



Devon and Cornwall Police and Crime Panel

27th January 2023

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 2022.

1. Chief Constable Will Kerr OBE, KPM

The new Chief Constable Mr Will Kerr OBE, KPM started his new role on 29th December 2022. The first few days of his arrival saw him out on foot patrol with police officers across Devon and Cornwall and meeting many police staff and police officers in stations right across our geography. Mr Kerr is rapidly getting to grips with the full range of activities in our locality. His letter to the Police and Crime Commissioner as part of the budget negotiations details his initial thoughts and his communications to police officers and staff. I am really pleased to announce that Mr Kerr will be splitting his time between both our county headquarters and has an office base in both Exeter Headquarters and Cornwall's Headquarters in Bodmin. This is the first time since the creation of Devon and Cornwall Police that there is permanent presence of a Chief Constable in Cornwall. You will have also noticed that Mr Kerr was awarded the King's Policing Medal (KPM) in the New Year's Honours list, another accolade to demonstrate his previous contributions to UK Policing.

Mr Kerr is planning to meet as many partner agencies as possible over the coming weeks and months. This week, the Chief Constable and I hosted an introductory event in Saltash for partner agencies to meet the new Chief Constable and members of his Executive Team and provided the opportunity for him to outline his policing aspirations for Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly over the coming months.

2. Update on HMICFRS Inspection (Policing Effectiveness, Efficiency and Legitimacy)

As a result of the His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) inspection in 2022, Devon and Cornwall Police were moved into an "engage" phase by the inspectorate to secure immediate improvements in three areas of business namely. The final report from the inspectorate has yet to be received.

The then Temporary Chief Constable and I attended our first Policing Performance Oversight Group chaired by His Majesty's Chief Inspector Andy Cooke in late November 2022. The Temporary Chief Constable presented the improvement plan for Devon and Cornwall while I outlined the strategic challenges. This was well received and some areas of additional support were requested and agreed including: a specialist from Humberside Police to advise on improvements in the Contact Centre; additional support with data analytics associated with Crime Data Integrity from the HMICFRS. There is a clear improvement plan now agreed between the Chief Constable and



HMICFRS and a regular dialogue is ongoing. At the end of January 2023 the OPCC Chief Executive and the Deputy Chief Constable are also attending a Masterclass arranged by the HMICFRS on the improvement journey which Greater Manchester Police have achieved.

The next Policing Performance Oversight Group meeting will be in March 2023 when a more formal progress report will be presented.

3. Police Enquiry Offices

A total of six police enquiry offices (PEOs) will have reopened by the end of 2022/23. These are front desks in police stations which had previously been closed, although the stations they were situated in remained operational. Tiverton, Truro, Penzance and Newton Abbot stations reopened in autumn; Falmouth and Bude's are due to fully reopen to six days a week by January 30. The reopened PEOs are open to the public between 10am and 3pm. The project has created 24 part time police enquiry officers, all of whom have now been recruited.

This extensive refurbishment and refit project has cost in the region of £400,000. A dedicated team of property professionals have worked collaboratively to deliver newly refurbished safe and resilient accommodation, improving Police visibility and enabling improved levels of connection with our communities. In addition, my Estates team have also worked in collaboration with Cornwall Council to re-open the shared customer facing desk within Pydar House in Cornwall's capital city of Truro, reinforcing our drive to work in partnership, whilst achieving our vision of places which are safe to live, work and visit. Although I have raised some concerns about visibility in this location and accessibility of the front desk due to changes in how the council use the building.

Since the reopenings serious crimes have been reported in person at these locations by victims who said they would not have otherwise contacted the force and the new staff have been able to support the work of their contact centre colleagues by answering 101 emails.

The front desks also provide people with a place to receive prevention advice and to engage with their neighbourhood policing teams. A survey asking the public about their preferred options if additional PEOs were to be reopened ran between November 22, 2022 and January 15, 2023 and has attracted significant attention, with 4,701 people responding to it. There is a clear desire to meet and engage with policing teams with most respondents (65%) listing 'to offer information to police on what is happening in my community' as a reason for supporting this project. I remain committed to exploring options to improve the connectivity between our police force and the public and am convinced that this project has the potential to improve confidence in policing. I have therefore made budgetary arrangements for further investment in PEO reopenings in 2023/24.

