

**Devon and Cornwall Police and Crime Panel**  
**21<sup>st</sup> November 2025**

**OFFICE OF THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER'S REPORT**  
**Police and Crime Plan Priority: Serious Violence**

## **1. Introduction**

1.1 The Commissioner's Police and Crime plan focusses on four main priorities: antisocial behaviour (ASB), serious violence, drugs and alcohol and theft. This report describes activity undertaken by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) and Devon and Cornwall Police to deliver the priority area of serious violence, specifically tackling concerns in our towns and city centres, in our countryside and coastal areas, on our roads and in our homes and neighbourhoods. The report also describes how the force and the Commissioner are delivering this priority through a focus on repeat victims, repeat offenders and repeat locations, and work with partners to prevent serious violence and support the delivery of the serious violence duty.



## **2. Background**

2.1 In her Police and Crime Plan, the Commissioner has adopted a broad definition of serious violence, including violence against women and girls (VAWG), domestic abuse, sexual and physical violence, organised crime and deaths and serious injuries on our roads. In the 12 months to September 2025, Devon and Cornwall Police recorded:

- 31,696 VAWG offences
- 24,668 domestic abuse offences
- 15,602 violence with injury offences
- 7,169 sexual offences
- 1,194 offences related to child exploitation



- 587 people killed or seriously injured on our roads<sup>1</sup>
- 152 offences related to modern slavery

## 2.2 The key aims of the Police and Crime Plan's serious violence priority are:

- Women and girls feel safer in our towns and cities
- Organised criminals are prevented from operating in our countryside
- A reduction in the number of people killed or seriously injured on our roads
- Radical ideas are tested to prevent domestic abuse, violence against women and girls, and child sexual abuse.

## 2.3 The Chief Constable has developed a delivery plan which sets out the prioritised activity for which Devon and Cornwall Police will focus its resources, activity and development in 2025-26 in line with the Commissioner's Police and Crime Plan priorities.

In our towns and city centres 	In our countryside and coastal areas 	On our roads 	In our homes and neighbourhoods 
<p><b>Women and girls feel safer in our towns and cities.</b></p> <p>We will implement our VAWG strategy including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Robust management and bringing offenders to justice</li> <li>• Ensure safeguarding of vulnerable and intimidated victims – code of practice compliance</li> <li>• Hotspot policing targeting to prevent crimes occurring</li> <li>• Identify repeat victims and perpetrators for both support/diversion/bringing to justice</li> <li>• Increase DVDS use VAWG preventative and pro-active campaigns run</li> </ul> <p>We will use specialist resources to help the force with Fugitive Management.</p> <p><b>Lead: ACC Crime, Justice and Vulnerability</b></p>	<p><b>Organised criminals are prevented from operating in our countryside.</b></p> <p>We will utilise our tasking and intelligence processes to identify OCGs operating locally and regionally.</p> <p>We will target disruption activity to those areas in our countryside subject to OCGs.</p> <p>We will use specialist assets to target scored investigations using a refined tasking process.</p> <p><b>Lead: ACC Crime, Justice and Vulnerability</b></p>	<p><b>A reduction in the number of people killed or seriously injured on our roads.</b></p> <p>We will work in partnership with Vision Zero South West to keep our roads safe and reduce KSIs.</p> <p>We will identify high-harm routes and hot-spots through data analysis and will deliver appropriate activity in conjunction with BCU's to tackle identified risks.</p> <p>We will run targeted media campaigns to highlight impact of the Fatal 5 and to promote road safety operations.</p> <p>We will use ANPR to identify offending drivers, taking swift action to prosecute offences and remove the risk from our roads.</p> <p><b>Lead: ACC Contact and Specialist Operations</b></p>	<p><b>Radical ideas are tested to prevent domestic abuse, violence against women and girls, and child sexual abuse.</b></p> <p>We will improve recording, investigation and outcomes for RAPE and serious sexual assault.</p> <p>We will Implement national Soteria Model for management and investigation of RASSO offending.</p> <p>We will utilise our data and intelligence to target repeat offenders and bring to justice.</p> <p>We will seek to understand and then respond to the impact of On-Line offending, including creation of safer spaces online.</p> <p><b>Lead: ACC Crime, Justice and Vulnerability</b></p>

## 2.4 The Commissioner reviewed the force's progress in delivering the Police and Crime Plan priority of serious violence at the October Commissioner's Accountability Board. The Commissioner was assured by the Chief Constable's plans for ongoing

<sup>1</sup> Data is accurate as of 02/10/25. Figures can change as data is updated to reflect updates to casualties' injuries and may be over-represented whilst data is reviewed.



delivery of the priority of serious violence, and her statement of assurance for this area, along with all other topics considered for assurance at the Board can be [viewed on the OPCC's website.](#)

### **3. Working with partners to prevent serious violence**

3.1 The Serious Violence Prevention Programme was established as a four-year commitment between the OPCC and the Chief Constable. Over this period, the programme generated significant learning around the approaches required to prevent serious violence, despite Devon and Cornwall not being formally recognised as a Violence Reduction Unit area.

