



Creating a safer
Cambridgeshire

To: Business Coordination Board

From: Chief Constable

Date: 03 September 2020

**POLICE AND CRIME PLAN VICTIMS THEME AND PERFORMANCE UPDATE – CAMBRIDGESHIRE
CONSTABULARY WORK TO DELIVER ACTIONS AND PERFORMANCE UPDATE**

1. Purpose

1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the Business Coordination Board (the “Board”) on the Victims pillar of the Police and Crime Plan (the “Plan”) and performance update from Cambridgeshire Constabulary (the “Constabulary”).

2. Recommendation

2.1 The Board is recommended to note the contents of this report.

3. Background

3.1 The most recent Force Performance Meeting was held on 21st July 2020 and reviewed performance in the 12 months ending June 2020. This report reflects the updates provided to that meeting.

3.2 Alongside an overall review of performance, the report will also update on the priorities under the Victims pillar of the Plan. This month’s priority areas were domestic abuse, child exploitation and serious sexual offences.

4. Performance Meeting Updates

4.1 Strategic measures

4.1.1 Victims

The management information underlying this is victim satisfaction rates and response performance

Victim satisfaction

77.5% (n = 1288) of the victims of crime surveyed in the 12 months ending June 2020 were at least fairly satisfied with overall service delivery. This is marginally lower than the same time last year, but the long term trend is stable following recent improvements in discrete month rates. It continues to reflect both longer term challenges around follow-up and more recent challenges around ease of contact and actions taken by the police.

We continue to see lower levels of satisfaction for victims of violent crime than for victims of burglary and hate crime. This is true across all aspects of service delivery, particularly follow up; and is evident across both policing areas. Setting and managing victim expectations is key to improving satisfaction. Detailing all contacts and attempted contacts, including notification of the closure of an investigation, is crucial in our understanding of victim dissatisfaction; this is especially true when there are no viable lines of enquiry and the investigation is filed almost immediately.

The Domestic Violence survey was suspended at the start of lockdown due to concerns around victim safety and proximity to offenders while social distancing measures were in place. The survey was restarted this month, but will be subject to change if further lockdown measures are introduced.

Response performance

The median time to respond to immediate grade incidents has remained stable over the last 12 months. Prompt grade response performance has improved in recent months following the introduction of social distancing measures in response to the COVID pandemic. However, with demand now rising, response times are also trending upwards again, and we continue to see notable differences by incident type and variation by district.

Pre lockdown, there had been a shift in the grading profile from prompt to immediate. That profile changed in April and May, with a notable increase in prompt graded incidents. This was linked to a high number of reports of people breaching social distancing restrictions, but was short lived, with the proportion of response incidents graded for an immediate response in June approaching levels similar to those seen pre lockdown. This will have implications on the availability of resources to attend prompt graded incidents, and remain a key inhibitor to achieving sustainable improvements.

4.2 National Context

4.2.1 On 17th July 2020, the ONS (Office for National Statistics) released crime figures for the 12 months ending March 2020¹. This contained data from both the Crime Survey for

¹<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/bulletins/crimeinenglandandwales/yearendingmarch2020>

England and Wales (CSEW) and police recorded crime figures. The latter will have captured the start of restrictions imposed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic (12th – 31st March), and the first 8 days of lockdown (23rd – 31st March), but ONS estimate that this will have had a marginal effect of the yearly figure.

