

## **Devon & Cornwall Police and Crime Panel**

### **Commissioner's Update Report: September 2025**

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

The data included in this report covers the period from July 25, 2025, to 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2025, unless otherwise stated.

#### **1. Removal from Engage status - His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS)**

On July 30, His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary, Sir Andy Cooke QPM DL, confirmed the decision to remove Devon & Cornwall Police from the Engage status of monitoring.

This followed improvements made by the force which were identified during an inspection on June 30, 2025. These included:

- Strengthened governance and oversight of the control room, with continued improvements to 999 and 101 contact, including reductions in the non-emergency 101 call abandonment rate;
- More effective management of sexual offenders, in line with national standards and guidance;
- Improved accuracy in crime recording, supported by greater confidence and understanding among frontline officers;
- Increased use of investigative plans and supervisory reviews by officers and staff.

The removal from Engage reflects the progress achieved by Devon & Cornwall Police under the leadership of Chief Constable James Vaughan QPM. HMICFRS acknowledged that these improvements demonstrate stronger organisational performance and more consistent delivery against national standards.

The change in status provides confidence that the force is moving in the right direction but is not a reason for complacency. The inspection found that the force needed to continue to improve in some areas, particularly in relation to crime data integrity which despite progress remains a cause for concern. This will be a focus of the 2025-27 PEEL inspection.

I have been assured by the Chief Constable that activity will be targeted on discharging HMICFRS recommendations, and that the force will be focussing on outstanding issues and areas of concern. Through my Commissioner's Accountability Board, I will continue to closely monitor progress, drawing on the insight that the HMICFRS process has, and continues, to provide.

2. Chief Constable extension

Strong and stable strategic leadership within Devon & Cornwall Police is a necessary foundation for delivering on strategic priorities and maintaining organisational confidence.

In August 2025 I took the decision to extend Chief Constable James Vaughan’s contract to January 2027. I previously appointed him as interim Chief Constable in December 2024.

This extension ensures continuity for Devon & Cornwall Police during a critical period of organisational improvement while supporting the continued delivery of the priorities I have set out within the Police and Crime Plan.

I am confident this extension will allow CC Vaughan to build on the improvements that I have already seen, such as reducing senior rank structures to increase the number of officers who are visible to the public and are delivering on the frontline, and the significant internal effort and oversight that was needed to remove the force from HMICFRS Engage status.

3. Police and Crime Plan Priority: Antisocial behaviour

3.1 A visible presence in areas where antisocial behaviour occurs

My office has secured Home Office funding to continue to deliver hotspot policing during 2025/26 and to be able to extend this to now include 15 of our towns and cities.

Alongside the previous hotspot policing areas, **Tiverton and Bodmin** are now benefiting from additional visible policing, targeted patrols and early intervention.

From April 1 until August 28, 2025, this investment had enabled 7,072 hours of additional foot patrols, which in turn:

- generated 1,105 intelligence submissions
- responded to 841 incidents of antisocial behaviour (ASB)
- produced 83 public protection notices or safeguarding referrals
- recorded 55 arrests
- conducted 64 stop-and-searches
- led to the seizure of 4 offensive weapons.

<b>Hotspot policing:</b>
<b>Barnstaple</b>
<b>Bideford</b>
<b>Bodmin</b>
<b>Camborne</b>
<b>Exeter</b>
<b>Exmouth</b>
<b>Newquay</b>
<b>Newton Abbot</b>
<b>Paignton</b>
<b>Penzance</b>
<b>Plymouth</b>
<b>St Austell</b>
<b>Tiverton</b>
<b>Torquay</b>
<b>Truro</b>

In addition to hotspot policing, I jointly fund (alongside local councils) street marshals in all hotspot areas. Street marshals provide a friendly, uniformed presence to reassure members of the public in areas where they may feel more vulnerable.

Most street marshals are fully accredited through the Community Safety Accreditation Scheme (CSAS) which gives partners a range of powers usually only available to police, such as the authority to issue fixed penalty notices for certain offences.

