

Now that our Response Function has been devolved locally, including the incorporation of the Force Support Unit, the focus is to embed the post-Commonwealth Games and Data Analytics Lab learnings into the local operating model. The new operating model enables Local Policing Commanders greater flexibility to use their officers and staff to respond to local needs. This includes responding to calls for service from the public. Accountability and responsibility for incident response and associated decision-making now sits with Local Commanders.

It is our intention that moving more officers to be physically present in neighbourhoods will naturally prevent and deter more crime and over time, reduce the number of incidents requiring a response - particularly lower level criminality.⁸ Whilst we do not expect major changes in our requests for service profiles immediately, we do expect, particularly in the next 6-12 months, our newly qualified officers to take longer to deal with incidents. Officers will be required to take on a wider range of tasks including investigations and responding. As a result, it is anticipated we will see some shift in productivity in some areas whilst staff become increasingly confident and competent. It will be for the LPAs to manage all resources available to ensure there is minimal impact on response time or volume of incidents managed.

As an organisation we are expecting to see an increase in requests for service relating to mental health. The cost of living crisis combined with increasing service pressures on other agencies such as the NHS, mental health charities and social care is likely to increase the number of P1, P2, P3 and P7 logs in relation to mental health incidents the organisation needs to attend. Due to the nature of these cases with the high risk of harm, assessment paperwork, detaining and supporting at hospitals, officers spend much longer (in some cases up to 12-24 hours post-incident) with some patients. This inevitably puts pressure on the number of remaining officers available to respond to further incidents and sometimes means we are unable to respond appropriately to calls from the public for policing services.

The changes to our operating model coupled with increasing policing support for mental health service requests that means whilst the new model embeds and the uplift in core responding staff continues, there will be an expectation that staff from other functions on the LPAs will and are being deployed to answer calls for service. There will be a broader pool of staff available to assist in meeting our SLA of 15 minutes for P1 calls, 60 minutes for P2 and 24 hours for P3 calls. Once the staffing levels within our local responding functions reach their optimum around November 2023. The requirement to deploy staff from other functions to achieve our SLA will diminish and will reduce impact on the roles they perform. In doing this every effort is made to ensure non-responding staff are attending calls that are, where possible, linked to their core role.

Workforce and Assets

Our relatively new workforce means that a large proportion of officers do not have a great deal of experience in incident response, however, Force Response did have a higher than average percentage of experienced staff than some other functions.⁹ Before April, student officers would experience Force Response as a rotational placement but the intention is that all new officers will start on a local response function. The change to a local model and pooling of new resources means each LPA will have more staff with a broader skills-set to distribute where needed. However, over the next 6-12 months while newer officers gain skills and experience such as improved driving grades, the majority may not be able to respond to an incident as fast as they will be able to in the future. In order to mitigate this risk, the LPA duty officer will be required to effectively deploy and manage resources to ensure we are utilising officers effectively and responding swiftly.

Whilst it is recognised that there may be some variation in approach with a localised model, strong central governance and consistent performance management information and expectation will

⁸ Chapter 4 covers this topic in more detail.

⁹ See chapter 11b for further detail on our workforce demographic profile.

mitigate against inconsistent levels of service delivery. Whilst LPA Commanders will have an increased amount of flexibility to manage local priorities, Local Policing continues to operate as a single portfolio, coming together as a single command team weekly and in a formal governance board monthly. A strong desire and commitment to work as a single team is already apparent and is a clear expectation set by the Chief Constable. In addition, each Commander and their Senior Leadership Team (SLT) members are all Subject Matter Experts (SME), taking responsibility to lead where necessary on important pieces of work for their peers and the organisation, ensuring efficient use of our senior leadership resources but also consistency and the sharing of good practice and innovation across all of the LPAs.

