

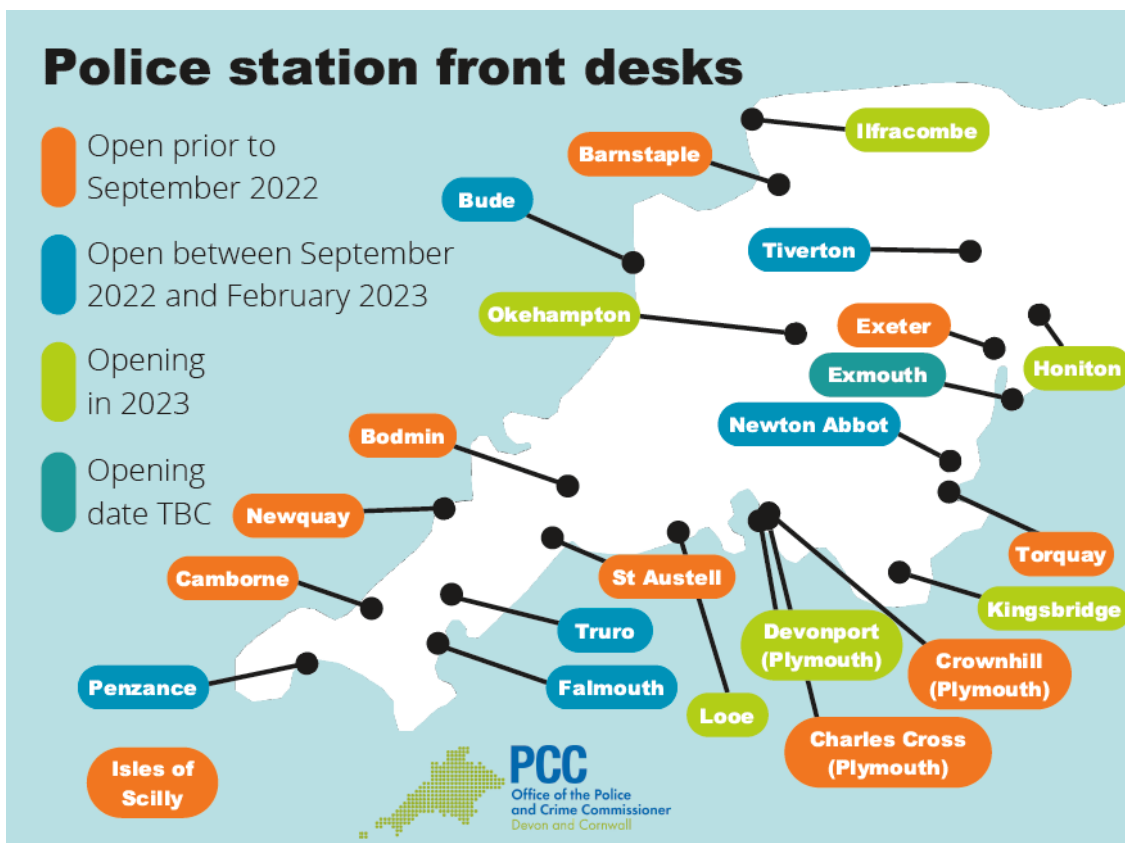
Devon and Cornwall Police and Crime Panel

7th July 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 January 2023.

1. **Six more police station front desks to reopen by April 2024**



One of my long-held ambitions is to reopen police station front desks across Devon and Cornwall. Police stations provide a vital place of safety for people and a reassuring presence in both isolated and densely populated locations. They are places where members of the public can directly report crime or seek help from victim services. After many years in the planning, I am delighted to have reopened six Police Enquiry Offices (PEOs) in 2022-23 and have announced that six more will be reopened in the next 12 months. The next phase will see PEOs reopened to the public in Devonport (Plymouth), Looe, Ilfracombe, Honiton, Okehampton and Kingsbridge before April 2024. A further



four PEOs will be reopened at locations to be decided between April 2024 and April 2026.

In addition, Exmouth Police Station in East Devon is being rebuilt as part of a £5m project and the new station is to include a functioning front desk. There is an immediate positive effect of having these stations back open to the public for these communities. But this is more than that – it is about making a long-term commitment to the people of Devon and Cornwall. We want to let them know that the police are by their side, accessible and care about their problems. Twenty-four new police enquiry officer posts were created by the first phase of the project in 2022-23 and more staff will be recruited as stations are reopened. New technology means that, when not dealing with face-to-face enquiries, these staff can reduce demand to the police contact unit by dealing with emails and web enquiries.

The stations opened to date have been accessible to the public six days a week. A full list of PEOs and their opening times across Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly is available on the [Devon and Cornwall Police website](#).