The first week in July was national ASB Awareness Week. Devon & Cornwall Police used this opportunity to reinforce to staff the importance of visible policing in designated hotspot areas. Officers worked closely with Community Safety Partnerships, housing authorities, and community focused neighbourhood teams to help prevent ASB escalation and strengthen community confidence.

Focus weeks such as this help strengthen relationships between organisations and help staff understand how we can use our respective powers to work with communities to solve problems they are experiencing. The challenge ahead is to continue to deliver in this joined up way, for every other week of the year.

### **Safer Streets Summer Focus**

The Safer Streets Summer Initiative has enabled an uplift in patrol presence in:

- **Barnstaple**
- **Bideford**
- **Brixham**
- **Bude**
- **Camborne**
- **Dartmouth**
- **Exeter**
- **Exmouth**
- **Falmouth**
- **Honiton**
- **Ilfracombe**
- **Kingsbridge**
- **Launceston**
- **Looe**
- **Newquay**
- **Newton Abbot**
- **Paignton**
- **Penzance**
- **Plymouth**
- **Redruth**
- **Sidmouth**
- **St Austell**
- **St Ives**
- **Tavistock**
- **Teignmouth**
- **Tiverton**
- **Torquay**
- **Totnes**
- **Truro**

We are in the process of reviewing data about delivery in July and August and looking at how we work together with local partners to continue to have an impact in these areas.

Key highlights include:

- **590 arrests for retail crime and 79 arrests for street crime** in focus areas.
- **1,560 hours of foot patrols** by police officers and street marshals, significantly enhancing visibility and reassurance.
- **Engagement with over 500 primary school students, 56 work experience placements**, and positive collaboration with licensees, councils, and businesses.
- Rollout of the UKPAC Business Crime Reduction Solution, strengthening intelligence-sharing and prosecution outcomes.

### 3.2 Street Focus Camborne

Street Focus is a partnership initiative led by my office in collaboration with Devon & Cornwall Police, local authorities and other partners to improve safety and address issues such as ASB in town and city centres.

In August, I met with local leaders in **Camborne** including the **Mayor, Councillor James Ball**, and the **Member of Parliament for Camborne and Redruth, Perran Moon**, representatives from the **Business Improvement District and Community Safety Partnership**, and the neighbourhood policing team, to observe the collaborative work already underway which can be built on during the next stage of the Street Focus project.



The visit highlighted key initiatives tackling ASB such as the **PubWatch** scheme, which enables hospitality services to work together to reduce problems in and around their premises. My office and Camborne Town Council have jointly funded a local **ASB officer**, who holds Community Safety Accreditation Scheme accreditation and intervenes early in emerging cases of ASB including street drinking.

Camborne is entering its second year as one of the areas receiving additional funding to support high-visibility patrols and is also an area where **Street Marshals** are part funded by my office. The Street Marshals were clearly appreciated by the public for their reassuring presence on the high street.

During my visit I was impressed by the collective commitment and noted the tangible uplift in local confidence and the community's recognition of positive change. I look forward to building on this success with Street Focus in the coming months.

### 3.3 Community protection measures

My office and Devon and Cornwall Police are working with **Community Safety Partnerships** to promote the use of Community Protection Notices (CPNs) and Community Protection Warnings (CPWs) across Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly.

These measures are being applied in cases of persistent antisocial behaviour (ASB) but also used more innovatively as an early intervention towards other problematic and criminal behaviour such as violence against women and girls. The process ensures that proportionate enforcement is used alongside interventions to address underlying causes.

The use of CPNs and CPWs by **housing authorities and local councils** working together in partnership helps ensure that specific circumstances that are impacting the community can be addressed. The model has been recognised as an effective means of reducing repeat ASB and providing reassurance to residents.

### 3.4 Antisocial behaviour case review appeals

Antisocial behaviour case reviews give victims of persistent antisocial behaviour the right to request a multi-agency review of their case.