Indirectly affecting our workforce is our wider partner's ability to sufficiently cope with the increasing number of mental health incidents. Our Data Analytics Lab (DAL) recently conducted a sample analysis of 999 calls where mental health was a factor, the results found when we applied the Right Person Right Care framework decision making we would not have deployed to 37% of the incidents reviewed.¹⁰ While all officers are equipped to attend and respond to these types of incidents with the support of our mental health tactical advisors, officers are aware they are available and can give advice. In addition, each LPA has a referral process.¹¹

Projects and Initiatives

The operating model change offers us a number of opportunities to offset the increased areas of policing activity we foresee over the next 12 months. Commanders will be able to respond to changes in local priorities by agile distribution of their workforce to the roles or geographic areas under greatest pressure and local need and priority. In the initial implementation months, we are aware of the increased responsibilities placed on our SLTs. This is particularly pertinent in the newly merged Birmingham area due to its sheer geographic size and scale. To ensure all requests for service can be appropriately responded to, 100 of the 220 staff from FSU were distributed to Birmingham.

In a similar thread, the nature of our local model means that in the coming years, with targeted upskilling, officers will be more equipped to not only respond to an incident but use their enhanced local knowledge to have a better awareness and ability of how to prevent a crime from happening again.¹² A key activity will be utilising those officers who have moved from Force Response to act as subject matter experts for dealing with requests for service such as domestic abuse and assist their colleagues who may be less experienced in responding to various incidents.

Efficiencies will be made in officers' mobility between jobs. Over the next year we have committed to more technology equipment and upgrades to our CONNECT system which we envisage will enable officers to crime incidents remotely. It is hoped this will remove the need to return to the station therefore allowing greater productivity for our staff. It is predicted to increase the number of jobs they can attend to in a given day, currently on average officers attend 2.88 for a double crew and 1.71 for a single crew closed in a day respectively. Whilst we have not been able to model this yet through our Data Analytics Lab due to the number of variables, we do know that due to lack of mobility across the organisation and access to desk top computers at peak times this is slowing our service offer. We are therefore, rolling out laptops to front line officers to enable them to log incidents in situ and remove the requirement to return to a station. This will assist in improving our ability to resolve incidents in real time and assist with the availability of officers to respond efficiently.

In addition, careful management and use of the P1-P9 grading assessment framework will ensure incident response is prioritised by the greatest public need rather than subjective judgement. WMP

¹⁰ For information in how WMP intends to implement the Humberside model see chapter 12.

¹¹ More information on how our workforce have been upskilled to become better in dealing with mental health incidents can be read in chapters 2 and 4.

¹² More detail on how we plan to upskill our officers in the next 12-24 months can be found in chapter 11b.

plans to focus on the time it takes to respond to a call for service in our performance management framework and to identify any significant inconsistencies from area to area. Our smaller geographic areas like Dudley where we expect greater variation in our peaks in calls for service are likely to be disproportionately more challenging on resource distribution than larger LPAs with greater resources. In the next 12 months we will continue to assess our incident response performance.

WMP will continue to appropriately manage our mental health driven calls for service through partnership working. Over the course of 2023, we are implementing our “Right Care Right Person” programme. This is an operating model for Police and Partners, to ensure health calls for service are responded to by those with the right skills and expertise to provide the best possible service for the public.¹³

Forward Look

Our ambition over the next three years is to increase public trust and confidence focusing on improving our community’s perception of us as an organisation and delivering a locally focussed service. Responding to calls from the public will continue to be a priority as it is fundamental to build confidence in our local communities that we respond quickly and effectively to their needs.

It is accepted that it will take time for the new operating model to truly embed into our business and for us to fully optimise the benefits that it will bring for the public, however, since April 2023 we have already seen greater than expected uplift in our responding performance. We have seen that calls for service are being appropriately prioritised, risk is being managed effectively and resources are being deployed efficiently with response times across all three P grades improving. Whilst we continue to learn and improve we are optimistic about how the new operating model, coupled with continued investment in our IT equipment, will enable the organisation to provide a better quality and faster service to the public.

Moving to a localised model has already started to demonstrate the benefits of an increased local presence. As we move to even more local response bases over the next few months our visibility, and the associated benefits, will increase further. This will enable us as an organisation to better understand and respond to local priorities, and as such, be better able to deliver a more effective service focused on local needs which in turn, will, we hope, improve trust and confidence.

¹³ See chapters 3a and 12 for the more information on this programme.