4. Commemorating 20 years of Police Community Support Officers

January 2023 marked the twentieth anniversary of the creation of Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs). The Chief Constable and I marked this occasion with a commemorative event held at Cornwall Police Headquarters in Bodmin with the High Sheriffs. The PCSO ceremony saw 15 PCSOs receiving recognition of their service to policing as this year marks 20 years since their posts were created, with the first to join Devon and Cornwall in January 2003.

Three PCSOs, PCSO Darren England, PCSO Alison Relf and PCSO Peter Soby joined 20 years to the day, so each received a Long Service Award and other PCSOs, Julia Berry, Wendy Christophers, Rebecca Di Quirico, Richard Hill, Jeremy Kewn, Anita Parry, Nicola Payne, Mark

Richards, Andrew Sells, Andrew Tonkin and Graham Wade are set to join them on 20 years of service later this year.

We formally recognised the work carried out by four individual PCSOs who last year were nominated for National Awards. They were; PCSO Robert Bayly (Plymouth) for 'Community Engagement', PCSO Beverley Faull (Camborne) for 'Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity', PCSO Shirley Graham (Isles of Scilly) for 'Lifetime Achievement' and PCSO Shaun Harvey (Camborne) for 'Bravery'.

Last year my office jointly funded the first ever maritime PCSO in Ilfracombe harbour on a 12-month pilot scheme. We have also trialled Police and Fire Community Support Officers along with Firefighter Specials, but the overall sustained trial has been Tri-Service Safety Officers in Cornwall.

The event highlighted the great contribution from individuals like learning sign language to communicate through the Deaf Academy and I shared my own experiences for example PCSO Hayley Widger from Axminster, the main driver in setting up a drug and alcohol treatment centre. PCSO Laurence Gaywood from Torquay led on intelligence to secure a teenage boy to be reunited with his stolen trainers, a recent expensive birthday present, which the police would normally not have investigated. I know many people in our communities will have their own stories.

Today, we have 156 PCSOs serving our communities and I am pleased that from January 30th 2023 recruitment will be open for more. Details can be found about the role and how to apply online: [Devon & Cornwall Police PCSO - Vital Members of our Police Family - Police Recruitment](#).

5. West Country Women's Awards – Violence Against Women and Girls

At the beginning of December 2022, my office attended the West Country Women's Awards in Plymouth organised by Alexis Bowater OBE. This event celebrated the work of some inspiring local women who are doing so much to help and support female victims of violence. I was proud to have sponsored a category at the awards recognising the work to tackle violence against women and girls. The category finalists were Andie Clift of First Light, a domestic abuse and sexual violence recovery service; Hannah Shead, CEO of Trevi, a children's charity providing a safe space for women in recovery; and Collette Eaton-Harris who leads in a role for NHS Devon tackling Interpersonal Trauma and Violence. The award went to Hannah Shead. This 'mother of all mothers' works tirelessly to offer a safe haven for women and children who may have nowhere else to go. It has rapidly expanded, now running three centres, the Jasmine mother's recovery centre, the Sunflower women's centre and the Daffodil family centre. The charity is now supporting almost nine times as many mothers as it did just four years ago. Many women arrive at their door showing signs of complex post-traumatic stress disorder having suffered years of abuse or significant violent events. At its mothers recovery centre in the past year 84% of women have detoxed, and 86% of children remained with their mum. In some cases, they even work to keep the family pet with them as well as their children.

So, while violence against women and girls still remains a huge challenge to society for years to come, the presence of women like Hannah, Andie and Colette, and the success of their work, should reassure, inspire and offer hope to us all. I'd also like to pay tribute to the other incredible women who made the shortlist - Dawn Dines of Stamp Out Spiking, a not-for-profit charity which raises awareness and educates on drink spiking; Rebecca Smith, a Plymouth councillor who chaired the Plymouth Violence Against Women and Girls Commission; and Laura Fraser-Crewes, formerly also of Trevi who now works for Lifeworks Charity Ltd.