2. Response to HMICFRS' PEEL inspection report

In February 2023, His Majesty's Inspectorate of the Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) published their report into the effectiveness, efficiency, and legitimacy of Devon and Cornwall Police. This inspection saw Devon and Cornwall Police placed into a period of enhanced monitoring known as 'engage' and the report found the force to be 'inadequate' in three areas, including crime recording, responding to the public, and the management of violent and sexual offenders. The force was also graded as 'requiring improvement' in the investigation of crime, and their management of resources.

The inspectorate's full report and recommendations can be viewed on the [HMICFRS website](#).

In March 2023, I published my official response to the inspectorate's report, and updated the public on progress that has been made by the Chief Constable. There has been a considerable improvement in the force's management of violent and sexual offenders since the publication of HMICFRS' report, with a reduction in officer caseloads and the number of overdue visits.

The force is carrying out regular audits of its crime recording accuracy, and there has been an improvement in compliance since this was reviewed as part of the PEEL inspection. There has also been some improvement in the management of contact services, with a reduction in 999 call waiting times in recent months. 101 wait times remain of concern, and I will persist in holding the Chief Constable to account for performance in this area.

Improvements across the force will continue to be progressed through Devon and Cornwall Police's dedicated action plan and Continuous Improvement Board.

3. Commissioner's Showcase

Commissioning services to help those affected by crime to cope and recover is one of my core roles. My team are dedicated to improving understanding within the force and our communities of the more than 50 support services I will spend over £9m funding in 2023-24.

On 23rd May I held my Commissioner's Showcase which saw around 140 attendees from Devon and Cornwall Police and local authorities get to know the breadth of support available and to celebrate our providers' great work.



The showcase heard from Chief Constable Will Kerr OBE KPM, who welcomed the role our commissioned services play in keeping communities safe in challenging times. My strategic delivery partner Victim Support shared key achievements, including the introduction of a multi-crime service using independent advocates, a specific Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) support service, the shaping of care for people in the police force who have experienced domestic abuse, and the recent commissioning of a three-year road collision support service.

The event not only helped to raise awareness in the force of services victims are being referred to, but also allowed providers to gain valuable insight into other services with similar objectives and identify opportunities for collaborative working.

4. Addressing the harm caused by substance misuse

On 17th May I chaired our bi-annual substance misuse event “Addressing the Harm Caused By Substance Misuse in the Criminal Justice System” attended by 150 professionals and practitioners. The event provided an opportunity to share best practice and work collaboratively to resolve blockers to achieving our national, regional, and local priorities under the Drugs Strategy, whilst also flagging up emerging threats (such as chemsex crime) so that we are prepared to address these issues head on. We were delighted to be joined by Professor David Best, the world’s first Professor of Addiction Recovery.

You can watch the event [here](#) (part 1) and [here](#) (part 2).

5. Councillor advocates

The devastating consequences of the drugs supply chain, addiction and the efforts being made to tackle criminals and rehabilitate users, were described to councillors from around Devon and Cornwall at my 16th May seminar. Connecting communities is a key principle of my Police and Crime Plan and this scheme is an essential part of delivering on that principle, linking local authority members to their policing teams, the services I commission and our communities. The scheme has approximately 350 members from local authorities from all council tiers across Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly and is designed to forge greater links between policing, the services I commission and our communities. Councillors were updated on the delivery of my Police and Crime Plan priority of tackling drugs. They heard from Philippa Brown, who presented on Prison and Probation Service efforts to reduce addiction and reoffending rates in Devon, Detective Superintendent Jon Bancroft

in relation to policing efforts to mitigate the risks posed by organised drug dealing networks and former cocaine addict Stewart Lee, who came off drugs with the help of the Amber Foundation, a charity which runs a residential centre in Mid Devon. Seminars on my other Police and Crime Plan priority areas of ASB, road safety and violence are planned. You can find out more about the Councillor Advocate Scheme [here](#).

6. Volunteers Celebration

All of those who volunteer their time to their communities via my office were welcomed to St Mellion Golf and Country Club on 25th March for my annual celebration event. Around 50 Independent Custody Visitors (ICVs) and councillor advocates attended the event and were treated to a cream tea. The event is held annually to celebrate and reflect on the contribution made by these volunteers to creating safe, resilient and connected communities. ICVs carry out an essential scrutiny function, assuring me and the Chief Constable of the quality of service provided by custody units. Councillor advocates provide myriad opportunities to drive engagement between the public and police.

