

## **Devon & Cornwall Police and Crime Panel Commissioner's Update Report - 25th July 2025**

**Safe, Resilient and Connected Communities, Where Everyone Plays Their Part**

### **1. Priority: ASB**

#### **1.1 Keeping Town Centres Safe this Summer**

The government launched the Safer Streets summer town centre initiative to prevent crime and antisocial behaviour this summer and to ensure visible, meaningful consequences for those responsible. As Commissioner, I have submitted a delivery plan explaining how my office, with Devon & Cornwall Police and local partners, intend to drive down crime & disorder, restore pride in public spaces and reassure residents, businesses and visitors that town centres are safe, well-managed environments.

Specific towns are receiving dedicated interventions through initiatives such as Hotspot Policing, Clear Hold Build, Street Focus, and Walk & Talk. Some of these have been in place for some time and we are scaling up with what we know works in our other communities. Exeter, Plymouth, Torquay, Paignton, Bideford, Newquay, Newton Abbot, Bodmin, Tiverton, Barnstaple, St Austell, Exmouth, Truro, Penzance, and Camborne have been identified based on demand profiles, recorded incidents, and community intelligence, ensuring resources are allocated where they will have the greatest impact.

Summer policing demand is not new across Devon, Cornwall & the Isles of Scilly, and we already reallocate resources as part of our business-as-usual arrangements to cope with the summer surge of visitors. I have long been making the case to government for additional resources in the police funding settlement to recognise our challenges with summer demand, our rurality and sparsity.

#### **1.2 £1 million Hotspot Scheme Extended into New Areas**

Last year we secured £1m of Government funding to introduce hot spot policing in high-risk areas. The scheme, which delivered more than 26,000 hours of extra foot patrols in our towns and cities, has been extended for 2025/2026 thanks to £1 million further Government funding.

Hotspot policing is designed to tackle antisocial behaviour (ASB) and serious violence with targeted police and street marshal patrols in areas with the highest levels of crime, with this year's scheme expanded into two new hotspots in Tiverton and Bodmin.

The funding pays for additional officer time to conduct the targeted patrols, providing a boost in visible policing where it is needed most. This is identified through local crime data. While the priority is to prevent crime, this targeted approach also enables proactive action. In the past year, this has led to:

- 26,821 hours of hotspot patrols
- 2,211 pieces of intelligence submitted
- 190 Public Protection Notices or safeguarding referrals

- 1,467 ASB incidents attended
- 256 arrests
- 274 stop and searches
- 52 offensive weapons seized
- 248 pieces of property seized e.g. drugs or stolen goods
- 177 enforcements of Public Spaces Protection Orders
- 8,022 other ASB Crime & Policing Act 2014 powers used

Since May 2024, more than 93,000 members of the public have been engaged with during a hotspot patrol and more than 40,000 premises visits. Businesses and residents have felt an increased uniformed presence and reported feeling safer as a result.

In the year ahead, hotspot policing will continue in the following areas, Barnstaple, Bideford, Camborne, Exeter, Exmouth, Newquay, Newton Abbot, Paignton, Penzance, Plymouth, St Austell, Torquay, Truro, Bodmin (new hotspot), Tiverton (new hotspot).

In addition to reducing ASB and serious violence, cutting knife crime in half is a new objective for the initiative. I will also continue to match fund street marshal patrols as I did in 2024.

### 1.3 Street Focus



Picture: Street Focus You Said, We Did engagement event

In May last year, Street Focus Torquay was launched to improve safety in the high crime but low public confidence area in Torquay town centre. The multi-agency Street Focus approach is a collective vision for a safer town centre where the community can thrive. My team worked in partnership with Devon & Cornwall Police, Torbay Council and waste management service SWISCo to drive down antisocial behaviour and crime in the town centre.

The project provided an opportunity to test new initiatives to improve the environment and increase public confidence, aiming to bring real, long-term change to the area. Having a regular visible presence within the town centre, engaging with local residents and businesses was key to raising awareness of the project and regularly sharing information on partners activity, progress and plans.

Over the past 12 months much has been learnt - there is a renewed sense that partnership working can make a difference, and the public have felt the step change in safety activity in the town centre.