3.2 Through a shared strategic needs assessment and defined theory of change the programme primarily focused on interventions for individuals under the age of 25, developing and sharing needs assessments, and testing a range of preventative approaches in partnership with local agencies to address issues within communities. At the time of inception, there was no dedicated policing capacity for serious violence prevention, no statutory mandate for partners to work in this area, and no national Serious Violence Duty.

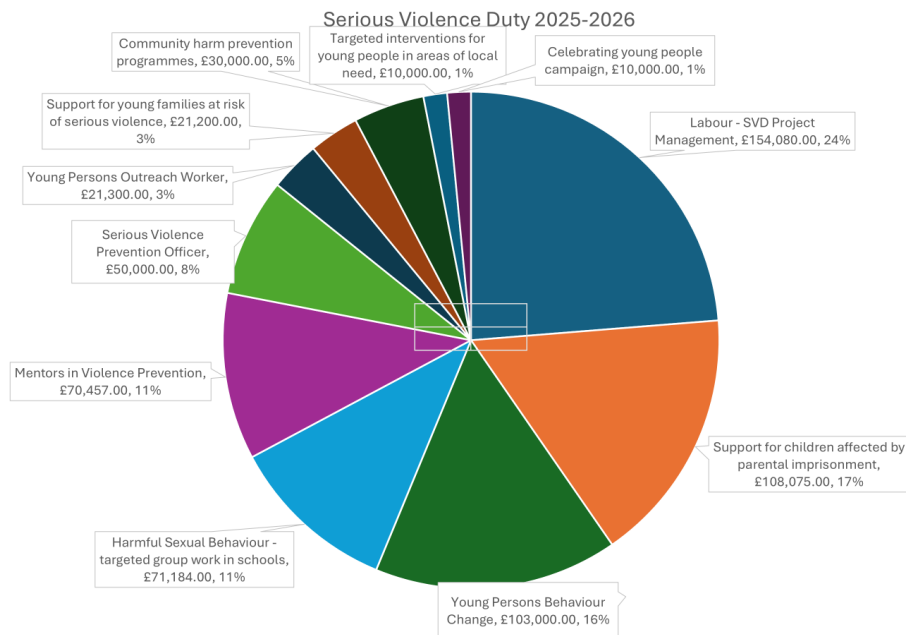
3.3 Whilst the Serious Violence Prevention Programme has now ended, considerable learning and legacy work been embedded into the current Police and Crime Plan, and into the force's operational activity. This includes:

- The establishment of a homicide reduction officer within Devon and Cornwall Police
- Capacity within the OPCC to support a focus on youth justice with oversight from the Local Criminal Justice Board
- Scoping a high harm perpetrator approach within Devon and Cornwall Police

3.4 The Serious Violence Duty came into effect from January 2023 and requires councils and local services to work together to share information and target interventions to prevent and reduce serious violence. This requirement includes identifying the kinds of serious violence that occur in the area, the causes of that violence, and to prepare and implement a strategy for preventing, and reducing serious violence in the area.

3.5 The Serious Violence Duty is currently accompanied by funding of £657,361 which is allocated to Community Safety Partnerships by the OPCC across the peninsula to address serious violence according to their local Strategic Needs Assessments (SNAs). A range of projects are being funded to support the prevention of serious violence, in line with the priorities of the Police and Crime Plan. The Serious Violence Duty funding stipulates that £154,080 must be spent on labour costs and the chart below outlines how the CSP's have allocated this funding:





3.6 The OPCC has a convening role in the Serious Violence Duty and is the accountable body for the Serious Violence Grant, reporting back to the Home Office on a quarterly basis on the financial expenditure alongside the overview and impact of these projects. The OPCC has retained a resource within the office to support this.

3.7 It is currently unclear whether (although considered unlikely) the Serious Violence Duty funding will be re-issued in 2026-27 as the refresh of the Serious Violence Duty statutory guidance is on hold whilst the learning from the Young Futures Panels pilot and the Landscape Review nationally is considered. This places potential additional pressure to work creatively together to ensure all organisations can meet their responsibilities under the statutory Serious Violence Duty through existing budgets.

3.8 The Home Office has announced that they have commissioned Crest Advisory to develop clear standards for partner roles and to strengthen partnership approaches under the Serious Violence Duty. Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly are one of six areas nationally that are involved in shaping this work. The OPCC is convening local partners to engage with this review.