My thanks and congratulations to all those nominated for awards.

6. Safer Streets 4

I am pleased that all five Safer Streets funded programmes are progressing well across the Peninsula. A significant amount of activity and interventions will be delivered in the final quarter of this financial year as assets including street lighting upgrades, installation of new streetlights and CCTV cameras are delivered and installed to improve the public's feelings of safety. In addition, coordinated work with businesses in the night-time economy will result in increased training across premises in all 5 areas promoting the Good Night Out scheme and/ or the Safety of Women at Night (SWaN) charters.

Some of innovative work that has been delivered by these partnership projects in the last few months include:

- A campaign, designed by Falmouth University students during Safer Streets 3, has been promoted on bus stops, buses, phone kiosks and in places of further education and night-time economy across Truro to address violence against women and girls, by encouraging effective bystander interventions. The campaign was focused across the city from the national 16 days of action until the end of January 2023. Other towns across the County also displayed the campaign using alternative funding.
- In Torbay, to address violence against women and girls (VAWG) in the night-time economy, the Police delivered dedicated VAWG car patrols. To date the patrols have:
 - enabled vulnerable individuals to be identified and supported people to access a safe route home,
 - provided direct action when unwanted attention was being received by women and girls
 - engaged with businesses during the night-time economy providing support and advice.
- The VAWG car is ongoing, and I am looking forward to understanding the impact of such a scheme on the safety of women and girls in our community.

7. Hate Crime Scrutiny

Since the last Panel meeting we have seen a further increase in the numbers of reported hate crimes to Devon and Cornwall Police, and we are now seeing the highest levels of reported hate crime since the baseline year of 2019. This is in line with national trends and I am encouraged that more people have the confidence to contact the police to report hate crime, but hatred within our communities is not acceptable and I am committed to championing community cohesion and tackling these types of crimes. I have previously reported to the Panel that the most common crimes with a hate element are public order offences, which predominately comprises 'racially or religiously aggravated public fear' and 'public fear or distress' offences. Just over half of all hate crime is motivated by race (53%) and this clearly raises concerns regarding cohesion and safety within our communities.

I am continuing work to further my understanding of our communities' experiences of hate crime, and scrutinise the police's approach to responding to and preventing hate crime. My team have already undertaken significant work to gather and analyse data alongside a comprehensive literature review in order to inform our understanding and approach. We will be conducting a public survey alongside focus groups with professionals, advocates and lived experience victims over the next few weeks. I look forward to sharing my findings with the Panel soon.

8. Operation Scorpion

My office's Communications and Customer Engagement team liaised with forces and PCCs around the South West to raise awareness of Operation Scorpion, a joint effort to tackle drug dealing affecting our communities. The third round of activity saw users and dealers targeted by passive drugs dogs and undercover officers in bars and clubs across Devon and Cornwall, Dorset, Wiltshire, Avon and Somerset and Gloucestershire police force areas. The forces were supported by Ministry of Defence police officers and British Transport Police. Significant policing resources deployed in Plymouth and Falmouth on December 3 and 4. In Plymouth, where I was joined by councillor advocate Lee Finn to observe, messages were projected onto buildings alongside CrimeStoppers details while the operation took place. In total drugs worth an estimated £797,000 were seized under Operation Scorpion in 2022, 391 arrests made and £363,000 of cash seized. Weapons including knives, tasers and machetes have been seized and destroyed. The approach has attracted significant national and regional media attention. Reducing drugs harm is one of my police and crime plan priorities and I remain committed supporting the next phase of Operation Scorpion.

9. Grant money available to organisations across Cornwall tackling drug-related activity and ASB

Over £40,000 collected under the Police Property Act is now available to voluntary organisations and charities across Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly that are providing diversionary activities from drugs-related anti-social behaviour through grant funding and will be managed by Cornwall Community Foundation.

The Police Property Act fund is made up from the proceeds of property sold which has been seized as part of police operations. I have asked that it is used to support our communities in preventing anti-social behaviour stemming from the illegal drugs trade in Cornwall or on the Isles of Scilly. Tackling the use and supply of drugs, and tackling anti-social behaviour, are two of my Police and Crime Plan priorities.

