey to help shape future priorities for making Torquay town centre a safer place. My office and Torbay Council teamed up to pose nine questions about whether people feel safe in Torquay and what could be done to make them feel more secure.

The work is being done on behalf of Torbay's Community Safety Partnership, who are keen to ensure their efforts respond to the issues that matter most to people.

Survey participants were asked about their experiences in Torquay town centre during the day and night.

I continue to work with local authorities and others across Devon and Cornwall to help secure significant improvements to our towns and cities. I have already made available £200,000 to help Torbay Council and the local police to tackle anti-social behaviour and crime in Torbay.

As well as shaping future plans and work, the survey results will also influence how the Torbay Community Safety Partnership bids for funds. The survey ran from Thursday 28th April until Friday 17th June, with interim results extracted to support our bid for Safer Streets monies.

A total of 801 people took part in the survey. Noteworthy results were as follows:

- When asked how safe they felt in Torquay town centre during the day 10% said 'very unsafe'. This increased to 45% when they were asked how safe they felt at night.
- A total of 83% of respondents cited 'signs of drug use' as a reason for feelings of unsafety – the most selected reason from a list of 10
- 'Castle Circus', 'High Street' and 'car parks' were selected as the three areas people most felt unsafe.
- A total of 90% of respondents said they had experienced threatening and intimidating behaviour when visiting the town.
- 'Seeing police officers/street marshals or enforcement officers' was the most popular choice, from a list of 10, when participants were asked 'What makes you feel safer when visiting Torquay town centre?' with 71% selecting it.

1.6 Launch of Exeter's Safety of Women at Night (SWaN) Charter

In December 2021, my office worked in collaboration with organisations across Exeter City Centre, including Exeter University, Exeter City Council and CoLab to successfully obtain £72,565 in additional funding from the Home Offices' Safety of Women at Night Fund (SWAN). The money has helped to deliver a number of initiatives to help tackle Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) in Exeter City Centre, particularly at night. This includes the development of a Women and Girls Safety Charter, which asks businesses and licensed premises to pledge a long-term commitment to preventing violence and to safeguard women in their establishments. In March 2022 the Safety Charter was launched at an event held by Exeter University at which I was delighted to speak. Partners and organisations from across Exeter City Centre discussed the importance of the Charter, which asks businesses to prioritise women's safety through 7 key pledges. These include; supporting and training staff to respond to and report violence, encouraging organisations to appoint a 'Champion' for women's safety and supporting the public by creating clear routes for reporting unacceptable behaviour while using services or spaces at night. Further information about the Charter can be found at <https://exeter.gov.uk/clean-safe-city/community-safety/safety-of-women-at-night-charter/>.

The Safety Charter was informed by a survey of 1,566 people who use the city centre. An overwhelming number of respondents were women (97.8%). The results showed that many people feel unsafe when alone in Exeter at night, with 42.5% stating they would feel 'unsafe' or 'very unsafe' in a pub on their own and 86.3% stating they would feel 'unsafe' or 'very unsafe' walking down a street or alley by themselves.

We must listen to the voices of women and girls, who continue to be at the forefront of these issues. I look forward to understanding how the SWAN project and the Safety Charter will continue to promote the safety of women in Exeter and to working with partners across Exeter to make our public spaces safer for everyone.

1.7 Safer Streets Fund 4

As the Panel are aware from my previous updates, the Safer Streets Fund seeks to invest in the delivery of place-based crime prevention plans. My office has worked alongside Torbay Council, Cornwall Council and North Devon District Council to develop and submit bids for Torquay, Truro and Barnstaple. All three bids aimed to reduce VAWG crimes and ASB incidents to improve feelings of safety in public spaces and also sought benefits for a number of secondary crime types, including wider violence against the person, public order, criminal damage, theft and robbery.

Round 4 of the Safer Streets Fund has a broader focus than previous rounds, allowing bids to focus on neighbourhood acquisitive crime (burglary, vehicle theft etc), violence against women and girls (VAWG) in public spaces and anti-social behaviour. The total funding for this round is £75 million, with maximum bids of £750,000 over the entire delivery period which ends in September 2023. The bidding window was open for 10 weeks from March and closed on 13th May 2022. The Home Office is currently in the process of assessing the submitted bids. The announcement of successful bids and the distribution of grant agreements to successful bidders for signature are expected sometime this month.