7. Safer Streets Four and Operation Loki

One of the ways I can help our communities is to work with others to help them secure funds for crime prevention from central government. Five bids to the Home Office for communities across Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly were successful in the latest round of Safer Streets funding, delivering more than £3m in funding, spread over the 2022-23 and 2023-24 financial years and focused on addressing Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) and antisocial behaviour (ASB). Projects are now live in Torquay, Truro, Barnstaple, Exeter and Plymouth. Initiatives include increased CCTV and street lighting, a new VAWG rapid response police car in Torquay and development of new safety charters for venues in our night-time economies.

Alongside the Safer Streets initiative, I recently worked with the Chief Constable to support a high visibility operation in these Safer Streets locations alongside Falmouth (which received Safer Streets monies in a previous round) and Paignton. This initiative, named Operation Loki, was designed to reassure communities that police were visible, present and tackling Police and Crime Plan priorities of drugs and ASB. My office's community engagement vehicle was used by the force as a 'pop up' police station in several locations. Operation Loki was well received and will be repeated in communities around the force area. My team is now assembling evidence to support bids for the next round of Safer Streets funding, and will provide a detailed update on this operation at the next Panel meeting once full analysis has taken place.

8. Operation Scorpion

Tackling drugs is a Police and Crime Plan priority because drugs remain one of our communities' most significant concerns, with 59% of people saying drug dealing and abuse are crimes which most need addressing in their community in my most recent survey. Collaborative efforts by myself, the four other South West Police and Crime Commissioners and our respective Chief Constables to reduce drug use and supply in the region has continued in 2023 under the Operation Scorpion banner. Since the Police and Crime Panel's last meeting, two more iterations of this work, phase four (led by Gloucestershire Police) and phase five (led by Avon and Somerset Police), have taken place. Phase four focussed on the violent crime associated with the illegal drugs trade. During Devon and Cornwall Police's week of action officers seized:

- £250,000 worth of suspected class A, B and C drugs
- more than £7,000 in cash suspected to be linked to criminality

- 66 mobile phones suspected to be used in co-ordinating drug deals
- 70 knives and six other weapons

In addition, officers carried out 'safe and well' checks on vulnerable people who may be susceptible to cuckooing, 91 intelligence-led person searches and 41 intelligence-led vehicle searches. Phase five, focussing on the drugs trade's links to modern slavery, is ongoing at the time of writing. The requirement to tackle drugs at a regional level remains front and centre of discussions with neighbouring commissioners.

9. Vision Zero South West Road Safety update

There have been a number of projects and campaigns launched through the Vision Zero South West road safety partnership. As you may know, the aim of the partnership is to reduce deaths and serious injuries on Devon & Cornwall's roads by 50% by 2030. We now publish agendas and minutes of all Vision Zero South West meetings [on the partnership's website](#).

Operation Cossett and motorcycle safety

2022 was a truly tragic year for motorcyclists in Devon and Cornwall with a spike in deaths (16) and serious injuries (187). As a result, a Vision Zero South West multi-agency task group was formed to tackle the issue.

In April the force launched [Op Cossett](#) in which road casualty reduction officers work with the Police Drones team and Fire Service Motorcycle specialists to pioneer the use of drones to detect dangerous driving behaviour from the skies. The operation, launched during National Motorcycle Safety Week, received much fanfare in the national and regional press and is set to continue throughout the summer months.

Op Cossett is just one part of a comprehensive plan to tackle motorbike safety in Devon and Cornwall following last year's terrible statistics. Other projects include:

- a publicity campaign developed with the Cabinet Office's Behaviour Change Team;
- a "Call For Ideas" small grants fund for motorcycle-specific community safety projects;
- a collaboration with Cornish motorcycle YouTube channel BikerCamTV;
- the purchase of a £200,000 state-of-the-art motorbike training simulator – the first of its kind in the UK

Operation Vortex

Officers from the Alliance Roads Policing Team recently conducted Op Vortex, a two-week operation targeting drivers of all vehicles who disregard road traffic laws on roads across Devon and Cornwall. Operation Vortex aims to reduce the number of collisions and casualties, by targeting poor driving as a result of the 'Fatal Five' which consists of careless driving, drink/drug driving, failing to wear seatbelts, using mobile phones (and other in-car distractions) and speeding. However, the operation also uncovered more serious criminality. During week one of the operation officers stopped a total of 98 vehicles. Six drivers were arrested for drug driving as well as seven people for other offences, including aggravated burglary, kidnapping and false imprisonment. A total of 15 drivers have been reported for using mobile phones and nine drivers for failing to have valid insurance. An additional 30 drivers have been caught speeding, five of whom have been reported to court and a number of vehicles have been seized as part of the operation.

Operation Snap



[Operation Snap](#), the scheme which enables members of the public to submit video evidence of driving offences, has reached a significant milestone. The operation has recently surpassed 10,000 submissions, which have resulted in action being taken against 7,000 road users across Devon & Cornwall.