Patrols have achieved the following positive outcomes:

- 1,072 hours of hotspot patrols
- 88 pieces of intelligence submitted into police systems

- 35 Arrests
- 37 stop and searches carried out
- 4 offensive weapons seized
- 81 ASB incidents attended
- 29 instances of policing powers being used
- 21 safeguarding referrals made
- 4,200 members of the public engaged with
- 1,546 premises visits made
- 20 items of stolen property, drugs or alcohol seized

The introduction of a dedicated ASB lawyer started in mid-2024, funded by the OPCC and employed by the police has also enabled:

- 8 closure orders have been obtained disrupting drug supply and responding to residents' complaints
- 2 Criminal Behaviour Orders served
- 1 Youth Civil Injunction
- 4 breaches of Civil Injunction
- 10+ Community Protection Warnings & Community Protection Notices
- 52 files opened since September 2024
- 3 Child Abduction Warning Notices

Street Focus Torquay will now help to inform a blueprint, which can be applied to other similar affected towns, with plans already underway to 'lift and shift' the best practice to Camborne in Cornwall.

## 1.4 Investment in Night Buses



Picture: DCC Damien Jones, Stagecoach Commercial Team Craig McGee, University of Exeter Peter Scargill. Front, left to right: ACC Glen Mayhew, PCC Alison Hernandez, Stagecoach Operations Manager Joe Beckley

Following the successful pilot of a night bus scheme in Torquay and Barnstaple in 2024, which saw 101 passengers use the service, it has now been expanded to Torquay, Barnstaple, Newquay, Plymouth and Exeter.

Provided by Stagecoach in Devon and First Bus in Newquay, these services operate on Saturday evenings from May throughout 2025 in a bid to reduce drink and drug-related incidents. The buses will also be available in Devon on Friday, December 19, and New Year's Eve. The North Devon, Torquay, Plymouth and Exeter buses will run between May 31 and New Year's Eve 2025, and a longer Newquay service until September 6.

The services in Plymouth and Exeter have seen 3,219 passengers in the first 6 weeks and 305 in Newquay. The new routes will be a fantastic boost to our evening and night time economy, encouraging residents and visitors alike to enjoy socialising while still getting home safely.

## 2. Priority: Serious Violence

### 2.1 Standing United Against Sexual Abuse and Violence



Picture: Queen Camilla visits a sexual assault referral centre in Exeter

Sexual Abuse and Sexual Violence Awareness Week took place in February. In Devon and Cornwall, we have seen a concerning rise in recorded sexual offences over the years. Since 2010, these crimes have more than tripled. While some of this increase can be attributed to greater reporting and awareness, it also reinforces the need to tackle the root causes of violence, particularly against women and children.

Survivors of sexual violence often face significant barriers when seeking support and justice. Stigma, shame, and fear can prevent individuals from coming forward. As a society, we must do better to challenge these narratives and create an environment where survivors feel safe and empowered to share their experiences.

As Commissioner, one of my primary aims is to ensure that all victims are supported and that the police ensure offenders are brought to justice. The bravery of survivors who come forward to report these crimes is commendable, and they deserve to know that their voices will be heard, and their cases will be treated with the utmost seriousness and care by the police and partners who support victims.

In February the incredible staff at Exeter's newly opened Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) were praised by Queen Camilla when she visited the facility. This centre is just one of a number around Devon and Cornwall funded by my office and NHS England. They are an invaluable first step in helping victims of sexual violence get the help they need and in securing vital evidence to bring offenders to justice.

Devon & Cornwall Police also deserve real credit for recently seizing £2.4 million from self-proclaimed misogynist Andrew Tate and his brother Tristan, individuals who have built their influence by spreading sometimes toxic views that degrade and harm women. I am delighted that Chief Constable James Vaughan has recommended and encouraged that matters relating to violence against women and girls should be considered in any applications for funding from this money. This sends a powerful message to all those who seek to perpetuate harm to hold influence in our community. It will not be tolerated.

Next year I intend to invest a further £3.5m supporting victims of sexual violence and domestic abuse and reducing reoffending, which includes continuing to support SARCs. This is in addition to delivering a new £5m five-year partnership contract to provide support for victims of rape and sexual assault in Devon and Cornwall.

My 2025-26 Commissioning Intentions Plan (<https://devonandcornwall-pcc.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/Appendix-3-Commissioning-Intentions-Plan-25-26-FINAL-DRAFT-1.pdf>) outlines how I will be spending money to prevent crime, help victims recover and support policing of our communities.

## **2.2 Op Sceptre Intensification on Knife Crime**

Op Sceptre is the national operation to tackle knife crime. This intensification in the South West was focused on the use of the fast parcel system to order knives online. UK Border Force intercept the postal system and refer details of recipients to police who then follow up by visiting the address in question.