1.8 Violence Against Women and Girls

I was really pleased to see the publication of the Plymouth Commissions report into Male Violence Against Women and Girls. This is a huge step forward in Plymouth recognising the challenges of violence which women and girls face but more importantly makes recommendations to start to tackle this issue. My team gave evidence to the Commission and already have a strong relationship with the Community Safety Partnership in Plymouth who will be driving much of this work forward. Through my convening role under the new prevention of serious violence duty which comes into effect later this year, I will continue to prioritise this area of work across Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly.

1.9 Operation Soteria

Op Soteria is a collaboration between criminal justice practitioners to develop a new operating model for the investigation and prosecution of rape cases with the ultimate aim of improving outcomes. The programme operates through expensive work in pathfinder areas with the support of academic evaluation. The key elements of Op Soteria are:

1. A suspect focused investigation;
2. Disrupting and challenging repeat offenders;
3. Using procedural justice to underpin victim engagement;

4. Placing investigators knowledge, learning and wellbeing at the heart of improvements;
5. Systematic use, analysis and exploitation of the data.

There were originally four areas piloting this approach and these have been expanded into an additional fourteen of which Devon and Cornwall is one such area. Plymouth is the geographic area piloting this approach which will inform both the national programme and local improvements to better support victims of rape and bring perpetrators to justice.

1.10 Keyham Recovery

Through the additional funding that the Plymouth Recovery Board was successful in obtaining from the Home Office and our own additional funding from the Ministry of Justice for victim care my team and Devon and Cornwall Police continue to support the recovery efforts in Keyham.

I attended the Strategic Recovery Workshop on 10th June in Keyham along with partners to ensure that the recovery plans remain on track and we continue to support the communities affected. The Safer Keyham Project Manager, Becki Parsons (OPCC staff member) has submitted a proposal into the Home Office seeking an extension of funding for the Keyham Community Policing Team (KCPT) to cover the period of December 2022 – March 2023. It is vital that the Keyham Community Policing Team remain in place during the inquest period to provide continued community reassurance and maintain legitimacy. The total amount requested from the Home Office is £104,000.

1.11 HMICFRS and HM Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate's (HMCPPI) joint thematic inspection of the Police and Crown Prosecution Services Response to Rape Phase 2

Since the last Police and Crime Panel, the Criminal Justice Joint Inspection have published the second and final part of the joint inspection by HMICFRS and HM Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate's (HMCPPI) of the investigation and prosecution of rape in England and Wales.

[A joint thematic inspection of the police and Crown Prosecution Service's response to rape – Phase 2: Post-charge \(justiceinspectorates.gov.uk\)](https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/cjji/phase-2-report/)

The first part (Phase 1) was published in July 2021 and examined cases from the point when they were reported to the police through to the decision (either by the police or the CPS) to take no further action. This part (Phase 2) examines cases from the point of charge and the case going to court, including the outcome.

Inspectors from HMICFRS and HMCPPI jointly reviewed and assessed 54 police and CPS case files from five police forces (Devon and Cornwall not referenced) and six CPS Areas in which the cases were charged. This included cases resulting in conviction, in jury acquittal, and where no evidence was offered, or the case was withdrawn. Inspectors conducted interviews and focus groups with police and CPS staff, as well as organisations providing support to victims, they also carried out two bespoke surveys to inform the report: one of rape victims/survivors; and a second of support services who support rape victims/survivors.

The combined findings from parts one and two of this inspection provide a comprehensive assessment of the criminal justice system's current approach to rape, and an account of victims' experiences of the system. The overall conclusion is that the criminal justice system is failing to provide a satisfactory level of service to victims of rape. This report makes for concerning reading and continues to highlight that the criminal justice system is failing the victims of this life changing

crime. I have been absolutely clear in all my statements on this matter that action by the police and CPS to improve the service provided to victims of rape is critical.

HMICFRS and HMCPSI have jointly made nine recommendations in the second phase of their inspection, three of which are aimed at police forces. Some of the inspectorates' joint recommendations include significantly improving communications with victims from the point of charge onwards, setting set up specialist rape offence courts to help clear the backlog of cases, and for the Home Office and the Ministerial Lead for Rape and Serious Sexual Offences to consult on the benefits of a commissioner for tackling rape and serious sexual offences.