You may have seen the recent [publicity and press coverage](#) of this achievement, and indeed it is the scheme's award-winning promotion through Vision Zero South West that has resulted in a surge of submissions. So many, in fact, that four further members of staff are being recruited to help deal with the back office demand.

Community Speedwatch



Community Speedwatch continues to grow – both in the number of participants and its overall prevalence. The voluntary scheme, which empowers community road safety advocates to monitor traffic speed through their neighbourhoods, has also reached a recent milestone – surpassing 200 active groups across both counties.

Within those groups, Devon and Cornwall Police has currently have 1,271 volunteers who last year conducted 3,123 speedwatch sessions, during which they monitored 411,833 vehicles – and new groups are being formed regularly as interest grows.

I would like to say a huge thank you to all of those volunteers who have given up their time to help make our communities safer.

New high-tech speed cameras

Four new high-tech speed cameras are in the process of being installed on roads in Devon and Cornwall with a history of speeding issues. New bi-directional digital cameras will replace older Gatso cameras on Exeter Road in Exmouth and the A385 Ashburton Road in Totnes. Another two sets of bi-directional cameras are also being erected on the A390 at Drakewalls and St Ann's Chapel near Gunnislake in Cornwall. All four cameras are scheduled to go live in June.

All of these routes have had problems with collisions and speeding vehicles, prompting numerous complaints to local councils and the police from residents. The cameras, which have been funded by Cornwall Council and Vision Zero South West, have been erected on bright yellow posts for maximum visibility and have the ability to enforce speed in both directions simultaneously.

Devon County Show

I was delighted to see partners join forces for the first ever Vision Zero South West Interactive Road Safety Village at the Devon County Show in May.

It saw Devon & Cornwall Police, Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service, the South Western Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust (SWASfT), Devon Air Ambulance and National Highways work collaboratively on a collection of road safety-themed stands, all of which had a focus on engagement and interactivity.

Partners engaged with thousands of members of the public, many of whom were signposted towards further training, Op Snap and other initiatives led by Vision Zero South West.

10. Anti-Social Behaviour Case Reviews (formerly Community Triggers)

As part of its recently published Anti-Social Behaviour Action Plan, the Government will be relaunching Anti-Social Behaviour Case Reviews, providing greater clarity for victims on when it can be used.

An ASB Case Review is a multi-agency case review that people who have reported three or more ASB incidents over a six month period can request through their Local Authority. If an individual is not satisfied with the way their request for a review is dealt with, or the way the review is carried, they can escalate the review to my office.

To help support this process, my office has developed an ASB Case Review information pack which seeks to provide transparency on how my office carries out ASB Case Review escalations and to promote best practice to all relevant agencies involved in this process, with the aim of improving compliance and consistency across Devon and Cornwall.

The pack provides key information on ASB Case Reviews and the escalation process, in addition to highlighting statutory duties and setting out my expectations to Community Safety Partnership

(CSP) partners when completing an ASB Case Review. Moreover, it also includes a number of resources which may be used by relevant authorities to facilitate the process – for example:

- a checklist for all evidence and documentation that local authorities are required to provide to my office once a case review is formally escalated;
- a compliance audit checklist for all relevant legislation and statutory guidance.;
- a copy of the assessment document used by my office during the escalation process to assess how the ASB Case Review was carried out (including examples of the methods used by my office to assess actions taken by relevant agencies for each ground for escalation);
- relevant links and contact details.

The information pack has now been published and may be accessed [here](#).

11. Serious Violence Prevention Programme (SVPP)

Together with the Chief Constable and local authority partners, I continue to tackle the root causes of violence and its impacts across the peninsula by funding the Serious Violence Prevention Programme (SVPP).

As outlined in our 2022-23 Annual Report, the programme (now entering its fourth year) is committed to improving both the police and partner response to violence via an expansive portfolio of evidence based work, aligned to the Police and Crime Plan, that's delivered much during this reporting period; ranging from an enhanced focus on restorative justice and reducing re-offending (including a regional conference) to roll-out of an innovative new digital signposting service for frontline officers and the general public.

In March we launched a website created for SVP, providing valuable assets through which to showcase its output and drive engagement with partners and the media: www.preventviolence.org.uk

We have also launched the new Law Enforcement and Public Health Link App (LEPH), which allows officers to connect vulnerable people with appropriate local services, at the touch of a button. Based on the Making Every Contact Count ethos, LEPH was designed by Leeds University as part of a national drive towards public health and evidence-led policing. I'm pleased to say it piloted successfully in Plymouth in autumn of last year, with participating officers (and the general public) welcoming it as a valuable, time-saving and easy to use new tool for the modern policing era ("Quick, easy and empowering to use"). A comprehensive pilot evaluation report will soon be published and made available to national partners, to share learnings about this progressive new policing tool.