The work supported by the fund will help prevent and protect communities from the damage they cause. It is great to see that money generated from thwarting criminal activity is being recycled back into our towns and villages to do good.

Voluntary organisations in Cornwall can apply for a grant of up to £5,000 by accessing the application form from the [Cornwall Community Foundation website](#). The deadline to apply is 22nd February 2023.

10. Implementation of an independent victim advocacy support model

I am delighted to return from the Christmas festivities and confirm that from 1st January 2023, victims of all crime types can now access their own support advocate in Devon and Cornwall. Whilst there are already domestic abuse and sexual abuse advocates in place, this new support model offers advocacy to victims of other serious violence offences and all other crimes such as stalking. To achieve this, I have been working with our strategic partner, Victim Support intensely for the last six months to realise our vision of ensuring that together, we put victims at the centre of their own support. Whilst, moving away from a patchwork of provision to a more consistent and equitable support offer has not been easy, but it is the right thing to do for victims. It is important that all victims who want support are offered an advocate who are trained and accredited. This is because we know that a consistent assessment of need, effective risk planning and bespoke support plans are the

most effective ways of helping people affected by crime to cope and recover from what has happened to them. Whilst I recognise we have more to do to communicate our support offers and enable people who do not report crime to the police to get the help and support they need, I am pleased that we join only a handful of other areas who have advocates in place to support victims of all crimes.

11. Serious Violence Prevention Programme Update

On the 16th December 2022, the [statutory guidance on the Serious Violence Duty in accordance with the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022](#) was published which sets out what is expected of us individually and together as a collective. Specified authorities subject to the Duty includes; Police, Health, Local Government, Justice, Fire and Rescue services and to a lesser degree, Prisons and Education settings. Amendments have been made to the Crime & Disorder Act to introduce Serious Violence as formal responsibility for Community Safety Partnerships. Police and Crime Commissioners whilst not specified authorities under the Duty are strongly encouraged to take on a role as lead convener for the local partnership arrangements for the Duty, a role I plan to adopt with earnest.

Panel members will recall that addressing serious violence has been a joint priority for policing and for many already across the partnership. I am very pleased that the Serious Violence Duty fully complements our existing journey and partnership arrangements to reduce and prevent serious violence, a journey that the former Chief Constable and I started back in early 2020 with the establishment of our Serious Violence Prevention Partnership. So far, this pioneering approach has helped support over 1,890 young people and 244 wider family members through a variety of services across every local authority area alongside a variety of projects which support the Force and partners to adopt a public health approach to violence and its drivers.

I am also proud to report that Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly feature in the guidance as a non-government funded case study highlighting the hard work we have all collectively taken on this agenda to date. All specified authorities have been invited to attend a dedicated Task and Finish Group on the Duty which brings together all specified authorities to adopt a shared approach, establish consensus and steer key pieces of collective work.

12. Road Safety

On 7th December, my office ran the latest Councillor Advocate Seminar this time on the Police and Crime Plan priority of road safety. Councillor Advocates gathered in Barnstaple and heard from and put questions to members of the Vision Zero South West about actions being taken to cut the number of people killed or seriously injured on our roads.

This included an overview of a project in which the Vision Zero South West team has painstakingly analysed 750 A and B roads across Devon and Cornwall in order to highlight routes where the highest harm was taking place. This work will result in information dashboards, many of which will be available for public viewing in the months to come on the Vision Zero South West's website – visit www.visionzerosouthwest.co.uk

Updates were also provided about the recent developments with Community Speed Watch (volunteers monitoring vehicle speeds in their local area), Operation Snap (the submission of dashcam footage of dangerous driving to the police) plus new technology that has been trialled such

as the Artificial Intelligence camera designed to identify motorists not wearing a seatbelt or those using a mobile phone whilst driving.