If a victim is dissatisfied with the outcome of their ASB case review – whether because the process, policy, or protocol was not properly applied, or because relevant evidence was overlooked – my office can undertake an ASB case review appeal. Appeals may also be conducted if a victim disputes a relevant body’s rejection of their original application for a review.

In Quarter 1 (April to June 2025) my office received one request for an ASB appeal. This appeal concluded that further steps could be taken to support the complainant, and recommendations were made to the relevant local authority.

## 4. Police and Crime Plan Priority: Serious Violence

### 4.1 Disrupting violence against women and girls

Violence against women and girls (VAWG) remains a central priority in my Police and Crime Plan 2025-29, and I am keen to shift the focus toward changing male attitudes and behaviours rather than placing the onus on women and girls to stay safe.

In July, I hosted a groundbreaking one-day workshop in Exeter, inviting around 100 frontline professionals to contribute radical ideas aimed at disrupting VAWG, and addressing problematic and criminal behaviour.

The workshop engaged a broad coalition of stakeholders – including **police officers, council representatives, charities, victim services and policy makers** – to co-produce solutions rooted in community and professional insight.

A month-long public survey also gave the public and other community organisations the opportunity to share their ideas.



Ideas ranged from “quick wins” and adjustments to existing activity and processes, to more ambitious proposals which we are now beginning to explore further. Over the coming months we will identify those where the reach and resources of my office can make the most difference.



## 4.2 Domestic abuse in holiday accommodation

Domestic abuse and other forms of VAWG are of particular concern during periods when communities experience increased social interaction and alcohol use, such as the summer holidays.

Amongst the high numbers of tourists visiting our area will be families where domestic abuse and other types of harm occur. Being away from their normal support structures can increase isolation and with this comes additional risk. We also see a lot of people coming to the area for summer work, who may also be vulnerable themselves.

This churn of both visitors and staff within the sector make it important to regularly refresh training and awareness.

In August, I joined the neighbourhood policing team, a licensing officer, the force lead for domestic abuse safeguarding and investigation, and a passive drugs dog and handler in a partnership initiative to help staff at holiday parks in **Looe** understand how they can help keep people safe.



During the visit, staff were given advice on recognising the signs of domestic abuse and guidance on how to respond and the support available for those affected. The **Ask for Angela** initiative was highlighted as a discreet safety measure already in use across hospitality venues nationally. The team also demonstrated how to identify drug use in communal areas, including visible drug residue. Information about referrals into local support organisations, and the work of **Safer Cornwall** were highlighted.

Embedding policing, licensing, and safeguarding activity together, and making use of the various touch points all partner organisations have with sectors such as hospitality and holiday accommodation can increase the likelihood of intervention at the earliest point.

## 4.2 Councillor advocate seminar: Tackling serious violence

My Councillor Advocate scheme connects local authority members with their local policing inspectors, and regular forums provide opportunity to better understand the force response to key issues at and the types of support that my office can provide. It also enables members to share good practice between authorities to help strengthen local activity.

In July, I hosted a seminar for Councillor Advocates on the theme of Serious Violence, and to provide an opportunity for members to hear from and ask questions of the Chief Constable about the progress that the force is making more generally.



Nick Wilden, the **Force Serious Violence Reduction Officer**, who gave an overview of the scale and nature of violent crime within the peninsula.

Tracey Naismith, **Head of Community Safety at Plymouth City Council**, shared details of the work delivered through the **Plymouth Community Recovery Fund** (following the disorder in Plymouth in August 2024) which has resulted in increased community cohesion, improved wellbeing for women and minoritised groups, and a rise in youth voice and volunteering.

Steve Foale (**Technical Lead, Safer Communities, Plymouth City Council**) also spoke about plans to bring the **Knife Angel** to Plymouth next year, and the wraparound work being done with schools and youth groups to maximise the positive impact of this project.