This intensification was co-ordinated by the South West Regional Organised Crime Unit (ROCU) Regional Disruption Team. The results of this week of action includes:

- 21 bladed weapons recovered
- 19 addresses visited
- 4 persons were arrested and interviewed
- At 2 locations police seized additional weapons

All individuals concerned were males aged 50+, challenging the notion of knife crime being largely a youth issue.

## **2.3 Youth Justice and Violence Prevention**

From January 2025, my office has been leading partnership work between the Youth Justice Service, Devon & Cornwall Police, and other partners with a focus on preventative work to improve youth justice outcomes and prevent young people entering the criminal justice system. This focus will see the development and delivery of initiatives that respond to serious and youth violence and the co-ordination of my convening duties for serious violence prevention.

## **2.4 Two Tier Policing**

Two tier policing is a term used to describe the idea that some people or groups of people, or some behaviour, for example, protests and demonstrations, are dealt with more harshly than others. The term has particularly been used by the far right to argue that right wing protests are policed more aggressively, and related offenders punished more severely.

Following the fatal stabbing of 3 young girls in Southport in July 2024, serious public disorder arose in a number of UK towns and cities. This disorder was fuelled by a significant amount of misinformation, with a manufactured narrative giving a name and origin of a falsely alleged offender.

In early August 2024 civil unrest developed into rioting in Plymouth, centring on Royal Parade. There were 2 separate groups, one legitimate protest organised in consultation with the police and the second organised mainly through social media groups and without any consultation



with authorities. Violence ensued and a number of police officers were injured, property damaged and serious disruption to public transport and businesses.

The police response was well planned and executed and the reaction from the media and public was largely positive. Within 72 hours of the event 4 men were arrested, charged, convicted and imprisoned for taking part. To date, 24 people have been charged and 23 of those sentenced. Details of 8 of the offender's ethnicity were withheld but of the available 16, 14 were white and 2 were of mixed race, which reflected the overall picture of ethnicity of those involved in the unrest.

I chaired an extraordinary meeting of the Local Criminal Justice Board to bring together the most senior people from the region's criminal justice agencies to ensure a swift, joined up approach to securing justice for riot related offences. To ensure that the policing response was effective, proportionate and legitimate, my office undertook immediate oversight.

There were two main considerations, the first is that legitimate protest and serious public disorder should not be conflated. While large scale protests can involve some less serious elements of disorder, peaceful protest is lawful and the right to hold it needs to be protected and policed accordingly. Serious disorder and riot, however, requires a robust and swift policing response.

The second factor is how the policing and wider criminal justice agencies respond to serious disorder. Riots which took place in 2011 were dealt with in a very similar fashion, although the participants of these riots were minority ethnic groups. With reference to accusations of discrimination, an analysis of the offending demographic is useful when comparing the 2011 and 2024 instances. The racial profile of offenders is different, but the swift and severe justice which was dispatched demonstrates the focus was on deterring disorder, irrespective of those involved.

The full report can be found here (<https://devonandcornwall-pcc.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/Two-tier-policing-OPCC-insight-report-2024-FINAL1.pdf>)

## **3 Priority: Drugs & Alcohol**

### **3.1 Clear Hold Build**

Clear Hold Build (CHB) is a Home Office initiative which provides a model for collaboration between the police, partner agencies and the local community to improve the response to serious and organised crime (SOC) at the local level. It aims to reduce SOC threat, reduce crime, and help communities become more resilient.

Stonehouse in Plymouth was identified to introduce a CHB approach. The creation of a Love Stonehouse programme has allowed the community to have a voice and work to make their areas safer. Working with policing teams, a community focused approach has emphasised face-to-face interactions, fostering problem-solving and amplifying the community's voice in identifying threats and priorities.

Regular engagement activities have included multi-agency days of action, community events, and hotspot policing, enabling the identification of ten specific CHB problem-solving priorities linked to SOC. This focus extended to accommodation for adults with addiction and complex needs, previously linked to violence and drug networks. Police also implemented daily visits,

breakfast meetings, and floor walks with a police drugs dog, gradually overcoming mistrust and generating crucial serious and organised crime intelligence.

Collaborations with the Plymouth Child Centred Policing Team to address the SOC threat and impact on young people, has included engagement with schools and homeless facilities for young people aged 16-25 to identify exploitation concerns. Persistent outreach and trust-building has led to improved relationships and collaboration, addressing vulnerabilities and facilitating interventions.