#### **4. Police and Crime Plan aim: Women and girls feel safer in our towns and cities**



4.1 The presence of CCTV can increase the sense of safety for women and girls and deter perpetrators. The Commissioner has recently announced £125,000 in new funding for 2025/26 to expand or improve town and parish council (and their equivalents) CCTV infrastructure, building on earlier Safer Streets investments across the region. This funding supports long-term situational prevention and intelligence gathering, reinforcing the legacy of the summer initiative.

4.2 Over 60 councils and voluntary organisations applied for a share of this investment, highlighting there are opportunities for improvement for partners to consider, beyond that which this funding can deliver. The Commissioner's office is currently reviewing applications for funding with the intention of announcing results early in December.

4.3 Devon and Cornwall Police have launched several campaigns which support the aim of women and girls feeling safer in our towns and cities. Project Nighteye is a campaign to specifically target male perpetrators of sexual violence in the evening and night-time economy. The project aims to make public spaces safer for women and girls and deter crime. The force has created two animated videos to raise awareness around behaviours of concern and provide signposting to methods of reporting.

4.4 A campaign was launched in line with university 'freshers week', which focused on reporting inappropriate sexual behaviours and non-contact sexual offending. In addition, the force launched a cyber stalking campaign in December 2024, with the aim of raising awareness of these types of crimes amongst the public, and to remind officers and staff of the relevant policies and guidance available for them when identifying, recording and investigation these crimes.

4.5 The force is now also using enhanced analytical capabilities to better understand the nature of crimes locally, such as rape, other serious sexual offences and stalking. These strategic profiles also give the force further information about both victim and offender demographics, and how the force responds to these offences, to inform prevention work and any necessary improvements to the police response.

#### **5. Police and Crime Plan aim: Organised criminals are prevented from operating in our countryside**

5.1 The Commissioner is the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners (APCC) national lead for serious and organised crime (SOC) and the national lead





for criminal justice. Devon and Cornwall police remain the National Police Chief Council lead for modern slavery and organised immigration crime (MSOIC). For nearly ten years, the Commissioner has overseen additional home office funding to support the police service nationally to strengthen their response to modern slavery, and more recently OIC. All these elements focus on the coordination of reducing pervasive crimes across our communities particularly where crime may be hidden in countryside and coastal areas.

5.2 In recognition of the impact of crime on farming and rural communities, the Commissioner has a regular dialogue with the National Farmers Union (NFU) and the British Association for Shooting and Conservation (BASC) and previously chaired a meeting with leads from the NFU and with communities to hear first-hand about problems facing farmers such as livestock attacks, livestock theft and farm plant and machinery theft.



5.3 According to the latest NFU Mutual Rural Crime Report, the estimated cost of rural crime in the UK was £44.1 million last year. Around £7 million of the loss is attributed to agricultural vehicle theft, including £2.7 million worth of quad bikes and all-terrain vehicles and £1.5 million worth of tractors. Operation Ragwort is an annual, regional operation which sees forces working together to target rural crime, including organised criminal gangs responsible for farm machinery and equipment theft. In September, Devon and Cornwall Police's rural affairs team led Operation Ragwort which involved more than 90 officers and other personnel from Devon and Cornwall Police and partner agencies including the Driving Vehicle Standards Agency, Trading Standards, an industry expert in forensic recovery, the Environment Agency and the National Construction and Agricultural Theft Team, as well as officers from Avon and Somerset, Dorset, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire.

5.4 Working with the force's drone team, officers carried out high-visibility patrols and stop-checks on popular routes in Devon, looking for signs of any stolen equipment, plant or livestock, and for vehicles associated with potential environmental waste crime such as fly tipping. More than 200 vehicles were stopped and checked, resulting in officers identifying a vehicle with an expired MOT, two commercial vehicles exceeding the weight limit and two other offences. Officers were also based at local agricultural supply stores to engage with rural communities, raising awareness about trends in rural crime and prevention measures as part of a two-pronged approach to the day of action.

5.5 The force's intelligence directorate has produced serious and organised crime local profiles for each BCU (Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly, Plymouth, South Devon and North, East and West Devon). These local profiles have identified intelligence regarding violence linked to drugs. Between July and August 2025, the force



recorded 579 disruptions, the majority of which relate to drugs, cybercrime, child sexual abuse, and organised immigration crime.

## **6. Police and Crime Plan aim: A reduction in people killed and seriously injured on our roads**

6.1 Vision Zero South West has committed to halving the number of people killed and seriously injured (KSI) by 2030. KSI figures have continued to fall year-on-year for the past three years, but there is still more work to do. There is a continued focus on vulnerable road user groups and education around the 'Fatal 5' causes of collisions.