13. Community Speed Watch

Community Speed Watch, the police-backed scheme whereby volunteers monitor vehicle speeds in their neighbourhood, goes from strength to strength. During the 2022 calendar year, CSW teams across Devon and Cornwall monitored over 400,000 vehicles during the course of over 2,100 sessions, resulting in more than 17,400 letters issued to motorists. The scheme gained an additional 300 volunteers during the course of last year and is on track to reach 1000 volunteers by the spring.

Community Speed Watch is a key contributor to the road safety priority in my Police and Crime Plan and my office has supported the scheme develop and improve. For more information about how to set up a Community Speed Watch team, please visit: www.CommunitySpeedWatch.org .

14. Local Criminal Justice Board Update

As Chair of the Local Criminal Justice Board (LCJB), I am really delighted to see the launch of the 'Court in Action' initiative, highlighting the crucial education and early intervention work we are doing within Devon and Cornwall, raising awareness of the criminal justice process and how courts work. You can read more about this initiative [here](#).

I am also pleased to highlight some other work which has been commissioned by the LCJB to further consider where and how improvements can be made for youths within the criminal justice system. We have commenced work through the formation of a 'Swift Youth Justice' task and finish group to better understand what causes delays and the impact this may have on early support, intervention and resolution for victims with a focus on where we can work in collaboration to address these. We have also recognised the need to evolve the existing Out of Court Disposal scrutiny process and introduce separate Youth and Adult focussed panels.

Work is ongoing to commission services in Devon and Torbay so that the provision for Mental Health Treatment Requirements (MHTRs) is secured across the whole of Devon and Cornwall. This is a key objective of the LCJB and so I wanted to take the opportunity to share with you the progress that is being made to achieve this.

15. Anti-Social Behaviour and Community Trigger Escalation

In line with my commitment to tackling ASB, my office provides a Community Trigger Escalation route for victims to query the decision on whether the threshold was met, or the way in which their Community Trigger was carried out.

Community Trigger Escalations carried out by my office in the last 12 months have helped deliver tangible outcomes. For example, a victim who had escalated their case to my office directly contacted me to communicate that, by virtue of my recommendations made to the relevant authorities, further actions were taken to address the ASB, so resolving the issue that had made them and their family victims of such behaviour for years.

In addition, a number of Local Authorities have amended their ASB policy and procedures as a result of my observations and findings following Community Trigger Escalations, reflecting how this process continuously promotes improvement and best practice.

My increased focus on this particular area also stems from the fact that applications for Community Triggers have consistently increased over the years as a result of better promotion and awareness of this tool. From 2018/2019 to 2020/2021, the number of applications went up from 9 to 22.

16. Independent Custody Visiting

I am pleased to welcome eighteen new volunteers this year from across Devon and Cornwall to act as my 'eyes and ears' in the police custody environment. They have been active since August 2022 alongside our existing twelve custody visitors to check the rights, entitlements, and conditions of detained persons in police custody. All six custody suites have been receiving 2-4 visits per month.

Rostering of visits to detained persons is dynamic, and pairs of volunteers arrive unannounced throughout the week and weekend at diverse times of the day and night. Visits are planned to respond to current risks. I am pleased to report that there have been no concerns during visits that required escalation above a local level.

My team has put plans in place to respond to potential prison officer strikes so that the rights and entitlements of Home Office detainees held in police custody can also be monitored.

The Custody Visiting scheme capability was further enhanced this year as four volunteers received specialised training in October 2022. This training will enable them to visit detainees held under terrorism act (TACT) legislation. It is through these visits that reassurance can be provided to the Independent Reviewer of Terrorism Legislation (IRTL) about compliance with the legal rights of terrorism suspects in Devon and Cornwall.

The newly appointed volunteers are due to complete their probationary period soon, and I am very grateful for the support of all of my volunteers in supporting the work of the OPCC.

17. New OPCC email address and web domain

Email addresses into the office will change to a @dc-pcc.gov.uk ending to align with the office's website and to more clearly differentiate the organisation from Devon and Cornwall Police. Whilst this may seem a minor change, it does represent an important step in signifying to the public and partners the independence of my role and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner from that of Devon and Cornwall Police. The OPCC's new website address is www.dc-pcc.gov.uk .



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