Now in the Hold phase, the Love Stonehouse programme has equipped the local Neighbourhood Policing Team to sustain and enhance community safety, confidence, and visible policing efforts during the Clear stage, ensuring lasting impact and growth.

## **3.2 Cracking Down on Cannabis Cultivation**

The fight against drugs in our communities is something I take incredibly seriously. There have been two weeks of action under Operation Scorpion, one in March and another in June 2025. In March, officers across the South West carried out a major crackdown on large-scale cannabis production. They executed 32 warrants, arrested 36 people, and seized over 2,240 cannabis plants, £57,335 in cash, and a variety of weapons, including knives and firearms. These were part of serious organised crime networks that bring drugs, violence, and exploitation into our communities.

For the past four years, the five South West police forces – Devon & Cornwall, Avon & Somerset, Dorset, Gloucestershire, and Wiltshire – and their respective Police and Crime Commissioners have worked together through Op Scorpion to tackle drug crime head-on. This latest crackdown was also linked to Operation Mille, a national effort focused on breaking up large-scale cannabis networks. Many of these drug farms have been uncovered because local people have noticed something suspicious and reported it. This information is vital in helping police take action. If something doesn't seem right in your area, I encourage you to please report it.

In June Op Scorpion ran in conjunction with National County Lines Intensification Week. Research shows that across the region more local children and vulnerable people in our communities are being exploited to supply and store drugs.

In Devon & Cornwall there were:

- 41 arrests
- £57,466 cash seized
- 85g crack, 194.4g heroin, 64kg cocaine, 11.6kg cannabis resin, 0.5kg ketamine seized
- 15 people safeguarded
- 3 weapons seized including hunting knives. Also 8 firearms including stun gun and pepper spray
- In total across the South West region:
  - 106 people were arrested
  - 65.7kg of cocaine was seized, plus 274g of crack cocaine, 13.9kg of cannabis and 455grams of heroin
  - £119,326 in cash was seized
  - 38 people were safeguarded
  - 29 suspected county lines were shut down
  - 17 vehicles were seized, including six e-bikes
  - 100 mobile phones were seized

- 26 weapons were seized

I joined neighbourhood officers from Devon & Cornwall Police, and undercover officers from British Transport Police for a joint day of action at Torquay Railway Station. Officers also worked with hotels, taxi and private hire companies and postal operators to raise awareness of the signs of exploitation and encourage them to report any concerns.

Young people and schools were also educated around the risks associated with illegal vapes. Not only do they pose serious health risks, but it is also believed criminals are recruiting young people to sell these illegal products, opening them up to potential further exploitation.

### **3.3 Use of Naloxone in Devon & Cornwall**

Devon & Cornwall Police is making a lifesaving overdose treatment drug available to its officers. Nasal Naloxone temporarily reverses the effects of opioid based drugs and is used when an overdose is suspected, and the victim is believed to be aged 18 or over. The drug is currently being used by over half of UK police forces. Officers now carry Naloxone kits which include guidance on triaging victims and a card that is given to medics to notify them the Naloxone has been administered.

## **4 Priority: Theft**

### **4.1 Theft - Retail Initiatives**

Two complementary initiatives are now being used to combat retail crime in our region.

Devon & Cornwall Police have partnered with Auror, a retail crime intelligence and loss prevention platform, to enhance their response to organised retail crime. The partnership, which includes direct reporting to the police through the Auror platform, aims to improve intelligence gathering, investigation efficiency, and ultimately reduce harm to victims of shoplifting. Two males have already been sentenced to 20 & 23 months in prison respectively with help from Auror, pleading guilty to conspiracy to steal offences across 11 different Police force areas – including Devon & Cornwall.

A second initiative is also being trialled. UK Partners Against Crime (UKPAC) is a not-for-profit organisation dedicated to enhancing business crime reduction through the creation of Business Crime Reduction Partnerships (BCRPs). During 2025, I have committed to funding a 12-month pilot in Torbay with local businesses, police and local council. Funding from the Summer Policing Fund has paid for the system to be rolled out in Liskeard, Saltash, Torpoint, Looe, Bodmin and Barnstaple. It is hoped that following the pilot UKPAC will then be rolled out across the Force area.

UKPAC's model contributes significantly to policing efficiency by reducing the administrative burden on the police. Through a dedicated team of crime analysts, UKPAC collects and compiles critical evidence of shoplifting offences, including statements, CCTV footage, and business impact statements. This process ensures that when a repeat offender commits multiple crimes, the police receive a comprehensive case file, allowing them to maximise court outcomes.