I have published my formal response to this report and recommendations on the [OPCC Website](#)

1.12 Prisoners building eco-homes to help tackle the South West housing crisis

As Chair of the South West Reducing Reoffending Partnership (a cross agency partnership of leaders from across the region, including the South West Police and Crime Commissioners), I am pleased to announce that we have launched a pioneering new project which involves prisoners working with modular housing providers to build low carbon, environmentally friendly modular homes for local communities and vulnerable people across the South West. It provides an opportunity to reduce reoffending by ensuring prisoners have the skills they need to help secure employment upon their release, whilst addressing the housing crisis in the South West.

I funded a successful proof of concept trial in Torquay and I am delighted the scheme is now being rolled out on a larger scale.

Under the leadership of professional tradespeople, prisoners have been learning a range of modern construction skills while also gaining valuable work experience, supporting their rehabilitation in readiness for their release. This is having a profound impact on prisoners who, in addition to learning new skills, have gained confidence and flourished.

The eco pod homes offer more than much needed, quality, affordable accommodation for those that need it in the community. They are also easy to relocate, built using low carbon methods and offer high energy efficiency to reduce energy bills for the occupants.

I am fully behind this project; it is important to help people who have been in the prison system and make sure they have purpose both in prison and outside. I want to see people succeed and contribute positively to society and this is a huge opportunity to help achieve that common goal. This project is about keeping people busy and giving them a purpose while providing a service that is really useful to our society. Not only does it equip prisoners with valuable skills and a great work ethic, it also creates essential housing for those who are most in need.

Please watch this short video to find out more: <https://youtu.be/blAqOJPEeM0>

1.13 Commissioner's Community Grant Scheme 2022

In January 2022 I updated the Panel on the launch of the second round of my community grants scheme which is operated by Cornwall Community Foundation and Devon Community Foundation. The focus was on projects that were aimed at raising awareness of the risks around drug use or which divert young people and adults from becoming involved in illegal drugs activity. I am pleased to advise the Panel that to date this round of funding has delivered £140,000 to projects across the peninsula. In Cornwall we have been able to support 13 projects (7 fully funded and 6 part funded) providing over £48,000. In Devon to date 11 projects have benefited from funding with over £92,000 distributed (10 fully funded and 1 part funded project) with the final round of applications due to be considered by the funding panel in early July.

I am also pleased to announce that the next round of PCC Community Grants will be for projects which focus on tackling anti-social behaviour or diverting individuals and groups from anti-social behaviour in their local communities. This round will make over £140,000 available to communities to help them to tackle this important issue (£48,450 in Cornwall and £93,925 in Devon). The fund launched in Cornwall on 24th June and will close on 15th August 2022. Details on how to apply can

be found at [Commissioner Community Grant Scheme - Cornwall Community Foundation](#). Devon Community Foundation's bidding process is expected to open in September 2022 and will be publicised by my office once it is launched.

2 RESILIENT

2.1 Victim Support Survey

Last year I signed the most significant contract to provide services for those affected by crime outside London, with national charity Victim Support becoming my strategic partner. There is some really interesting work going on at the moment, based on the foundation principle that the victim should be placed at the centre of the system and bespoke services tailored to their needs. A victim of violence could, for example, choose to take part in restorative justice, communicating with the perpetrator of the crime in an attempt to understand the offence more. They might also take up opportunities for counselling to help them recover.

Victim services have improved and diversified hugely over the years, and those affected can now be directed to any number of effective, high-quality services.

One of the biggest challenges is that the availability of these services is not as widely understood as it could be with victims not always realising that free support is available to them regardless of whether they wish to report the issue to the police. Victim Support undertook a survey recently, asking residents of the Devon and Cornwall area to answer a few questions about the kind of search terms they might use if they were looking for support and the people or agencies they might reach out to. This data will tell the charity where it should invest communications resource and ultimately put more people in touch with those who can help.

2.2 North Devon Criminal Justice Hub

I have temporary arrangements in North Devon in terms of the police estate, and we are actively seeking a long-term solution. As part of these discussions with North Devon MP Selaine Saxby we have considered the possibility of creating a North Devon Criminal Justice Hub.

I am pleased to say that we have been successful in securing funding to scope the opportunities for a North Devon Criminal Justice Hub from the One Public Estate (OPE) programme. The OPE programme have appointed a company called Avison Young to develop a business case. Avison Young recently convened a multi-agency meeting to discuss the project, its scope and the potential amongst the public sector. Whilst it is early days, there is a lot of good will to support the initial scoping work and we will keep you updated as the plans develop.