I am pleased to report that the SVPP increasingly supports a wide range of improvements across Devon and Cornwall Police, from the use of 'hot spot' policing in high crime areas through to reducing violence against women and girls. Project Night Eye has recently been set up specifically to target sexual predators, with police officers and CCTV operators currently being trained to identify predatory behaviour in the night-time economy. Dynamic police initiatives like this demonstrate – to perpetrators, victims and the concerned public – that sexual violence has no place in our city and town centres, and importantly, will help keep young women safe.

In addition to frontline policing initiatives, the programme continues to directly commission a range of pioneering outreach projects which span community policing and criminal justice, with an evidence-led focus primarily on the vulnerable under 25-year-olds. Current examples of such work include the award-nominated restorative justice (RJ) project for families in Plymouth and Torbay

where specialist family practitioners bring the 'harmed' (victim) and 'harmer' (perpetrator) together in a bid to reach acceptance and move forward. During the reporting year to April 2023, the initiative delivered RJ for 186 victims, achieving a 100% satisfaction rate in evaluation and receiving plaudits such as "brilliant", "amazing" and "really, really helpful".

More widely, I am proud to report that the SVPP continues to receive national recognition for its innovative, partnership work - in pioneering long-term violence prevention via a multi-agency approach. In February the SVP team hosted colleagues from Staffordshire Police and its Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner's Office to exchange best practice and broker relationships. Additionally, Devon and Cornwall's SVP Programme Director, Becky Inskip, presented a keynote address at the Home Office Serious Violence Duty Launch Event in April and at Lancashire Constabulary's Violence Reduction Learning Event in June – showcasing how Devon and Cornwall has enacted a large-scale violence reduction programme without central government support.

And in a boost to the peninsula's finances, the Serious Violence Duty comes with dedicated Home Office funding for financial years 2023-24 and 2024-25. A total allocation of nearly £360k is currently being distributed to Devon and Cornwall's Community Safety Partnerships to support their delivery of the Duty and enhance their local prevention activity. This funding follows an additional £237k of spending, via the SVP Programme, on restorative justice family workers, youth offending services, evaluation activities and education-based programming for local areas.

It is important, of course, that funding streams allow our CSP partners to deliver effectively against local need and match output to high-risk areas - that way, we will continue to see a programme which is fit for purpose across the peninsula but aligned to national priorities. This blended approach will continue to form the basis of our SVP Partnership as we move into the next reporting period, and beyond.

12. Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Funding

My office has been in receipt of Home Office funding to commission services to prevent domestic abuse perpetration for the last two years. During that time, we have been working with our Local Authority partners to deliver a suite of behaviour change interventions, bystander projects and work with families. Following a competitive bid to the Home Office for renewed funding, I was disappointed to learn that we had not been successful in receiving further funding. This was despite strong evidence of need, independent evaluations on the success of our existing work and good partnership engagement in support of the funding. Having planned for this possibility, I have been able to use £200,000 from my reserves to work with partners over the next few months to see if there are possibilities of other funding or the continuation of support to sustain this important intervention.

13. Independent Sexual Violence Advisor Service

It is one of my responsibilities to provide an Independent Sexual Violence Advisor (ISVA) service for people affected by rape, sexual abuse and other sexual offences. We have had a service provided by First Light in place since 2018. This contract is now out for retender following the contract expiring. The new contract has been co-designed with people who will use the service, all partners and a professional who will be making referrals. As a result, the new service specification has a particular focus on working with the sexual violence pathfinder project who are working towards the implementation of a 'Devon or Cornwall' triage approach which will enable all survivors to have their needs assessed, resulting in them going to the right support service to help them at the right time. It is hoped that this will help to stabilise victim's trauma response and reduce the number of people waiting on lists for more than one service. The new specification is also looking

for innovative approaches which will be able to help reduce caseload numbers in order to help improve the health and wellbeing of the ISVAs who need to be at their best in order to offer exceptional support, and to preserve retention and prevent burnout. The new service will be in place for January 2024 following mobilisation over the autumn and winter months.

14. Rural Crime Survey

One of my key roles is to seek the views of residents of the police force area and ensure that these views are reflected in policing and the services I commission. In early June, Police and Crime Commissioners from around the South West got together to launch a survey to explore how crime is affecting rural communities.

A similar survey from 2018 found that rural communities were living in fear of crime, unhappy with police and felt isolated and vulnerable.