4: Prevention and Deterrence (Neighbourhood Policing)

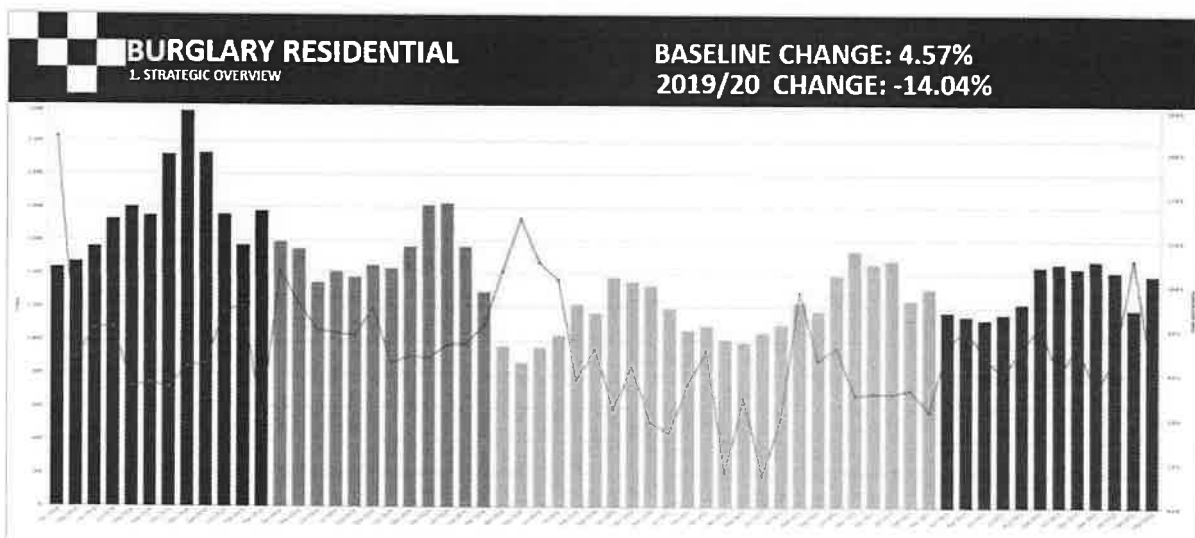
Executive Overview:

The new operating model has improved West Midlands Police's (WMP) ability to engage with communities and improve trust, confidence and legitimacy in policing. The development of a Neighbourhood Policing Strategy is underway which will provide a clear offer to communities of what to expect from local neighbourhood policing teams. Neighbourhood Policing (NHP) continues to focus on embedding and integrating the seven NHP guidelines, with a continuing emphasis on a place-based approach to policing, as well as an improved problem-solving response to managing entrenched issues and long-term problems. The officer uplift secured across NHP will further enhance our problem-solving capability. It will provide dedicated resource working with schools and early help to reduce criminal exploitation and youth violence. As an organisation, we will be working with our partners closely through a number of initiatives to ensure a preventative approach is taken to anti-social behaviour as well as upskilling our officers in managing trauma and utilising new technologies such as QR codes to learn from our interactions with the public.