## **4.2 Working together to support child and adult victims of sexual violence**

We continue to work with partners to strengthen sexual violence services to improve access, coordination and outcomes for children and adults who are victims of sexual violence across Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly.

We have been working towards a five-year arrangement to jointly procure services across the peninsula, pooling investments from:

- **Cornwall Council,**
- **Plymouth City Council,**
- **Torbay Council,**
- **Devon County Council**
- **NHS England**
- **Devon & Cornwall ICB Cluster**
- **Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner**

This will enable a more joined up approach to supporting victims, reduce waiting times, and provide a longer commitment to organisations that deliver these vital services. In turn this will help retain skills and specialist staff which the peninsula is at risk of otherwise losing to longer term contracts elsewhere.

With significant potential organisational change on the horizon through local government reform and the disbanding of Public Health England, the OPCC is carefully monitoring the transition to this new way of working.

## **4.3 Helping family, carers and supporters who are impacted by crime**

The impact of serious crime extends beyond the primary victims, affecting family members, carers, partners, and others who support victims through their recovery after a crime. They can experience significant emotional, psychological, and practical challenges as they navigate what can be a very different day-to-day life for the victim and those around them after the crime has occurred.

Family and carers have for too long fallen between gaps in victim support services.

To help overcome this I have extended our victim care services to now include **Restitute**.

Restitute is a multi-award-winning, not-for-profit community interest company.

The new service can support the family and carers of sexual or serious violent crime across Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly via referrals from Devon & Cornwall Police's Victim Care Unit.

Restitute's services provide a wide range of practical help and support on a range of difficult issues, from helping advocate and empower the primary victim, managing the impact of behaviour change and coping strategies that the primary victim may rely on, to understanding the health, legal, mental health, education, criminal justice and benefit systems that they may now need to navigate.



100% of people who have accessed Restitute's services have reported an increase in emotional wellbeing and the ability to care and support their loved ones.

Restitute also delivers training and raises awareness for organisations that work with victims and their families. You can find out more about their work, and how to access their services here: [www.restitute.org.uk](http://www.restitute.org.uk)

#### 4.4 Reducing harm on our roads



Much of my offices work to reduce harm on our roads is carried out via **the Vision Zero South West road safety partnership** – a collaboration of partners committed to halving the number of deaths and serious injuries on our roads by 2030.

The Acusensus AI cameras we have been trialling have now detected **more than 10,000 mobile phone and seatbelt offences** in the region

.Recent figures also show positive results in terms of the behaviour change created by the cameras and associated publicity campaigns, with a prolonged decrease in the number of offences being detected at numerous sites.

A series of new average and fixed speed cameras went live on the **A38 between the Carkeel roundabout and Trerulefoot on August 20** in a bid to reduce collisions along the route. Between 2019 and 2023, there have been 60 collisions in the area, leading to 97 casualties - two of which were fatalities. The project was undertaken in collaboration with the local communities and has been made possible with funding from **National Highways, Vision Zero South West and Cornwall Council**.

It was recently revealed that the Government is expected to make a raft of changes to the law to improve road safety – many of which Vision Zero South West has been lobbying for. These are expected to include mandatory eye tests and health checks for older drivers, lowering the drink-drive limit and introducing tougher penalties for those caught not wearing seatbelts – all of which I warmly welcome.

You can find out more about our Road To Zero plan by visiting: [The Road To Zero: Why we need national support to reach zero road deaths - vision-zero](#)



## 5. Police and Crime Plan Priority: Drugs & Alcohol

I monitor the forces capability to disrupt the supply of drugs and force performance in this area through the Commissioner's Accountability Board. This remains an area which requires significant cross border activity, working with forces not just in the region but across the country to target those who distribute drugs into our community.

In August I was updated by the new Force Director of Intelligence about the activity being undertaken to tackle all forms of serious and organised crime.