In the five years since, a lot has changed and police forces across the region have shown an increased commitment to tackling rural crime. While rural parts of Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly enjoy some of the lowest crime rates in England and Wales, some of the crime that does occur, like the theft of farm machinery such as quad bikes, has been linked to gangs who are involved in other types of criminality.

Stopping rural crime requires those living in our countryside to be engaged with policing and to help each other through schemes like Farm Watch and Horse Watch, which create connected communities who can warn each other of suspicious activities.

The South West Rural Crime Survey asks rural residents if they have been the victim of any crimes in the past 12 months as well as asking what rural crimes concern them the most. You can take the survey at <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/RuralDC>.

15. Local Criminal Justice Board update

I am pleased to share with you the work that the Local Criminal Justice Board is overseeing to scrutinise Out of Court Disposals (OoCD) through the detailed examination of cases by panel members who represent key stakeholders across the Criminal Justice Partnership. We recently hosted a panel where Youth OoCD cases were reviewed against a theme of knife crime. There was really positive engagement from the force knife crime lead as well as representation from the four Youth Justice Services across the peninsula, youth magistrates and the Crown Prosecution Service. The process provided a positive learning experience highlighting examples of good practice as well as areas for improvement. A separate Adult OoCD scrutiny panel also reviewed cases of violence.

It is important that the public and criminal justice partner organisations understand and have confidence that Devon and Cornwall Police is using its powers legally, proportionately and consistently with policy and working practices. It is also healthy for any organisation to pause to reflect on their practice and learn. Both the Youth and Adult OoCD panels meet three times a year and focus on areas of priority, publishing the findings and the police response [here](#).

As Chair of the LCJB, I am also proud of the scrutiny work that is being undertaken across the partnership to identify good practice and areas for learning so we can better understand gaps and demands on services for victims. This is really important work, particularly in the context that PCCs are responsible for commissioning the majority of local services for victims and are well placed to have oversight of how well the CJS locally is meeting the needs of victims.

The LCJB has also established a new task and finish group to look at children and young people in the criminal justice system who are adversely affected by delays from point of arrest, charging decision and disposal or sentencing due to nature of the developmental stage they are in. This group will help identify where the delays are in the system and find and implement solutions to increase the speed that children are dealt with across the whole youth justice system.

16. Prisoners Building Homes for Local Communities Programme



The Prisoners Building Homes Programme is led by the South West Reducing Reoffending Partnership, of which I am the chairman, working in partnership with the One Public Estate Programme and West of England Combined Authority. It was set up to enable prisoners to be employed and trained by modular housing providers to build low carbon, 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.

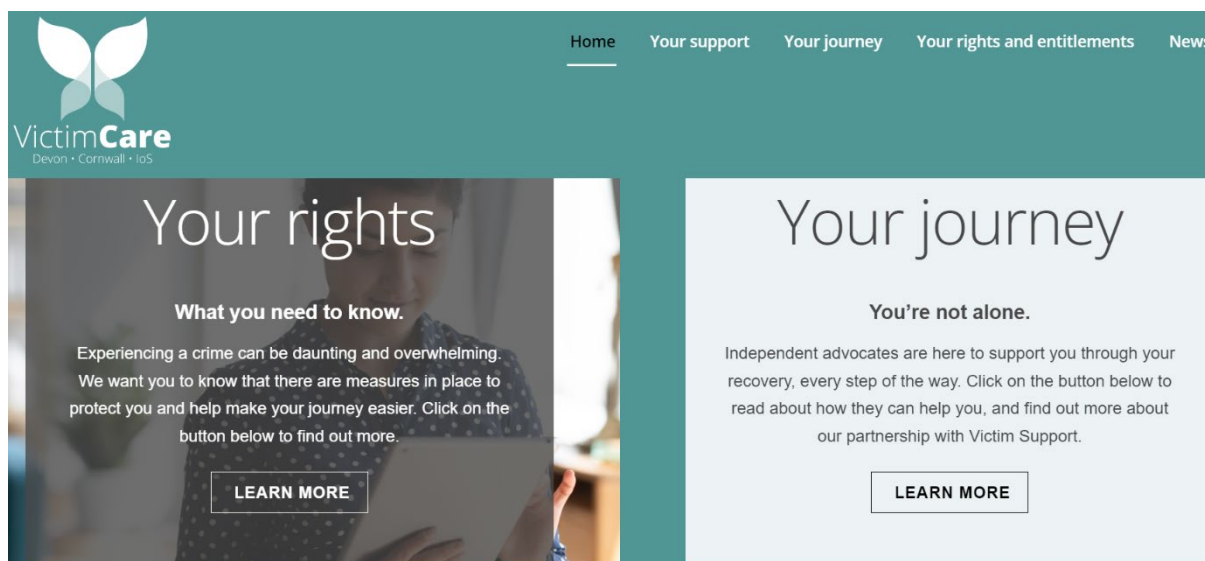
The Programme is currently progressing work to deliver 54 accommodation units across 8 sites, including sites in Devon and Cornwall and a £2m bespoke Residential Women's Centre in Bristol (for women with complex needs at risk of custody). The ambition is to set up production in nine South West prison workshops (employing over 100 prisoners each year) and providing full time employment on day release for another 40 prisoners a day, with the prospect of post-release employment for all prisoners involved in the programme.