2.3 2022/23 Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Provision

The Home Office have recently made a provisional offer of funding for perpetrator intervention work up to the value of £417,395 to continue to deliver the Domestic Abuse Perpetrator projects which have been funded across Devon and Cornwall over the past 2 years. There is also a strong indication from the Home Office that there will be a shift to multi-year funding, which signals a welcome commitment to addressing harmful behaviours. The details of this longer-term funding are yet to be published.

As a result of this latest funding, my office and Local Authorities have come together to discuss priorities for future funding. The following local principles and priorities have been established:

- Equity of provision across Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly

- A shift in dialogue and culture to understand why those who cause harm do so
- A priority of upskilling the wider workforce
- Committing to a whole family support approach which is needs led
- Trauma informed and trauma responsive
- Open and available to all
- Supported by a coordinator

In addition, the Drive Partnership has recently carried out a piece of short-term consultancy (funded by the Home Office) to understand our approach to perpetrators across Devon and Cornwall and give recommendations for future strategy and delivery. As a result of these recommendations, and following consultation with Force leads and my office, a decision has been made to create a strategic post that will enable the development of a regional strategy, embed effective strategic collaboration and ensure a consistent approach to perpetrators of Domestic Abuse across Devon and Cornwall.

Proposed plans for the 2022/23 funding are as follows:

Cornwall: Continue Tier 3 Behaviour Change Work	£72.8k
Devon: Continue Tier 3 Behaviour Change Work	£85.8k
Plymouth: Continue Tier 3 Behaviour Change Work	£62.4k
Torbay: Develop Tier 3 offer (slightly higher than is proportionate due to current lack of provision)	£50k
Medium Risk provision to fill identified gaps	£30k
Workforce development: region wide training offer	£50k
Coordinator: viewed as essential in delivery and implementation of Drive recommendations	£39k
Strategic Lead: part time post to lead on strategy development and partnership approach	£27k

2.4 Maritime PCSO in Ilfracombe

A new Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) has started work in Ilfracombe with the specific remit of policing the town's harbour. This new dedicated role is part of a 12-month pilot project, the first of its kind in Devon and Cornwall.

The post has been jointly funded by North Devon Council, who own and operate Ilfracombe Harbour, and my office, which has provided money through the money allocated in the Bluelight Fund which aims to promote innovative new ways to providing policing support.

During the summer tourist season, when Ilfracombe's population swells, the harbour sees a rise in anti-social behaviour including street drinking and people jumping into hazardous areas of the sea, known as tombstoning.

The Maritime PCSO, is located at Ilfracombe Harbour Master's Office, will work as part of the Neighbourhood Policing Team to provide an important, visible presence for the Harbour and to help prevent incidents of ASB.

Trialling new ways to create a uniformed presence in some of our remote rural and coastal locations is precisely why I created the Bluelight Fund some years ago, with the support of council taxpayers. We have already expanded our Tri-Service Safety Officers in Cornwall and Firefighter/Specials in South Devon, so this latest innovation in North Devon feels like an obvious progression.

Working in partnership is the only solution to solving ASB in the long term, which is why I was so keen to work with the Harbourmaster to pilot this Maritime PCSO post.

2.5 Funding for victims services

In June the Ministry of Justice published a new Victim Funding Strategy ([Victims Funding Strategy \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)). The Strategy, which was published alongside the draft Victims Bill has three strategic aims:

- **Fund the victim support sector more strategically:** to simplify funding processes, where appropriate, to reduce the complexity of the landscape for those providing critical services for victims of crime. It includes adopting a strategic approach across government departments who have responsibilities for victim funding and commissioning of support services. In particular, government has committed to the principle of multi-year funding for core victim support services, recognising the importance of sustainable service
- **Remove barriers to access:** introducing national commissioning standards, across all victim support services, to ensure a baseline quality of support for all victims. This includes reviewing and refreshing existing commissioning guidance across government, so that it reflects updated priorities and funding. These new standards will complement the joint statutory duty on relevant agencies in the draft Victims Bill, which will require them to work together when commissioning support services to ensure victims of sexual and domestic violence and serious violence get the joined-up support needed.
- **Implement clear and consistent outcomes:** introducing a set of core metrics for all departments, commissioners and services to collect, and a set of core outcomes for commissioners and services to deliver against. This will ensure that across government, they can build a strong baseline for measuring impact, and ensure that funding is being used effectively to support victims.