## 5.1 Helping young adults to transform their lives

My office has continued to support early intervention and recovery-focused initiatives, working in partnership with local authorities, charities and specialist providers to reduce offending, support vulnerable people, and prevent escalation of harm.

One of the initiatives I fund is the **Amber Foundation**, which supports young adults aged 18 to 30 facing complex challenges such as homelessness and unemployment.

The charity helps participants to stabilise their lives, build resilience, and work towards sustainable housing, employment, and healthier futures.

The Amber Foundation's wraparound approach is recognised nationally as an effective pathway for young adults to exit cycles of homelessness, addiction, and offending.



## 5.2 Identifying best practice in recovery and community safety: Cornwall

With alcohol a priority for policing in Devon and Cornwall for the first time under my Police and Crime Plan 2025-29, I am committed to seeking out areas of best practice to influence the work of my office and its partners.

In July, I was invited to visit the **Safe and Well Hub in Penzance**, a facility which offers significant wraparound support for people with complex needs, including street-attached individuals and those in recovery from addiction.



The hub is run by the complex needs team at **Cornwall Council** and offers almost 20 different services under one roof, it offers a wide range of support including mental health, drug and alcohol, and domestic abuse services, a vet clinic, housing support and debt advice alongside drop-in sessions for creative skills.

From speaking with service users, it is evident that the work of the hub is having a significantly positive impact not only on their recovery, physical and mental health but also the safety of the wider community and demonstrates the importance of connection not only in recovery but also at an organisational level.

## 5.3 Tackling the impact of drugs and alcohol on our roads

So far this year (1<sup>st</sup> January to end of July 2025) there have been **1,094 drink driving arrests** (including those who refused or failed to give a specimen) and **677 drug driving arrests** in Devon and Cornwall.

Vision Zero South West is working in partnership with **local pubs, clubs and restaurants** to expand the popular **Lift Legend** campaign during December this year. Planning has been underway since January to grow the scheme, which sees designated drivers offered free soft drinks as a reward for getting their friends and colleagues home safely.

Last year over 200 pubs signed up to the scheme – but we'd like to work with licensing authorities and other touchpoints with the hospitality trade to see more this year.

Licensees can sign up to Lift Legend by completing the short form [here](https://forms.cloud.microsoft/e/Kut3LfvZB5):

## 5.4 Disrupting drug use in licensed premises

Devon & Cornwall Police's **Pubs Against Drugs** initiative continued in August with an operation in **Torpoint** targeting licensed venues around the town with passive drugs dog PD Jasper.

Pubs against Drugs is aimed at disrupting the use of recreational drugs by deterring people using, carrying or supplying them, and is a great example of partnership working between the police and local businesses, members of the public, and partner agencies acting collaboratively to keep communities safe.

The operation, which has the added benefit of educating people enjoying the nighttime economy of the consequences of drug crime and supporting licensed premises to reinforce the law, saw two people searched and one person arrested.

## 6. Priority: Theft

### 6.1 Tackling shoplifting with business crime reporting partnership

Retail crime and persistent shoplifting continue to present challenges for local businesses and communities.

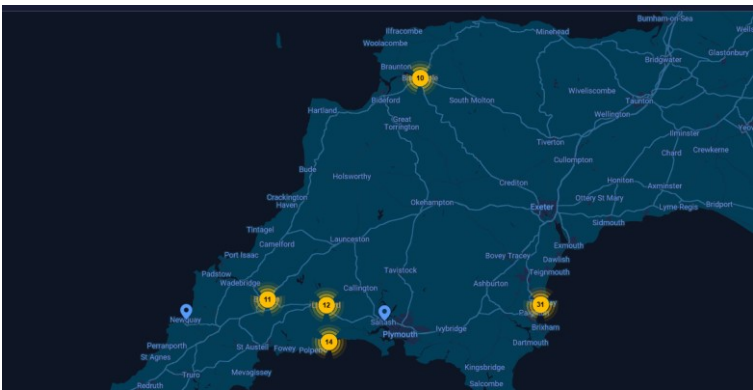
To help combat this, my office has funded business crime reduction partnership **UK Partners Against Crime (UKPAC)**, which provides businesses with a digital platform to report, share and track offending.