- 4.2.2 Nationally, whilst overall levels of crime as reported by CSEW had been broadly stable in recent years, latest estimates showed a 9% fall year on year. There were reductions across the majority of crime types, but the most notable decreases were in theft offences (12%) and criminal damage (13%). However, due to coronavirus and the necessary change to the Crime Survey methodology² to allow researchers to adhere to social distancing guidelines, it will not be possible to say whether this decrease would have come to represent a change in the longer term trend.
- 4.2.3 In contrast, national police recorded data for the period April 2019 – March 2020 showed a 1.4% rise in overall crime, but the rate of growth has continued to slow. While burglary offences were down by 9% and the number of vehicle offences remained stable, there were increased in the number of offences involving knives or sharp instruments (6%), robbery (6%), violence against the person (7%) and stalking and harassment offences (12%).
- 4.2.4 Police recorded crime in Cambridgeshire increased by 5.1% in the 12 months to March 2020; the 10th highest increase nationally. While this is being predominantly driven by an increase in violence without injury and stalking and harassment offences, the overall crime rate per 1,000 population in Cambridgeshire remains lower than the national average, and comparable to the regional average.

4.3 Performance Headlines and Department Updates

- 4.3.1 Call volumes continue to trend upwards, but have yet to return to pre-COVID levels. While grade of service and average wait times are improved in comparison to recent months, they remain prone to fluctuation, with spikes in the number of web chats received often coinciding with periods of higher call demand.
- 4.3.2 Crime levels are also trending upwards, but to a large extent remain suppressed by ongoing lockdown restrictions, with 14.8% less crime recorded in June than the same month last year. However, there are early indications of trend normalisation in some offence types; this includes domestic abuse, rape, violence against the person and public order offences. We anticipate further increases, across a broader range of crime types, as restrictions are further relaxed and economic activity resumes.
- 4.3.3 Some offences committed during lockdown will not as yet have been reported, either because they are only now coming to light, or because victims have had limited access to reporting channels, this includes burglary, domestic abuse and child abuse. This will also impact on levels of future demand.
- 4.3.4 The rolling 12 month prosecution possible outcome rate continues to improve, rising to an 18 month high of 12.4%, with improvements seen across the majority of crime types. Higher numbers of Community Resolutions continue to influence the direction of travel, but an increase in the use of Adult Cautions was also noted last month. These improvements remain largely attributable to the work of the Out of Court Disposals

² With effect from 21st May 2020, the Crime Survey changed from a face to face survey to a telephone survey

(OOC) team, and two additional posts have now been agreed to meet the growing national requirement to maximise use of out of court disposals.

- 4.3.5 Live investigative workload increased for the second consecutive month, but there were almost 1,000 fewer crimes at the end of June than at the end of March. While workload in the IMU (Investigation Management Unit) has increased, this has not resulted in any sustained backlogs and does not currently appear to be negatively impacting on throughput. However, with demand trending upwards, a trial involving IMU Assistants taking on the IMU mailbox should have a positive impact on QA and linking capacity at the end of the initial training period.
- 4.3.6 Custody capacity is now back to pre-COVID levels. However, an increase in the number of people charged and detained for court is leading to capacity challenges in the first half of each day, with use of virtual courts meaning that remanded detainees are inevitably occupying cell space for longer.
- 4.3.7 Plans to drive up data quality focus on three key areas: supervisory reviews, Victim Care Contracts (VCC) compliance and suspect categorisation. All three areas show improvement since the start of lockdown, across the majority of crime types.
- 4.3.8 Improved suspect categorisation has enabled a much better assessment of risk and a clearer picture of the volume of work outstanding. Improved supervisory oversight will be ensuring blockages to throughput are identified, remedial work talked, and officers offered support and guidance. Higher levels of VCC compliance are likely to lead to higher levels of victim satisfaction and victim engagement. However, there has to be a longer term change in culture and embedding of these principles into business as normal if improvements are to be sustained.