I would also like to bring to the Panel's attention two recent additional funding developments for victims of sexual violence and domestic abuse. In line with the new strategy both of these funding announcements cover a three year period which is important in providing greater stability to providers and better enabling them to support victims of these crimes.

- an additional £6m per annum funding for the next 3 years is being provided to Police and Crime Commissioners nationally for services supporting victims of sexual violence and domestic abuse. Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly has been awarded just over £600,000 per annum and my Office is now working to put in place appropriate mechanisms for the distribution of this funding and is engaged with partners across the peninsula in this work. I will update the Panel further on this progress in the autumn.
- in addition to the continuation of existing ISVA and IDVA provisions across Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly I am pleased to advise you that additional funding has been allocated by the Ministry of Justice to add a further 6 ISVA/IDVAs to the cohort within our area. This includes a particular focus on the securing of specialist children and young persons' ISVAs.

2.6 LCJB Update

'Getting Court'

As Chair of the Local Criminal Justice Board I have commissioned Young Citizens to deliver a Court awareness project for young people in Devon and Cornwall, 'Getting Court', which is based on initiatives previously introduced within Gloucestershire and Oxfordshire. The programme seeks to raise public confidence and understanding in the Criminal Justice system and will:

- Provide an understanding of how the criminal justice system works, including how the police bring a prosecution case to court and how they support victims and witnesses, the role of the judge and how they determine sentences, the role of prosecution and defence, the role of probation and pre-sentencing reports, and how legal aid works.

- Enable opportunities to learn about career opportunities within the criminal justice system, what it's like to work with victims and witnesses, what a role of a barrister entails, and what it's like to be a judge.
- Give an insight into the consequences of crime, including how it impacts on life choices, what a criminal conviction will mean for a person's future opportunities, travel; higher education (entry to university for some subjects), job prospects, social stigma, and the dangers of county lines, knife crime and drugs.

I am also commissioning an independent evaluation of the initiative so that we can truly understand the benefits and value of this investment.

Victims' Code of Practice

I am also proud to report that Devon and Cornwall are the first Local Criminal Justice Board (LCJB) to successfully develop and implement an agency wide scrutiny process designed to identify good practice and areas for learning, to better understand gaps and demands on services and influence changes in policy and working practices to improve service delivery to victims. The scrutiny panel is made up of representatives from the Courts, Youth Justice Service, Police, Crown Prosecution and Probation Service. The panel 'dip-samples' criminal cases that have been finalised through the criminal justice system to explore whether or not the 12 victim rights have been fulfilled, assessing the level of service given to each case.

The VCoP Scrutiny Terms of reference have been shared with our colleagues within the Ministry of Justice who are keen to share best practice with other LCJBs also seeking to introduce the process. To date, two panels have taken place which have reviewed Domestic Abuse and Rape cases to enable us to have greater insight into the service provided to those victims across all agencies within the criminal justice system.

3 CONNECTED

3.1 Opening of front offices

After years of austerity which resulted in the closure of many police stations to the public I am pleased to announce that a schedule for the opening of six police station front offices during 2022 has been agreed with the Chief Constable. This is in addition to the reopening of Truro which closed during the pandemic as it was on a site shared with partners. This is a significant step forward. However, I aim to increase the provision of front offices to more than twenty over the next three years.

The reopening of police front offices is one of the priorities in my Police and Crime Plan. This announcement sets out the commitment to enable a better service to the public by providing greater connectivity and accessibility to the public whilst underlining the police service's roots in the community. In this first phase it also creates 48 new jobs for local people.

The schedule is as follows:

- From November 2022: Truro, Newquay, Penzance, Falmouth, Tiverton and Newton Abbot and Bude
- From June 2023: Okehampton and Tavistock
- From June 2024: Ivybridge, and Ilfracombe
- From June 2025: Exmouth (replacement police station already announced)

Plans are for each front office to be open Monday to Saturday from 10.00am to 3.00pm.

Staff recruitment will commence shortly. I am aware of requests from others for the police station in their town to reopen to the public. A list of these is being maintained by my office and the above

schedule will be subject to review and further prioritisation in line with the financial envelope available.

3.2 999 Emergency call handling figures published by the Government

Figures published by the Government this week reveal that Devon and Cornwall Police received a total of 81,899 emergency 999 calls between 1st January and the end of April.