UKPAC allows businesses of any kind to quickly and securely report offences via an app or online portal, linking data across areas nationally. This enables more efficient and robust police investigation and prosecution of prolific offenders.



In April 2025, I invested £80,000 in a 12-month UKPAC pilot in **Torbay**, as part of our Street Focus Torquay project. Within the first four months, there have been two successful prosecutions of prolific offenders in Torquay, with one offender sentenced to 24 weeks' imprisonment and another convicted of 15 offences and awaiting sentence.

UKPAC is now being adopted by businesses in **Barnstaple, North Devon, Liskeard, Saltash and Teignmouth**, and a strategic plan is being developed for a **wider force-wide rollout**, ensuring that the benefits of the pilot can be extended across Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly.



6.2 Investing in local prevention initiatives

I am making available £115,000 of funding via the Commissioner’s Community Grant scheme to support community-led prevention activity that will help reduce burglary and theft, by addressing root causes.

Local community groups and grass roots organisations are invited to apply for up to £5,000 to deliver projects that will help prevent harm, tailored to the challenges they face in their local area. The Police (Property) Act is a statutory requirement to deal with money and other property which comes into the possession of the police either in connection with criminal charges or handed in by members of the public. After a year, unclaimed property can be sold and the proceeds distributed among charitable organisations.

The grant process is being facilitated on behalf of my office by the Devon Community Foundation and the Cornwall Community Foundation, both of whom are trusted local foundations that are well placed to assess community needs. Applications are open until October 8<sup>th</sup>.

Devon Community Foundation will be drawing on its database of community groups to invite relevant organisations to apply for a grant. Cornwall Community Foundation

Last year (2024-25) 21 organisations benefited from £83,000 of funding to tackle ASB in rural and non-urban coastal communities. They were:

Devon	Cornwall
Wheels of Ananda	Kernow Youth CIC
What’s Your Problem CIC	West Cornwall Women’s Aid
True Butterflies Foundation	First Light Southwest
The Olive Project	The Sparkle Foundation UK
Surviving Abuse North Devon	Crimestoppers in the Southwest
Sunrise Diversity	Be Creative Cornwall



South West Community Chaplaincy	Livewire Youth Project
Phoenix Rising	Pegasus Men's Wellbeing Centre
Gifted Women	
Exeter Street Pastors	
Ahimsa	
Home-Start South and West Devon	
Resilient Lives	

### 6.3 Funding to improve community safety through CCTV

CCTV plays an important role in crime prevention and community reassurance. My office continues to work with local councils to strengthen our CCTV infrastructure, in ways which reflect local priorities.

I am investing **£150,000 of dedicated funding to help support councils across Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly to improve or update their existing CCTV equipment and infrastructure.**

Parish and town councils or their equivalents can each apply for up to £10,000 via an expression of interest scheme which will open on September 15<sup>th</sup> and run for six weeks.

By strengthening surveillance capability in public spaces, the initiative also supports police operations and complements wider community safety strategies delivered through Community Safety Partnerships.

In addition to investing in local infrastructure, I am also **supporting Devon and Cornwall Police to improve access to CCTV feeds in our control rooms.**

## 7. Strengthening the Criminal Justice system

### 7.1 National leadership in criminal justice

Effective criminal justice coordination is central to public confidence and the delivery of safer communities across Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly.

In August 2025, I was appointed as national co-lead for the criminal justice portfolio for the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners (APCC). This appointment reflects my sustained focus on improving criminal justice outcomes locally and nationally and will increase opportunities to shine a national spotlight on the issues that we face locally.

### 7.2 Devon and Cornwall Local Criminal Justice Board (LCJB)

The LCJB brings together senior leaders from across the criminal justice system to set priorities, oversee delivery, and drive improvements in victim and witness experience. The Board ensures that activity is coordinated, consistent, and responsive to local needs across Devon and Cornwall.