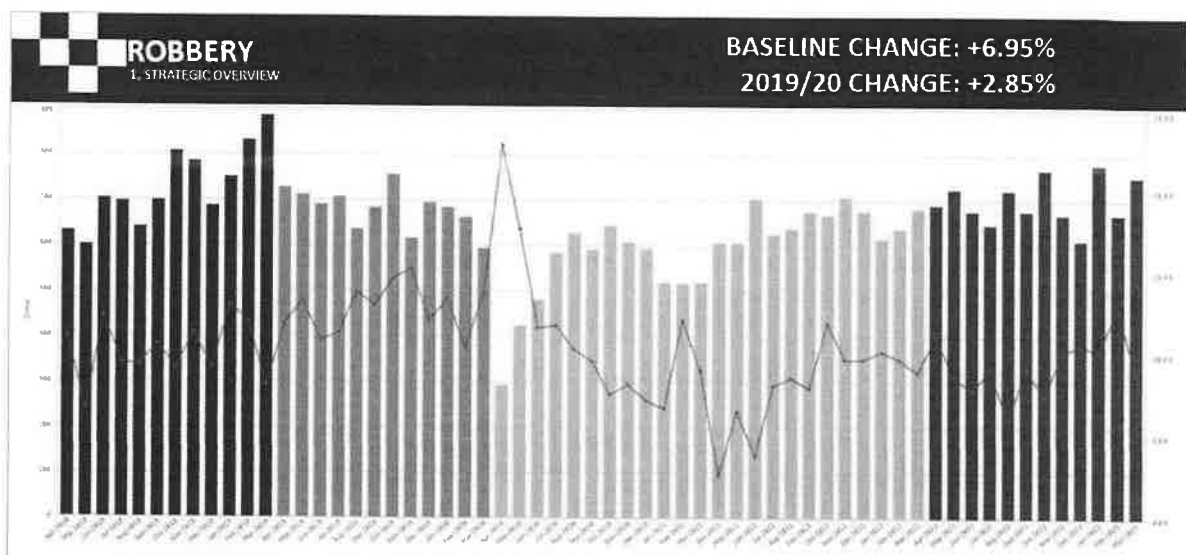
Current and Future Demand

The changes to our operating model offer a wide range of opportunities to prevent and deter crime and increase public confidence in policing which will increase our performance against the National Crime and Policing Measures. Within the seven Local Policing Areas (LPA) there are now more officers locally based and serving our communities. It is expected that having a greater physical presence in our communities will lead to greater disruption to criminals and reassure the public. It is acknowledged that greater engagement with communities may lead to increased reporting to officers and police community support officers.

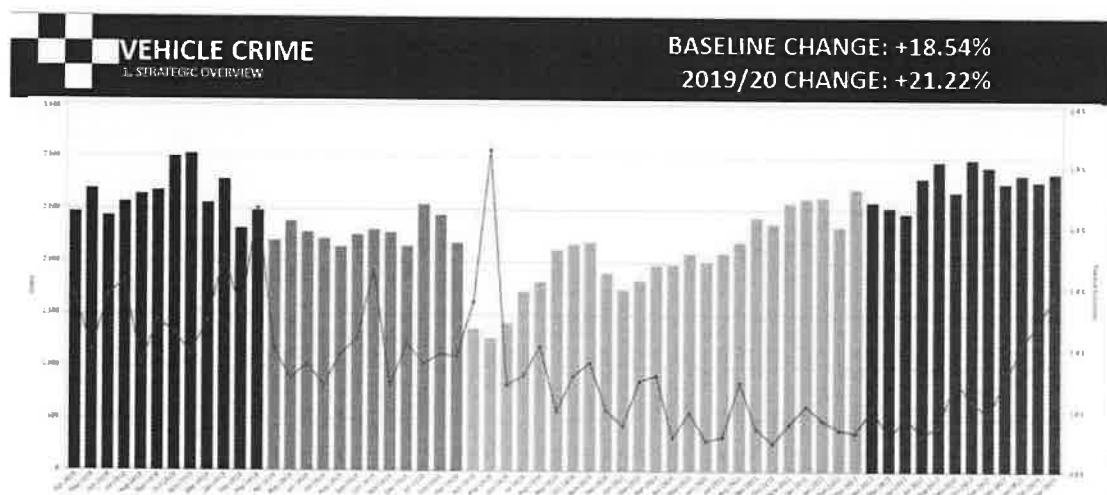
Against the 2021-22 baseline Burglary, Robbery, Vehicle Crime and Theft from Person were impacted in the following:



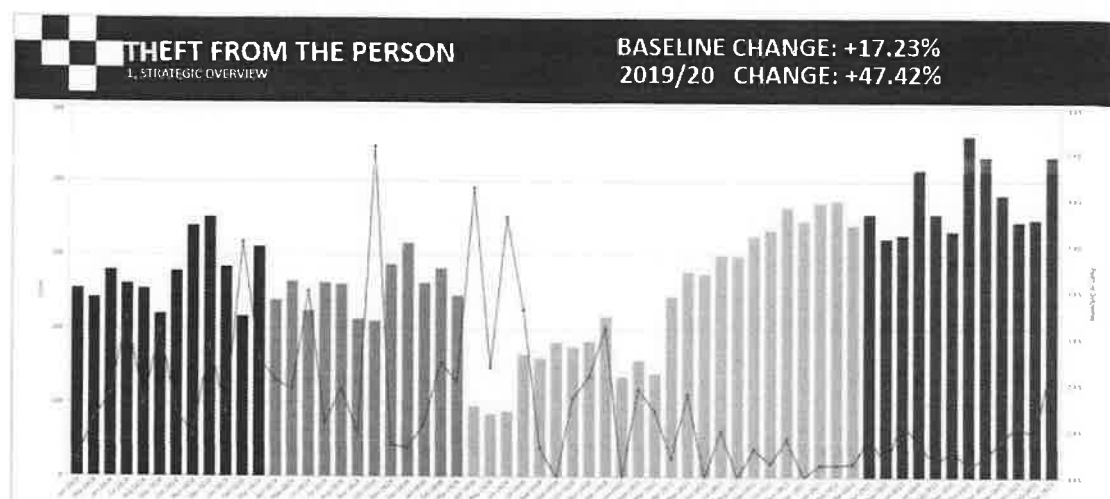
Burglary Residential has seen a 4.57% increase with offences at a monthly average of 1,300. This is increased on the position for the previous two years for March but remains lower than March 2019. Compared with 2019-20, Burglary Residential is 14.04% reduced with 1,294 recorded offences in March 2020 and 1,396 recorded Mar 2023. The monthly average for 2019-20 was 1,520 offences.



Robbery has seen an 6.95% increase with offences at a current monthly average of 697 which is now higher than pre-pandemic levels. Offences reached a new peak in January 2023 with 782 offences recorded.

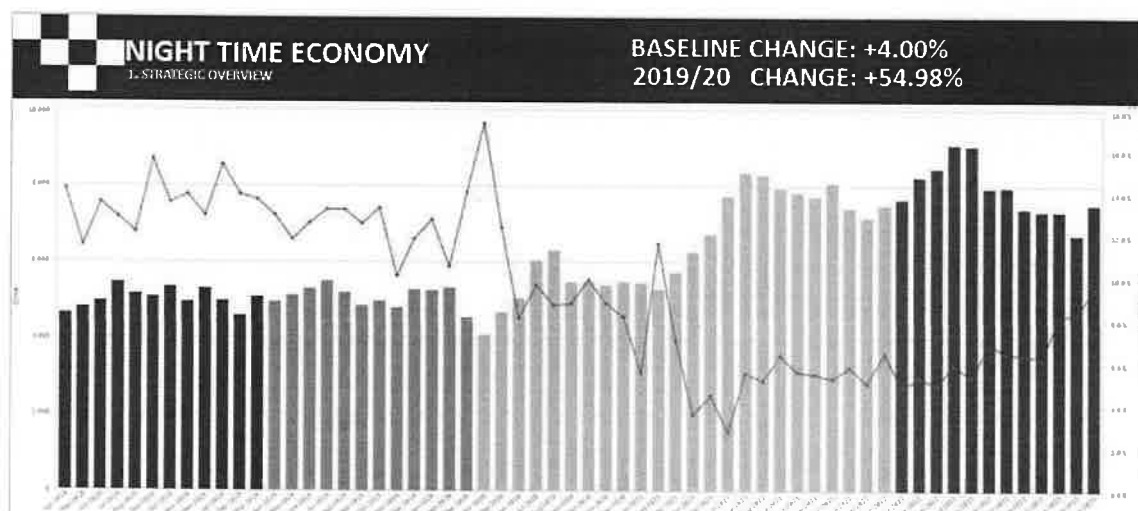


Vehicle Crime has seen an 18.54% increase with offences at a current monthly average of 2,756 and continues to increase well above pre-pandemic levels. Offences reached a new peak in August 2022 with 2,967 offences recorded. The pattern of recording in all performance years has been on an upward trajectory and as such this has impacted on seasonality with no seasonal trends identified yet.