## 5 Priority: On our Roads

### 5.1 Game Changing Road Safety Initiative



Picture: Alison Hernandez with Prof Tim Nutbeam from IMPACT: The Centre for Post-Collision Research, Innovation and Translation

Road safety is a priority for me and everyone in Devon and Cornwall, and it's the reason I formed the Vision Zero South West road safety partnership – a collaborative approach which aims to reduce road deaths by 50% by 2030, and eventually to zero.

One project which is funded by Vision Zero is IMPACT: The Centre for Post-Collision Research, Innovation and Translation – a small but highly skilled team conducting world-class research right here in Devon.

At their recent launch event, Professor Tim Nutbeam, Emergency Medicine consultant and Critical Care Doctor for Devon Air Ambulance, spoke about some of the amazing work they are carrying out to improve the outcomes of those involved in collisions.

One such example is their BYSTANDER project which focuses on the chain of survival and looks to harness the role of bystanders in providing vital interventions that could save lives, reduce harm and limit psychological trauma.

## 6 Priority: In our Towns & Cities, Countryside & Coastal Areas

### 6.1 Police Enquiry Offices Reopening



Picture: The official opening of Tavistock Police Enquiry Office

In February I was delighted to officially open three more Police Enquiry Offices (PEOs) at Ivybridge, Liskeard and Tavistock. It was great to hear from local residents about how important these new facilities are. More than 90,000 residents accessed our PEOs during 2024-25, a clear sign of the value placed on face-to-face policing.

## 6.2 Community Safety Accreditation Scheme (CSAS) Development

The Community Safety Accreditation Scheme (CSAS) gives partners involved in a community safety or traffic management role a range of powers usually only available to police. CSAS members often include street marshals, park wardens, security guards and parking attendants.

The scheme aims to contribute to community safety and combat crime and disorder, public nuisance and other forms of antisocial behaviour.

There are a range of powers a chief officer might grant, including requesting an offender's name and address, issuing a fixed penalty notice, confiscating items such as tobacco or alcohol and directing traffic.

Devon and Cornwall is one of the few areas in the country where CSAS is being used to its best advantage and I am pleased to say that there are now over 150 CSAS accredited officers in your communities.

## 6.3 Tri Service Safety Officer launch



Picture: Tri Service Safety Officers at the Holsworthy launch

My office also coordinated the launch event for the first Tri Service Safety Officer (TSSO) for Devon. The event in Holsworthy was attended by the High Sheriff of Devon, representatives from Devon & Cornwall Police, Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service, the NHS, and local authorities, and members of the community including pupils from nearby schools. It was a great opportunity to meet the new TSSO and to raise awareness of the role, which is a pioneering collaboration between police, fire, and health services.

We have over 20 TSSOs across the force, and whilst mainly within Cornwall this was our first Devon based officer. The role provides all three emergency services with a presence in hard-to-reach communities. Their early intervention reduces demand and impact on the three emergency services, and key partners within the public, private and voluntary sectors.

## 7 Priority: Victims

### 7.1 The Victim Care Unit and Victim Focus Week



Chief Constable James Vaughan at the Victim Care Unit

It is now 10 years since the creation of the Victim Care Unit (VCU) in Devon and Cornwall. The VCU is responsible for supporting victims of crime across the Force area to give the best possible service in line with the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime (VCOP). To mark this anniversary, the VCU hosted the first Victim Focus Week from 28 April to 2 May, with a series of online and in-person events to increase awareness of victims' rights and the work that the VCU do to support victim-focused investigations and help ensure the Force is compliant with their rights.

One of the topics during Victim Focus Week - organised by Devon & Cornwall Police and supported by my office - was a Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Lived Experience Day where brave victims shared their experiences of domestic abuse, stalking and sexual offenses. The aim was to provide a valuable insight into the impact it has had on their lives, including how the crime was handled by police and what support they received.

Among them was the mum of 21-year-old student Libby Squire who was raped and murdered following a night out in Hull in 2019. It later emerged her killer had committed a string of offences against women in the months before her death.

It has prompted her mum Lisa to tirelessly campaign to keep other women and girls safe and encourage people to report all non-contact sexual offences which she believes could have saved her daughter's life.

In the 12 months to February 2025, 104,811 victim-based crimes were recorded by Devon & Cornwall Police, up by 13.5% from the previous year. My office has dedicated funding of more than £9.5 million in 2024/25 to support victims through services we commission.