It equates to an average of 666 emergency calls every single day, or 27 an hour. Every two minutes someone is calling Devon and Cornwall Police about something which requires an emergency response from the police – where someone is in danger, or their life or property could be under threat, or they could be involved in an accident and in immediate need of police assistance.

The dedicated people answering those calls, those considering how best to respond and those organising that response do a brilliant job – often under the highest of pressure and, I would ask that anyone studying these ‘league tables’ considers this when doing so.

These figures do not include non-emergency calls to 101 (which are much higher) and just goes to show the pressure that the police emergency control room is under even though we remain one of the safest areas in the country.

The figures for emergency call waiting times are available for anyone to view at the [police.uk](https://www.police.uk) website and are updated every month but were highlighted this week when the Home Office published, for the first time, a list of how long it takes to answer a 999 call.

We have a shared ambition to drive up standards in our incredible emergency services even further, so that the public can have every confidence in the police’s ability to save lives and keep our streets safe. I hope that publishing the 999 league tables will reconnect the police with the public, holding individual forces to account and helping identify previously unknown issues, with the goal of driving up performance.

This performance data demonstrates the demand for policing. The public quite rightly expect the police to respond swiftly to 999 calls in good time, so I will be using this data to continually monitor performance and ensure members of the public who need emergency assistance are receiving an efficient and effective response when they call 999.

As the public’s voice in policing, I am also very keen to better understand their experiences when contacting their local forces, which is why I am supporting the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners’ [national survey on contact management](#) launched earlier this month to help identify any challenges around where the public report crime through both 101 and 999 services.

3.3 Survey on 101 and 999 services

Residents of Devon and Cornwall have been invited to take a few minutes to tell police chiefs about their experiences when contacting the 101 and 999 services, as well as share their preferences for future modes of contact.

The survey is being run by the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners and will help better inform the police force, the Home Office and myself on the challenges around reporting to the police and assist in forming plans for the future. I am fully aware that reporting to 101 and 999 remains a challenging area of business for the force and we must prioritise those most in need which means contact about routine items is sometimes not responded to as quickly as people would like.

As the voice of the public in policing, I am very keen to better understand their views on these

issues and will be watching the results with interest to build on my own scrutiny in this area. The survey closes at midnight on Sunday 24th July. I would ask all Panel members to raise awareness of the survey within their communities and to encourage their residents to complete it. The survey can be found at <https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/crimereporting-national-public-contact-survey-apcc>.

3.4 Public contact with policing

Control room recruitment is significantly more challenging than traditional contact centre recruitment and retention of staff in a buoyant job market is difficult. To give an idea of how challenging recruitment and retention is, I was interested to share the following information with you:

- In January we had 30 training places and 14 started.
- In March it was 30 training places and 22 started.
- There are currently 36 new starters scheduled for July.
- The next cohort of recruitment for September has yielded 102 candidates for interview, to enable us to meet our target of an additional 20.
- We also have a pool of 24 applicants for Resource Deployment Officers, and we need 15.

In general, it is much easier to recruit in Plymouth than Exeter. However, we are limited for space at Plymouth. Retention is also challenging, although most of the leavers (about 60%) stay in the organisation and move to other roles. This has been particularly prevalent during the recent officer uplift.

3.5 Statement of Accounts

In June I published our annual Statement Of Accounts. This is part of our transparency requirements and the opportunity for the public to see how policing is funded and how the money is spent. This is a critical document for us and the Force and is [available on our website](#).

4 National Updates

4.1 The Queen's Speech

The Queen's Speech on 10th May set out the government's legislative agenda for the new parliamentary term. This includes a number of Bills which are of particular interest to policing, community safety and criminal justice which I have highlighted below.

Draft Victims Bill

The draft Bill was published on 25th May for pre-legislative scrutiny. It follows the Government's recent public consultation on the contents of a future Victims Law which I have previously updated the Panel on. The Draft Bills aims to amplify victims' voices and confidence in the criminal justice process, strengthen transparency and enhance the accountability of criminal justice agencies in the services they deliver to victims, including:

- Enshrining the Victims' Code of Practice (and its 12 rights for victims) in law.
- Increasing the transparency and oversight of the services that criminal justice agencies provide to victims, including a new duty on Police and Crime Commissioners with regards to reviewing compliance with the Victims Code of Practice and a greater focus on joint inspections looking at victim experiences across the criminal justice system.