On 23rd March we hosted a visit from the Rt Hon Damian Hinds MP (Minister of State at the Ministry of Justice, responsible for Prisons, Parole and Probation).

I am delighted to announce that we have recruited a full time Specialist Programme Delivery Manager to drive this innovative programme forward. It is Sophie Baker, who has worked across the South West region and out of my office for some years. My office will host the role on behalf of the South West PCCs.

Learn more about the programme [here](#). If you are interested in supporting the Programme or wish to suggest sites please contact: sophie.baker@dc-pcc.gov.uk.

17. New Victim Care website



My strategic partnership with Victim Support means victims of crime in Devon and Cornwall have access to high quality services. In order to improve understanding of the service and clarify how victims can access these services, I have a new website: www.victimcare-dc.org. This replaces the Victim Care Unit website and provides information for both victims who have reported their crimes to police and those who have not. The language deployed and design elements have been selected to be trauma-informed, accessible, easy to use and place victims at their heart of their journey. Multi-media elements will be added to the site to further describe the types of practical and emotional support available to those affected by crime in our police force area.

18. Council tax leaflet

I remain committed to my statutory duty to explain to households how the policing budget which I have overall responsibility for is raised and spent. My communications and customer engagement team once again organised the production and distribution of a council tax leaflet, which was sent with or alongside every council tax bill issued in the police force area. In total 786,916 leaflets were printed and distributed. Due to the collecting authority landscape in Devon and Cornwall, with 11 councils, ours is one of the more complex council tax leaflet exercises undertaken by commissioners but the leaflet, as a universal service, is a vital tool in bringing transparency to the spending of the police budget. Accessibility improvements were made on the leaflet for the 2022-23 financial year. A PDF of the leaflet can be found on [my office's website](#).

19. OPC Customer Contact

The correspondence which my office's customer contact team receives enables me to gain an understanding into the issues members of the public are concerned about. Since the last Police and Crime Panel, using data from 27th January until 26th May 2023, shows that officer conduct, road safety, Devon and Cornwall Police contact and firearms licensing are themes which commonly arise within the customer contact arena.

I received 97 separate queries or concerns regarding officer conduct, most of which were sent to the Professional Standards Department as a complaint. Problems with contacting the force, such

as calls to 101 and 999, resulted in my office receiving 48 queries or concerns regarding this topic. These mostly referenced the difficulties of the wait times.

The topic of firearms generated 36 queries or concerns into my office, with most of the correspondence received referencing the delays that are experienced when applying for a licence or renewal. In terms of queries and concerns relating to Police and Crime Plan priorities, road safety generated 54, anti-social behaviour 28, violence 25, and drugs 15.

My team strive to resolve queries and concerns from the public at the first point of contact. By analysing the trends of topics which are generated by correspondence which enters my office, I can remain committed to ensuring that my priorities are aligned with the views of the public and continue to scrutinise the force on areas which the public raise their concerns over.

20. Devon & Cornwall Police executive team changes

The Force has appointed Jim Pearce and David Thorne as Assistant Chief Constables (ACC), taking on the portfolios for Operations Support and Vulnerability & Crime respectively.

ACC Pearce took up his post in April 2023, having held the National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC) Portfolio for Modern Slavery and Organised Immigration Crime since last year. His role will see him leading the specialist uniform operations, including public order, roads policing and firearms. ACC Pearce previously worked as the Policing Commander for Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly and has broad experience of partnership working, and a collaborative lead in delivering the ground-breaking Tri-Service Safety Officer scheme.

ACC Thorne re-joined Devon & Cornwall Police in March 2023, having originally joined the organisation in 1999, working with Exeter Crime Investigation Department (CID), then as Plymouth Basic Command Unit (BCU) Commander and later as Temporary ACC in charge of Innovation, Contact and Demand. He was then appointed Assistant Chief Constable at South Wales Police in June 2020, inheriting the Specialist Crime portfolio.

I want to express my sincere thanks to outgoing ACCs Jim Nye and Julie Fielding for their service to Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly.