### 7.2 National Stalking Awareness Week

Latest data from Devon & Cornwall Police has revealed 14,457 stalking and harassment offences were recorded within a 12-month period to February 2025 - an increase of 14.4% compared with the previous year. While the rise may partly be due to improved recording and identification of the offences by police, there is a need for greater awareness of stalking and its effects on victims, their families and communities.

As Commissioner, I am responsible for holding the Chief Constable to account for reducing stalking and harassment, to ensure that investigations are as victim-centred as possible, and that people are signposted to the right services.

It is very clear to me that despite the excellent job so many police officers do, there are times when victims do not always receive the support they should. That is why I am extremely supportive of the force implementing its first Victim Focus Week.

### **7.3 Victims Support Network brought back in-house**

The Victim Support Strategic Delivery Partnership contract was set up in 2021 to enable the delivery, management and development of a Victim Care Network. A decision was made in January 2025 to cease the contract and manage a handover of the work to the OPCC due to a substantial change in the contract and what it delivers.

On 1<sup>st</sup> July, Victim Support staff transferred to the OPCC under TUPE (Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment)). We are grateful to Victim Support for their work over the past few years.

## **8 Criminal Justice**

### **8.1 Local Criminal Justice Board**

The Local Criminal Justice Board (LCJB) continues to meet quarterly – most recently on June 9th to focus on collaboration and the progression of our agreed priorities. These are to ensure we have an efficient and effective criminal justice system, that we work together to keep victims engaged to secure justice and to address disproportionality.

We have recently reviewed the criminal justice partnership response to the large-scale disorder in August 2024. I thank all those agencies who contributed to this work to understand how we can continue to work together effectively – securing learning and sharing best practice. The Executive Summary of this work can be located by accessing this link within my OPCC website: <https://devonandcornwall-pcc.gov.uk/lcjb-reports>

### **8.2 Criminal Justice Scrutiny**

The role of undertaking scrutiny across the criminal justice partnership for Out of Court Resolutions (OoCRs) and to assess quality of compliance with the Victim Codes of Practice (VCoP) continue to be held each month against an agreed theme.

Panels continue to be well supported by the criminal justice partnership with positive engagement from all key stakeholders who together consider what our agencies are doing to make a difference, how we work together to learn and improve, and to develop policy and practice.

So far this year, scrutiny panels have reviewed cases for drug offences, non-fatal road collisions, shoplifting, assaults on emergency workers, sexual offences and domestic abuse. These are all now published on the OPCC website here <https://devonandcornwall-pcc.gov.uk/lcjb-reports>

## 8.3 Local Criminal Justice Court Reporting Pilot

I am delighted to report that I have appointed Newsquest to run a local criminal justice court reporting pilot to improve communication and transparency. This involves the third-party supplier to provide content from magistrates and crown court in Devon and Cornwall for a three-month period, which will be distributed to publishers, who will be able to publish at no cost. The scheme is based on the successful Local Democracy Reporter Scheme, a national BBC-funded programme which has been running since 2017. Following delivery of the contract, a report will be prepared to measure the scheme's impact.

## 9 Public Engagement

### 9.1 Engagement Activities

My team and I have undertaken a wide range of engagement activities over the last six months. These have included:

- Attendance at the Devon County Show
- Attending an event at the House of Lords to showcase our Prisoners Building Homes programme at the request of the Bishop of Gloucester for an audience which included Lord Timpson, Minister of State for Prisons, Parole and Probation
- Supporting the Police and the Museum of Policing at their Annual Recognition of Excellence in Policing Awards
- Attendance at the annual Blue Light Day
- Young Voices in Policing college visits
- Police Cadet Celebration Day
- Commissioner's Thank you Event
- Torbay Business Awards
- The Plymouth Youth Awards

### 9.2 Young Voices in Policing



Picture: A Police Cadet Leader with a copy of the Police and Crime Plan

One of the key duties of my communication and public engagement team is speaking with members of the public about their experiences of policing, hearing about the issues that affect them and ensuring they know about work being done to tackle these issues.



I have been pleased to continue my Young Voices in Policing college visits, speaking with students from courses relevant to policing and public service at Dawlish College and Petroc College. This work continues to be supported by my survey which, to date, shows 60% of respondents feel either safe or very safe in Devon & Cornwall.