- Introducing a new duty on Police and Crime Commissioners, local authorities and Integrated Care Boards to collaborate locally in commissioning services for victims of sexual violence, domestic violence and serious violence
- Creating a more formalised approach to Independent Sexual Violence Advisors (*ISVA's*) and Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (*IDVA's*) including setting out more clearly their role and expectations on how agencies should engage with them as well as training, accreditation and best practice.

The Justice Select Committee is currently taking evidence on the draft Victims Bill and I have submitted a response to the Committee to inform its work which will be published on the Parliament website. I am supportive of the proposals for the Bill but in particular have highlighted to the Committee the potential opportunities to go further in enshrining a wider right to advocacy services for other victims of crime and the opportunities presented by the Victims Surcharge to deliver a further step change in support to victims of crime.

Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill

The Levelling Up Bill was introduced in Parliament on the 11th May and has now entered the Committee Stage. The Bill takes forward the key ambitions set out in this year's *Levelling Up White Paper* and the *Planning for the Future White Paper* which was published in August 2020; including:

- Setting out in statute the government's Levelling Up missions with annual reporting on progress.
- Creating a new model of combined authority; the 'County Deal', which will provide local leaders with powers to enhance local accountability, join up services and provide transparent decision making to rejuvenate their communities.
- Unlocking new powers for Local Authorities to bring empty premises back into use and instigate rental auctions of vacant commercial properties in town centres and high streets.

Modern Slavery (Amendment) Bill

As the Chair of the Strategic Oversight Board for the national Modern Slavery and Organised Immigration Crime Programme I recognise the importance of a continued robust response to these horrific crimes and the important role that businesses can play in preventing modern slavery.

This Bill seeks to reinforce the protection and support for victims of human trafficking and modern slavery and increase the accountability of companies and other organisations to drive out modern slavery from their supply chains. The Bill will strengthen requirements on businesses with a turnover of £36 million or more to publish an annual modern slavery statement, including greater specification of the contents of those statements and financial penalties for non-publication. It will also include measures to enhance Slavery and Trafficking Prevention Orders and Slavery and Trafficking Risk Orders which enable conditions to be placed on an individual in order to prevent and disrupt modern slavery crimes which will be supported by criminal sanctions.

Public Order Bill

The Public Order Bill was introduced in Parliament on 11th May. The Bill has completed Committee Stage and will report back into the House of Commons in the next few weeks. The Bill will create new criminal offences in relation to certain protest tactics, including offences related to locking-on and going equipped to lock-on; obstructing major transport works; and interfering with key national infrastructure such as railways, airports and printing presses. The Bill also seeks to extend police stop and search powers in relation to articles related to protest-related offences and to introduce new Serious Disruption Prevention Orders, to target protestors who repeatedly inflict disruption on the public.

4.2 Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022

The Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022 (the Act) received Royal Assent in April 2022.

I have previously updated the Panel during its passage through the House. It is an extensive piece of legislation (at over 330 pages) and covers a wide range of policing and the wider criminal justice matters. The commencement of the provisions in the Act will be staggered with some of the more complex areas such as the new serious violence duty and changes to arrangements for out of court disposals and pre-charge bail not expected to be commenced until late 2022 and early 2023.

A significant number of the provisions in the Bill came into effect on 28th June. This included many of the provisions relating to sentencing, including increased penalties for assault and manslaughter of emergency workers and for certain road traffic offences. It has also included the commencement of some key new powers related to policing protests, new offences including those related to unauthorised encampments and changes to the time limits for prosecution of common assault or battery in domestic abuse cases. Some of the key provisions, including the new Offensive Weapons Homicide Reviews and the new Serious Violence Reduction Orders will be subject to pilots before wider national roll-out.

I have provided a brief outline of the matters covered by the Act below and Panel members can find further information on these provisions in the series of factsheets published by the government: [Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022: factsheets - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/factsheets/policy-factsheet-police-crime-sentencing-and-courts-act-2022). I would however draw the Panel's attention to four specific areas of interest:

Serious Violence:

The Act delivers on the Government's commitment to reducing serious violence via the following statutory measures:

- Additional duties on key authorities (including the police and local authorities) to ensure that they collaborate to prevent and reduce serious violence by sharing data, intelligence and production of a strategy. Commissioners will have an important convening role and may request certain information from those authorities, monitor their work to prevent serious violence and report any findings to the Home Secretary.
- The introduction of New Serious Violence Reduction Orders which give the police the target those already convicted of an offence where a knife and offensive weapon was used or was present, giving them the automatic right to stop and search these offenders.