The agencies that form the Devon and Cornwall LCJB are;

- **The Office for the Police and Crime Commissioner**
- **Devon & Cornwall Police**
- **Crown Prosecution Service (CPS)**
- **His Majesty's Courts and Tribunal Service, Devon & Cornwall area (HMCTS)**
- **His Majesty Prison & Probation Service (HMPPS)**
- **A representative of the Youth Justice Service**
- **The Legal Aid Agency**
- **A representative from the Defence Community**
- **The representatives from Devon and Cornwall Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise Sector (VCSE)**
- **The High Sheriff of Devon and The High Sheriff of Cornwall**

The LCJB annual planning day is on September 25, 2025, where members will review progress against agreed priorities from the last 12 months and set the direction and focus for the year ahead.

Updates will be provided at the next Police and Crime Panel meeting on these priorities, including examples of collective work to maintain an efficient and effective criminal justice system, improve victim engagement, and address disproportionality within the system.

The LCJB's collective priorities for 2024-25 are publicly available here: [LCJB Priorities 2024-25 – Your voice in policing](#)

### **7.3 Criminal justice scrutiny**

Scrutiny is a key mechanism for ensuring accountability, transparency and improvement across the criminal justice system. Through scrutiny panels chaired by my office, partners collectively assess performance, compliance with national standards, and the effectiveness of local practice.

Scrutiny panels continue to be held each month to review compliance against the Victim Code of Practice (VCoP) and to assess the use of Out of Court Resolutions (OoCRs).

In the last quarter, an Adult OoCR panel was convened to review cases of domestic abuse. The findings will be shared with LCJB members ahead of the annual planning day and formally signed off in line with my office's governance arrangements.

Additional scrutiny panels are scheduled for September, October and early November 2025, focusing on offences relating to stalking or harassment, sexual offences, and assaults on emergency workers.

These scrutiny processes are well supported by stakeholders across the criminal justice partnership and represent best practice in collaborative oversight. Engagement is constructive, with partners working together to strengthen consistency, raise standards, and improve outcomes for victims.

## 7.4 Masterclasses share best practice in reducing reoffending

As part of the ongoing work of the South West Reducing Reoffending Partnership (SWRRP), a new series of non-accredited Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Masterclasses has been introduced. These sessions have been incredibly well received. They are designed to strengthen knowledge, raise awareness of emerging issues in criminal justice, and provide opportunities for professional learning across the partnership.

The next session, scheduled for September 10, 2025, will feature a presentation **from Band of Brothers, a Cornwall-based charity** that mentors young men, sharing insights into how community-based mentoring can help reduce reoffending and support rehabilitation. Previous sessions have addressed gateway drugs and gambling harms.

## 8. Holding the police to account

### 8.1 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 several ways, including chairing the Commissioner's Accountability Board (CAB). This allows me to select specific areas of policing activity and performance to scrutinise in detail, requiring the Chief Constable and his team to explain current performance, and any plans for improvements.

A statement is then published on my office's website here, <https://devonandcornwall-pcc.gov.uk/commissioners-accountability-board> describing the levels of assurance along with the agenda and attendance at each Board.

Since the last panel meeting, I have reviewed overall force performance; the force serious and organised crime intelligence function, and the force response to shoplifting and retail crime via CAB.

I remain absolutely committed to ensuring that Devon & Cornwall Police deliver 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.

### 8.4 Police complaint reviews

As Police and Crime Commissioner I have a statutory responsibility to undertake police complaint reviews. Where a member of the public is dissatisfied with the outcome of a complaint they receive from Devon & Cornwall Police, they can apply to my office for an independent review.

In Quarter 1 (April to June 2025), we received 39 requests to undertake police complaint reviews. During this period, 22 requests were concluded to outcome, including 14 valid complaint reviews. Of these valid reviews, 43% were upheld, meaning my Complaint Review Officers deemed the police's original handling of the complaint was not reasonable or proportionate.