My team also supported the Police Cadet Celebration Day in May, sharing the work of my office with more than 100 attendees, as well as the annual Cornwall Blue Light Day in July, which raises awareness of emergency services among the learning disabled community.

### **9.3 Commissioner's Thank You Event**

In March, my office again hosted the annual Commissioner's Thank You event. Among those celebrated were my Councillor Advocates, who act as an important link between their communities and the police. I was pleased to welcome and celebrate volunteers who work with the many victim support services I commission, as well as Independent Panel Members and Legally Qualified People who support misconduct proceedings.

### **9.4 Torbay Business Awards**

In June I attended the Torbay Weekly Naturally Inspiring Business Awards where I sponsored the 'Business Community Champion' Award. The evening recognises those going above and beyond in our community – particularly the Business Community Champion award which recognises those who work above their day-to-day role in making Torbay a safe place to live and work.



Picture: guests of the Commissioner join her at the awards event

This year eight applicants applied for this award. Three runners up were given recognition for their work in the community - Torbay United Licensed Drivers Association, Pier Point Bar & Restaurant and the overall winners Unleashed Theatre Company. For more than two decades, Unleashed have worked at the heart of Torbay's community, using theatre and creative arts to reach those most vulnerable — including people affected by homelessness, addiction, mental illness, or social exclusion.



## 9.5 The Plymouth Youth Awards

I also attended the YMCA's Plymouth Youth Awards on Saturday, June 14 at the Crown Plaza Hotel as sponsor of the Inspirational Person of the Year Award. This award is about more than achievements — it's about courage, character, and the ability to lift others up even in the face of challenges. The young people recognised with this award have shown strength, leadership, and compassion well beyond their years. My office is committed to building safer, stronger communities — and the young people of Plymouth nominated for this award are doing just that.



Picture: Alison Hernandez at the Plymouth Youth Awards

I picked three finalists from the 12 who entered who were Crawford Kerr, Scarlett Swaddle and Alexandra Radu. Crawford was crowned the winner, a 17-year-old Police Cadet Leader, unpaid carer and volunteer.

## 9.6 Customer Services

All customer feedback is valuable as it helps assess the overall performance of Devon & Cornwall Police. The correspondence office's customer service team receives, enables me to gain an understanding of the current and arising issues faced by the public.

Since the last Police and Crime Panel, data shows that road safety, violence, conduct and service delays are the most common themes. Road safety concerns are typically directed to the Road Safety Team within Devon and Cornwall police for their assistance. Queries or concerns regarding conduct are referred to the Devon and Cornwall Police Professional Standards Department as a complaint. The service delays mainly relate to firearms licensing.

There has been a decrease in the number of concerns relating to 101 wait times which is a huge improvement, also resulting in greater satisfaction with the service. In terms of queries and concerns relating to Police and Crime Plan priorities, violence generated the most, followed by antisocial behaviour, theft and drugs. With violence being a priority in my Police and Crime plan, it has been alarming to see the increase of concerns relating to it and I will continue to make this a priority within all areas of Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly.

My team strives to resolve queries and concerns at the first point of contact. We have introduced a voicemail system where customers can leave a message outside operating times (10am – 2pm) and a team member call back as soon as possible. Analysing correspondence trends is crucial so I can commit to ensuring my priorities are aligned with the views of the public and scrutinise the force on areas of concern that the public have raised.

## 10 Police Governance

### 10.1 Commissioner's Accountability Board

Holding our police to account on behalf of the people of Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly is my core responsibility.

I do this in a number of ways, including chairing the Accountability Board. This allows me to select a number of areas of policing activity and performance to scrutinise in detail, requiring the Chief Constable and his team to explain both current performance, and any plans for improvements.

A statement is then published on the OPCC website describing the levels of assurance for the public to see, along with the agenda and attendance at each Board, to ensure transparency.

I remain absolutely committed to ensuring that Devon & Cornwall Police delivers a service to our communities as effectively and efficiently as is possible and will continue to not only scrutinise and challenge robustly, but also to celebrate and champion whenever appropriate.

Assurance statements are published on the OPCC website here <https://devonandcornwall-pcc.gov.uk/commissioners-accountability-board>

### 10.2 Neighbourhood Strategic Governance Board

A neighbourhood strategic governance board has been established to provide strategic oversight and co-ordination for the delivery of the neighbourhood policing grant. This monthly board will receive regular reports on recruitment and training, budget allocation and spending, operational impact, performance reporting and communications to ensure that the force is on track to deliver the Home Office Neighbourhood Guarantee.