5. Priority Updates

5.1 Domestic Abuse

- 5.1.1 Prompt grade response performance has improved when compared to pre-lockdown attendance times. It nevertheless remains challenging and continues to trend upwards as demand increases. Non availability of resources is a key inhibitor to improvement, and remains consistently higher for domestic incidents than for most other incident types.
- 5.1.2 A significantly higher number of incidents have been closed as domestics in each of the last two months; the highest single month figures ever recorded. Initially driven by an increase in verbal only domestics, we are now seeing an increase in the incident to crime conversion rate, particularly for incidents graded standard or high risk. We have also seen an increasing proportion of domestic incidents with a mental health qualifier since the beginning of lockdown.
- 5.1.3 Domestic Abuse offences continue to account for a higher proportion of total recorded crime than was the case pre lockdown, with crime levels still trending upwards. Whilst some of the increase in demand could be attributed to social isolation during the COVID-19 pandemic, this increasing trend is consistent with the pattern over recent years. However, a number of stakeholders and victim support charities are preparing for a significant peak in reporting in September when schools fully reopen and traditional reporting mechanisms are operating business as usual.

- 5.1.4 With effect from 1st July, all Domestic Abuse investigations will be allocated to a local supervisory review prior to filing. This will ensure an additional layer of scrutiny to address missed opportunities in respect of safeguarding, evidence led prosecutions and OOCs under the current allocations policy.
- 5.1.5 Work remains ongoing to align the Domestic Abuse crime allocation policy in North and South to provide a consistent approach across the Constabulary. This is now being progressed as part of a wider piece of work around roles, remits, capacity and capability locally. Once agreed, progress and the impact of changes will be tracked through the DA Delivery Group.
- 5.1.6 The rolling 12 months prosecution possible outcome rate has further improved, rising to 11.5%, with a high number of charges in recent months. 51 crimes have been filed using outcome 22 'Diversionary, educational or intervention activity being undertaken' in the last 5 months; there had been little use of this outcome prior to them. Over the longer term, the proportion of crimes filed due to evidential difficulties with the victim unsupportive of police action remains high, but stable.
- 5.1.7 The CARA (Conditional Cautioning and Relationship Abuse) Programme is available to be used in medium and standard risk cases of intimate partner violence. Managed by the OOC Team, it aims to help perpetrators understand the impact of their behaviour in order to prevent repeat abuse. While the programme was suspended due to COVID, it has recently been relaunched with 1-2-1 interventions. A similar programme is being developed for non-intimate family related violence. This will be aimed at diverting those who display violence within the family home away from becoming perpetrators of domestic abuse in the future.
- 5.1.8 The Constabulary (through the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) and the Victim and Witness Hub) continue to work in partnership with a number of agencies to support victims of domestic abuse. There has been national concern from a number of support networks that services for victims have shut down during lockdown, leaving them feeling unsupported and isolated. The Constabulary have implemented a number of measures to address this. This includes the development of 'safe spaces' in supermarkets, chemists and GP surgeries; Facebook surgeries; and use of Constabulary Social Media accounts to promote reporting and support measures.
- 5.1.9 The Constabulary has been piloting a partnership with DA Alliance, giving victims access to legal services for advice, guidance and non-molestation orders. 171 victims were referred over the review period, and 120 of those engaged with. The Constabulary are now working with DA Alliance with a view to rolling this out across the Constabulary.
- 5.1.10 The Constabulary also continues to pilot the 'Bright Sky' phone app. Developed by TecSOS, it provides supportive information and reporting tools to victims, and contains a safeguarding button which allows users to quickly disguise their activity in the form of weather app. A full review will be taken to the Change Board, along with a plan for forcewide rollout.
- 5.1.11 Following a recruitment drive, the number of DA Champions has now increased to 50 across the Constabulary. Champions are pioneers for DA within their teams and form an information sharing network aimed at providing frontline staff with the necessary

skills to effectively tackle abuse through positive intervention and appropriate disposal.

- 5.1.12 Since legislation went live in April 2020, two applications have been made for Stalking Protection Orders and both remain in the court process. Applications are considered by the Head of Protecting Vulnerable People to provide consistent decision making, and high performing forces nationally are being contacted to identify good practice.