6.2 This year Vision Zero has continued to fund and promote motorcycle training schemes for all ages and launched a targeted behaviour change campaign for motorcyclists which reached over two million people over the summer months. Work is also underway on a campaign targeting older drivers and their families and working on a pedestrian safety pilot project in the Mutley Plain area of Plymouth. The Learn2Live education programme continues to give lifesaving advice to thousands of new young drivers throughout the region.



6.3 The Vision Zero intelligence team have produced problem profiles covering high harm routes and hotspot locations. A lead responsible officer is assigned to each and a problem-solving plan then implemented, which brings partners together to tackle the issues identified. Intelligence and incident logs are also monitored to identify dangerous, disqualified or impaired drivers and this information is then shared with frontline policing teams for awareness and targeting.

6.4 ANPR markers also provide the opportunity to quickly identify and react when targets are located on the roads. Stop checks and disruptions occur daily, helping to ensure offenders are prosecuted and taken off the roads. The Acusensus AI camera systems usage has been expanded to prevent seatbelt and mobile phone offences, which have a direct correlation to the risk of death and serious injury in the event of a collision.

6.5 Vision Zero has engaged the public with road safety messaging which has reached over 3.8 million people, worked in partnership with council and emergency service colleagues to host Road Safety Villages at county shows in Devon and Cornwall, and launched a new website, complete with targeted road safety advice and downloadable resources for community messaging.



6.6 A pioneering programme to support the families of road safety victims has been commissioned via the OPCC for the last three years and is currently being evaluated.

## **7. Police and Crime Plan aim: Radical ideas are tested to prevent domestic abuse, violence against women and girls, and sexual abuse**



7.1 In July, the Commissioner hosted a groundbreaking one-day workshop in Exeter, inviting around 100 frontline professionals to contribute to radical ideas aimed at disrupting VAWG (violence against women and girls). The workshop engaged a broad coalition of stakeholders, including police officers, council representatives, charities, victim services and policy makers.

7.2 Many ideas have been captured and are being evaluated by my office to be translated into actionable interventions alongside identifying opportunities for scaling across the region.

7.3 A month-long survey was also shared publicly by my office to maximise the opportunity to collate radical ideas and engage the voice of communities in this work.

7.4 A follow-up meeting is now being planned this autumn to further engage with partners to help link them up to funding opportunities and start developing the most transformative ideas to create much-needed change.

7.5 The OPCC commissions and funds a range of services with the aim of preventing crime and reoffending. This includes providing funding for A Band of Brothers which works with young men who are at risk of offending. It provides weekly one-on-one mentoring sessions for men aged 18 to 25 who have had traumatic childhoods that have led to them being involved in the criminal justice system or put them at increased risk of doing so. Those sessions help to make well-rounded individuals who may have never had good role models in their lives, and they are taught how to develop good and healthy relationships, including with current or future partners.

7.6 The OPCC works with partners to prevent criminal exploitation of young people through funding of programmes including Exeter City Football Club's Changing Our Path service, and Plymouth Argyles young person's mentoring and activities programme.





7.7 In Plymouth the force is running a multi-agency tasking and coordination (MATAC) pilot with the aim of reducing domestic abuse offending, alongside a rape and serious sexual offences disruption panel pilot to target and disrupt perpetrators of domestic abuse, rape and serious sexual offences.

7.8 The force is working hard to identify the most vulnerable repeat victims and ensure they are safeguarded and supported. The force's strategic performance board conducted a deep dive review of repeat victimisation in October and as a result the force plan to develop a repeat victim problem profile to enable further understanding in this area and improve the force's overall response.

7.9 The force has been piloting rapid video response which uses video calling to connect to domestic abuse victims at the point of initial report. This has the benefit of engaging the victim instantly, in cases where a police resource is not required for initial attendance at a scene. The pilot has now concluded, and the force is planning, where appropriate, to make use of video response more widely, to support early victim engagement, safeguarding and to minimise the risk of attrition. To ensure that the most vulnerable victims of domestic abuse receive an appropriate response from the police, the rapid video response pilot has been run alongside a priority domestic abuse vulnerable call logs pilot, which identifies the most vulnerable victims and ensures they are prioritised for an in-person response.

7.10 The force has seen a significant increase in demand for Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme requests. In the last 12 months the volume of applications has increased by 65% compared to the previous year. Across the last six months, the average number of applications received per month is 252. The force is monitoring disclosures to ensure an improved and consistent service is provided in line with statutory guidance.

7.11 The force has undertaken a series of self-assessments related to the national Soteria model for rape and serious sexual offences to review progress and ensure activity is in line with best practice. In November, the national Soteria team will visit the force to discuss progress and recommendations for ongoing improvements, which will be incorporated into the force's own Soteria transformation plan.

## **Contact for further information**

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