The board, chaired by ACC Glen Mayhew, will monitor the Force's approach which includes hotspot policing, uplift of police officers, recruitment of PCSOs and recruitment of PIP1 qualified police staff investigators.

### 10.3 PCSO and Police Officer Recruitment Inc neighbourhood policing grant

We remain on track to deliver an additional 55 PCSOs by April 2026. These officers will make a real difference in helping residents feel safer and better connected to their local policing teams.

The current recruitment and training pipeline includes:

- 22 PCSOs due to start in August 2025
- A further 22 in late September 2025
- A final intake of 16 PCSOs scheduled for January 2026

From October onwards, communities can expect to feel the benefits of a more visible police presence, particularly in our town centres and across key neighbourhoods. While the exact deployment of PCSOs will be confirmed, early planning has ensured that both high-footfall and harder-to-fill locations will be prioritised.

This uplift reflects a continued focus on community engagement and preventative policing, in which PCSOs play a vital role.

## 10.4 New Communication Approaches in Policing



Picture: The Chief Constable, James Vaughan with students at Exeter College

In April Devon & Cornwall Police launched a Tik Tok channel. This collaboration with media students from Exeter College, working with the force's Corporate Communications and Engagement team, created short videos for use on the channel. The Chief Constable attended the launch to meet students, view some of the videos and talk about the power of connectivity between the police and young people in our communities.

## 10.5 Police complaint reviews

In previous reports to the Panel, I have highlighted the statutory role my office undertakes in respect of police complaint reviews. If a member of the public is dissatisfied with the complaint outcome they receive from Devon & Cornwall Police, they can apply to my office for an independent review.

In the first 5 months of the year, we received 41 requests to undertake police complaint reviews. 40 requests were concluded to outcome, including 30 valid complaint reviews. Of the valid reviews, 40% were upheld, meaning my Complaint Review Officer's deemed the police's original handling of the complaint was not reasonable or proportionate.

As a result of the upheld complaints, 13 recommendations were made to the police. These included asking police to undertake further enquiries and to provide the complainant with a further outcome letter, apologising to complainants where appropriate, and providing additional information and explanations so decisions could be fully understood.

## 10.6 Gross misconduct hearings

My office continues to support the running of police officer misconduct hearings. Since January, we have supported a further 5 hearings, 4 of which led to the subsequent dismissal of a police officer. My office appoints the Independent Panel Members and Legally Qualified People to support these hearings. It is with their hard work and dedication we ensure that only the right people work in policing.

## 10.7 Independent Custody Visitors (ICVs)

In previous reports to the Panel, I have also highlighted my statutory duty to run an Independent Custody Visiting (ICV) scheme. This scheme involves volunteers visiting police stations to check on the welfare of those in custody and ensure their rights and entitlements are being upheld. This helps to provide assurance that police custody centres are operating safely and

appropriately. Between the 1<sup>st</sup> of April to the 30<sup>th</sup> of June 2025, 29 visits have been undertaken with no significant issues raised.

## 10.8 Firearms Licensing

New firearms licensing fees introduced by Government took effect in February 2025. The fees are now:

Grant of Firearms certificate	£198.00 (previously £88)
Renewal of Firearms certificate	£131.00 (previously £62)
Grant of Shotgun certificate	£194.00 (previously £79.50)
Renewal of Shotgun certificate	£126.00 (previously £49)

Full details can be found on the Devon and Cornwall Police website here <https://firearms.devon-cornwall.police.uk/firearms/fees-charges/>

Any additional income goes towards the running costs of providing firearms licensing in Devon and Cornwall. However, this income only covers 43% of the full costs of providing the function (excluding police officer costs) and the balance is met from the wider police budget. Prior to the uplift, the income covered just 21% of the costs.

The last update on performance indicated that the team are working to a 112 day target for all non-complex work. The number of certificate holders is 27,459, holding over 37,000 certificates which is the largest in England and Wales. The applications within the 112 day target were 82% with zero temporary permits.

## 10.9 Chief Constable's Investigation

Chief Constable Will Kerr remains suspended from duty. Although in April 2025 PPS in Northern Ireland announced there would be no criminal charges brought against Mr Kerr, there remains an ongoing IOPC investigation in relation to conduct matters.

Interim Chief Constable James Vaughan, who was appointed to the role in December 2024, will remain in post until any outstanding matters are concluded.

The Deputy Chief Constable, Jim Colwell, has now returned to work in his substantive post.



**Alison Hernandez**

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

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