As a result of the upheld complaints, 11 recommendations were issued to the police. These included requests further enquiries to be undertaken, provision of additional outcome letters to complainants where appropriate, issuing apologies, and providing supplementary information and explanations. This ensures that complainants have a clear understanding of the decisions reached and that the police are held accountable for delivering proportionate and fair complaint handling.

## 8.7 Independent Custody Visitors (ICVs)

As Police and Crime Commissioner, I have a statutory duty to run an Independent Custody Visiting (ICV) scheme. This scheme relies on trained volunteers who make unannounced visits to police custody centres to check on the welfare of detainees and ensure their rights and entitlements are being respected. These visits provide independent assurance that custody facilities are operating safely and appropriately.

We are currently recruiting for more volunteers to join the scheme.

Between July 1 and August 30, 2025, a total of 24 visits were undertaken across Devon and Cornwall, with no significant issues raised. The 2024-25 ICV Annual Report has been published [here](#), summarising the positive work of the scheme over the past financial year. This report highlights how the scheme has operated, the value of volunteer contributions, and the consistency of welfare checks.

## 8.8 Custody scrutiny inquiry: welfare service provision

My office is currently undertaking a scrutiny enquiry to understand, compare and assess the quality and consistency of welfare services provided to detainees across the Devon and Cornwall custody estate.

This is a complex area as responsibilities for these services are held across various parts of the wider system, including health and local authorities. Changes in any of these sectors can impact the services available. It is already clear there are significant challenges for medical providers in recruiting and retaining qualified practitioners within the peninsula and in local authorities for delivering on the provision of appropriate adults.

We also face challenges linked to partners organisational geographical boundaries, and how this interacts with the physical location of our six custody centres (**Barnstaple, Camborne, Charles Cross (Plymouth), Exeter, Newquay and Torquay**). A wide range of factors influence where a detainee is taken, and this can have consequences for organisations who have a duty to support them.

The inquiry is examining a wide range of welfare services including:

- Legal services, such as legal aid
- Healthcare and mental healthcare provision
- Appropriate adults for vulnerable detainees
- Translators and interpretation services

- Drug and alcohol services
- Faith support

I will keep the Police and Crime Panel updated on the progress of this work and will share my key findings and recommendations once the scrutiny enquiry is complete.

## **8.9 New guidance for firearms licensing**

In August 2025, the Home Office published revised statutory guidance on firearms licensing for Chief Officers following national consultation with firearms licensing managers.

The guidance reflects learning from recent reviews and incidents and includes 71 changes to the previous version published in 2023. The updated guidance provides greater clarity and direction in relation to domestic abuse, violent conduct and wider suitability checks. Main themes include:

- Mandatory training (including specific modules on domestic abuse).
- Enhanced background checks and scrutiny of associates
- Home visits for applicants and renewals
- Referees and medical information requirements
- Consideration of organised crime links, violent conduct, and NFA (no further action) police outcomes in decision-making

I am receiving a briefing on the implications of these changes and the current force performance at September's Commissioner's Accountability Board, which falls between the submission of this report and the date of the Police and Crime Panel and will provide an update in due course.

## **8.10 Responding to HMICFRS inspection reports**

I have a statutory responsibility to respond to all reports published by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) that include recommendations or are otherwise relevant to Devon & Cornwall Police.

During 2025, four inspection reports have been published which fall into this category. Three of these are national reports, and one is an inspection of regional activity.

These are:

- An inspection of the police response to the public disorder in July and August 2024 (Tranche 2)
- An inspection into how effectively the police investigate crime
- A review of the response to organised immigration crime
- An inspection of the South West regional response to serious and organised crime

The responses to these reports, including the action taken or planned by the force in relation to the recommendations, are publicly available at <https://www.devonandcornwall-pcc.gov.uk>



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

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