The Serious Violence Prevention Partnership established jointly by the Chief Constable and myself in 2020 is taking a lead role in ensuring that preparations are in place across the peninsula for implementation which is expected to take place in the first half of 2023. The investment in our programme, for which I am grateful for the Panel's support has put us in a good position with a considerable level of collaboration already taking place across partners under a shared vision. To further support preparations for the new duty, I have provided dedicated grant funding for serious violence prevention to community safety partnerships across Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly.

Unauthorised encampments:

The Act introduces a new offence aimed at those residing on private or public land with vehicles without consent. This will operate alongside existing processes, powers (civil and criminal) and arrangements and comes into effect on 28th June 2022. It applies when a person refuses to leave without reasonable excuse when asked to do so and where they have caused, or are likely to cause, significant damage, disruption or distress. The Act also provides the police with additional powers including in relation to unauthorised encampments on a highway and the seizure and forfeiture of vehicles which cause significant damage. Guidance on the operation of the new powers and offences related to unauthorised encampments is still awaited from the Home Office.

Cautions:

The Act triggers major change to existing out of court disposals by introducing a new two-fold statutory framework which consists of Diversionary and Community cautions. These will formally replace current adult out of court disposals of Simple Cautions, Cannabis / Khat Warnings and Penalty Notices for Disorder. My Office and I will continue to monitor and assess the potential impacts that these changes may have on the existing arrangements in place within Devon and Cornwall (Pathfinder), including the community remedy arrangements. These new arrangements are not expected to come into effect until early 2023.

Road Safety:

The Act provides for increased sentences for death by dangerous or careless driving and causing serious injury. It also makes changes to the arrangements for the setting of fees for educational diversion courses from road traffic offences such as speeding. This includes the introduction of a new national framework for the operation of courses and also confirmation in statute that surplus funding from such courses can be used to fund road safety initiatives. These are important developments for our collective road safety endeavours under the Vision Zero South West partnership. The detail of changes to the operation of courses has not yet been specified and will be contained in regulations which are expected to be developed over the coming months. I will be working closely with the Chief Constable, local authorities and wider partners under Vision Zero to ensure that we are engaged in that work and are prepared for any subsequent changes.

4.3 National Funding Opportunities for Community Safety

As part of its Levelling Up agenda the government has recently launched two key rounds of funding for local authorities which are of particular relevance to community safety: the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and Round 2 of the Levelling Up Fund. Alongside the Safer Streets Fund these provide an important opportunity for investment in areas such as street lighting, CCTV and measures to tackle anti-social behaviour.

UK Shared Prosperity Fund: The 3 year £2.6bn UK Shared Prosperity Fund seeks to restore a sense of community, local pride and belonging by focusing on three key areas for investment; improving communities and place, people & skills, and supporting local business. The communities and place strand of the fund has a particular relevance to community safety with the prospectus specifically citing the potential for investment in measures such as CCTV, street lighting and action to tackle anti-social behaviour. The fund launched on 13th April and Local Authorities will need to submit investment plans to the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities by 1st August 2022.

Levelling Up Fund Round 2: The Levelling Up Fund seeks to address regional disparities across the UK, reduce crime in the worst-affected areas, and transform the UK economy by generating higher paid, higher skilled jobs and new investment. Round 2 will focus on the same three investment themes as the first round: Transport investments; Regeneration and town centre investment; and Cultural investment. Bids that are focused on regeneration and town centre investment provide an opportunity to include investment in measures to help improve community safety and prevent crime which is explicitly recognised in the prospectus. Round 2 of the Levelling up Fund is a total amount of £4.8 bn and every local authority can submit bids worth up to £20 million (or up to £50 million for Transport & Culture). The application window opened on 31st May and bids must be submitted by 6th July 2022.

I have written to Council Leaders within Devon and Cornwall to highlight the opportunities that both

of these funds present for strengthening community safety and to encourage them to fully explore how these funding streams can be used to support public realm investment in community safety. I have also been engaging with the Chairs of our Community Safety Partnerships to ensure that they are engaged in these funding discussions. Panel members may wish to explore within their own local authority how community safety is being considered within these funding discussions.



Alison Hernandez

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