5.2 Child Abuse and Child Exploitation

- 5.2.1 The number of child sexual abuse offences remains prone to fluctuation, but the long term upward trend continues. This is in line with the general longer term trend of increased demand in child abuse (sexual and physical) and child exploitation, driven by greater awareness of the signs and symptoms of abuse and exploitation.
- 5.2.2 It is anticipated by all professionals across the partnership and nationally there will be a significant spike in demand in autumn when the schools and other services return to more normal services. As a partnership we are working to ensure effective support and referrals mechanisms. However, there are concerns that this spike will add significant pressure across the partnership given that levels are already returning to pre lockdown levels.
- 5.2.3 The rolling 12 month prosecution possible outcome rate for Child Sexual Abuse offences remained stable at 14.0%; higher than both the year end benchmark and the equivalent period last year. However, this is also prone to fluctuation with lower numbers of offences, and investigations which are typically lengthier and inherently more complex than other crime types.
- 5.2.4 The number of missing children reports fell when social distancing restrictions were first implemented, but numbers have since increased and are now approaching levels similar to those seen pre lockdown. However, the number of children in care reported missing remains low.
- 5.2.5 The Missing, Exploited and Trafficked Hub (METHub) have engaged with 89 young people so far in 2020; a slight increase compared to 2019. What is encouraging is the amount of positive interactions being completed with a number of previously disengaged young people. The team continue to work in partnership with stakeholders to safeguard young people through intervention and diversion.
- 5.2.6 The Child Abuse Investigation Safeguarding Unit (CAISU) continue to explore the use of innovative measures to monitor those who pose the greatest risk to children. In the past month, a number of Sexual Risk Orders and Child Abduction Warning Notices have been served. Perpetrators of low level offences have also been referred to the OOC team for diversion programmes.
- 5.2.7 The MASH continues to operate as normal in processing 101s, 102s and Domestic Abuse, Stalking and Honour Based Violence (DASH) referrals with no current backlog. This is in contrast to a number of other forces around the country, with a number reporting significant backlogs and engagement challenges with partners. Whilst this may appear as business as normal Cambridgeshire continues to protect its' most vulnerable people in extremely challenging circumstances and this should not be overlooked.

5.3 Serious Sexual Offences

- 5.3.1 The number of Serious Sexual Offences returned to pre-COVID levels last month, driven by an increase in the number of reported rapes. This is not unexpected, as national data indicates rape to be one of the crime types where trend normalisation is being seen; however, this did include a high number of historic reports.
- 5.3.2 The rolling 12 month prosecution possible outcome rate for all Serious Sexual Offences continued to improve, increasing to 7.3%. The rolling 12 month rate for rape remained stable at 3.5%, with the recent increase in reporting influential.
- 5.3.3 While there has been evidence of improvements in throughput and supervisory oversight during lockdown, the introduction of Specially Trained Officers (STOs) has also added significant value to the investigation process in recent months, with STOs managing all victim contact within the Rape Investigation Team. This has led to improved levels of VCC compliance, and has had a positive impact on victim engagement, with Cambridgeshire currently the only force in the East of England Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) region where levels of disengagement among rape victims are in decline.
- 5.3.4 A regional strategic working group has been set up between the police and Rape and Serious Sexual Assault Unit (RASSO) with the aim of identifying opportunities to develop the regional joint response. This has led to improvements in processes such as Early Advice.
- 5.3.5 Scrutiny panels have been established between the Rape Investigation Team (RIT), CAISU and relevant partners, including the Independent Sexual Violence Advocate (ISVA) service and CPS. These seek to establish reasons for disengagement or case discontinuance and identify learning for the future. Police are also working with the CPS to address inconsistencies in decision making from RASSO.

6. Recommendation

- 6.1 The Board is recommended to note the contents of this report.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Source Documents	Police and Crime Plan http://www.cambridgeshire-pcc.gov.uk/police-crime-plan/
Contact Officers	Neil Stacey, Strategic Analysis Manager, Strategic Analysis Team