21. HMICFRS Annual Assessment of Policing in England and Wales

In June HMICFRS published its Annual Assessment of Policing in England and Wales. I agree with many of the conclusions Chief Inspector of Constabulary Andy Cooke made in his report, including the need for the police to prioritise the issues that matter most to the public. My Police and Crime Plan prioritises the areas of road safety, antisocial behaviour, violence and drug abuse because when consulted, the public told me those were the issues that most mattered to them. The report also concluded that forces were failing to get the basics right in investigation and responding to the public, and they need to concentrate on effective neighbourhood policing, and these were both points I considered during my recruitment of a new Chief Constable last year.

The report also calls for substantial reform of police service's leadership and workforce arrangements such as more scrutiny on vetting and recruitment processes, including for chief officers. Whilst I welcome the support that HMICFRS gives to Commissioners as part of their critical role in holding Chief Constables to account, I disagree with the Inspector's recommendation that Inspectors of Constabulary should have a role in recruiting chief constables, a task that I think should

remain exclusively for a Police and Crime Commissioner, as democratically elected representative of the public. I will be making my views clear on this matter in my formal response to HMICFRS which will be published next month.

22. HMICFRS thematic reports

HMICFRS has also published three thematic reports which contain recommendations for Chief Constables since the last Police and Crime Panel meeting. The first, published in March, examined how well the police tackle serious youth violence and included recommendations asking Chief Constables to ensure that officers are properly trained in the use of Home Office Crime Outcome 22 (which relates to the use of diversionary programmes as a way of resolving crime instead of using prosecution) and that through data collection and analysis, police forces better understand the levels of racial disproportionality in serious youth violence in their force areas. The second report, also published in March, was an inspection of values and culture in fire and rescue services and whilst most recommendations were directed at Chief Fire Officers and the Home Office, the report highlights the police's power to pass information to employers where there is a public protection risk, and asks that Chief Constables make sure they are appropriately using their Common Law Police Disclosure powers in circumstances involving employees of fire and rescue services. The third report, published in April, was an inspection of how well the police and National Crime Agency are tackling the online sexual abuse and exploitation of children. The report highlights some key issues including limited resourcing in policing, lack of training and guidance, poor investigative practices, risk management problems and a lack of partnership working, and makes 11 recommendations to Chief Constables. Two of these recommendations are also for Police and Crime Commissioners and these ask that we ensure that our commissioned services, including referrals for support or therapeutic services, are available for children affected by online sexual abuse and exploitation, and that we should review the advice we publish on our websites, to ensure that it is consistent with the National Crime Agency's ThinkUKnow material.

My formal response to each HMICFRS report is [published on my website](#).

23. Property and Information Store

In January 2023, the Estate team completed the new £8.8m investment into a combined Devon Property and Information Store. This facility brings together two critical force services under one roof and releases four leasehold premises.

24. Middlemoor Police Headquarters Sports Hall

In March 2023, my Estates team completed the new development of the Middlemoor Headquarters Sports Hall, following the demolition of the previous sports facility due to structural concerns. This £3.7m project provides an expansive sports facility, separate training and treatment rooms, along with the necessary changing and welfare facilities. It is already being fully used by our Learning and Development colleagues to undertake a range of physical training activities to meet our College of Policing requirements.

25. Police Constable awarded King's Policing Medal

A Devon and Cornwall Police Officer was awarded the King's Policing Medal for services to policing in the 2023 King's Birthday Honours list. PC Sam Samuel served with the Royal Navy before joining the force and is presently a full time Police Federation representative. His citation read: "he has demonstrated exemplary service and dedication to communities, using his initiative to help improve the understanding in the force of the impact of racism on victims of crime".


26. New High Sheriffs appointed

Former Bishop of Plymouth the Rt Rev Nicholas McKinnel and former Royal Naval officer Toby Ashworth have been appointed High Sheriffs of Devon and Cornwall respectively. Bishop McKinnel, also a former Bishop of Crediton, was appointed as High Sheriff of Devon on Thursday, March 30, and succeeds Richard Youngman. Mr Ashworth was appointed as High Sheriff of Cornwall on March 26, and succeeds Andrew Williams. The Office of High Sheriff is an independent non-political Royal appointment for a single year. The position is the oldest Royal appointment and there is a High Sheriff for each county. In Cornwall the appointment is made by HRH The Duke of Cornwall.

27. King's Coronation

Finally, my thanks to the three Devon & Cornwall officers who were on ceremonial duty, in full parade uniform, for the coronation of HM King Charles III. One joined colleagues from other uniformed civilian services marching in the procession, while the other two were on route-lining duties.

Mutual aid was provided by 50 officers from various teams, including dog handling, escort drivers, search, public order and patrol.



Alison Hernandez

Police and Crime Commissioner for Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly

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