Theft from the Person has seen a 17.23% increase and offences have a monthly average of 372. The peak in offences occurred in October 2022 with 462 offences. The greatest number of offences have taken place in Birmingham. The pattern of recording in all performance years has been on a downward trajectory and places theft from person below its current process average.

Since the Covid pandemic, changes have been identified in the night-time economy, with a more confrontational environment than before coupled with younger members of the public preferring to stay in to drink alcohol at home. Against the 2021-22 baseline, offences committed within the night time economy have increased by 4%. Offences have a monthly average of 7,893. The peak in offences occurred in July 2022 with 9,093 offences. Many of our newer officers joined during the pandemic are now starting to experience the challenges of the night-time economy. Additionally, the hospitality sector does not have the staff experience it did before. It is often police who have to respond, which has increased our calls for service.



From a prevention and deterrence service provision, there are an increasing number of initiatives that aim to deflect calls for service by focusing on neighbourhood activity and engaging with local communities. An example of this is the Community Initiative to Reduce Violence (CIRV) which goes live in both Coventry and Wolverhampton in May 2023 and will run at least until August 2025. It has received £2.3m funding from the Home Office, £1m in evaluation costs and £4m in investment directly from West Midlands Police. CIRV is primarily designed to engage anyone of any age and connect them to an exit pathway from gangs, violence and county lines. It coordinates disruptive, rehabilitative and preventative activities for those who are primarily adults and who are criminally active yet fail or refuse to engage. WMP have capacity for approximately 800 unique individuals each year over both sites. The fully integrated service offer means for the first time, disruption and support can be carefully coordinated and choreographed consistently. There will be two distinct groups moving through the intervention. The first group (trial one) which is subject to a randomised control trial, is made up from the individuals already linked to violence and organised crime at a mid to senior level with a history of weapons possession or violence. The second group (trial two) is based on referrals from partner agencies and looks for lower to mid-level individuals that are not necessarily on police systems but have indicators that they are predicated to violence. A robust multi-agency selection panel will then select those suited to the programme and these individuals form trial two. Both trial one and trial two will be subject to a rigorous randomised control trial funded through the Home Office and Youth Endowment Fund. Whilst focussed deterrence strategies have been undertaken several times across the globe, it has never been evaluated to this extent or duration so the outcomes of the study have international connotations for best practice in the field of violence prevention and suppression.

We predict, based on prior programme evaluation, it is unlikely to reduce policing activity overall, however what it is intended to do is reduce the workload associated with responding to crimes by diverting the policing resources to neighbourhood activity moving WMP from reactive response to proactive policing.

In addition, we are seeing increased appetite for community-based activities in the Violence Reduction Partnership (VRP) arena. To comprehensively address and reduce serious violence is one of the National Crime and Policing Measures and it necessitates a longer-term, targeted approach. The VRP focuses on understanding the root causes of the problem and then on testing, evaluating and upscaling interventions. Some of the prevention activities involve the whole community whilst others are focused on supporting those most likely to be affected by violence.

Our dedicated Project Guardian team continue to deliver positive results in respect of Youth Violence and Knife Crime. Year to date, there has been a 9.1% reduction in youth violence with injury and 29% reduction in under-25 knife use causing injury. We are one of 18 forces in the country who have secured Home Office "GRIP" funding which we will invest over the next three years in further activities to reduce youth violence. It is acknowledged that the ambition to reduce violence and secondarily reduce pressure placed on our teams, is not going to be achieved quickly, it will take time and may, in the short-term, bring increased workload for policing and partners.

Workforce and Assets

After an organisation-wide effort focused on recruitment, we have now reached our national uplift officer numbers. Following further Home Office funding secured at the beginning of 2023, the organisation has increased its officer numbers by a further 100 officers, to a total of 4113. There has been a reduction of PCSO numbers but this will be offset by the increased officer workforce. As per the national trend, we are entering a heightened period of retirements and while we can project rough numbers of officers exiting the organisation, the delivery of the Uplift programme has put us in a stronger than expected position. We are preparing for an increasing pool of younger, less experienced

staff (our current headcount of student officers is 1,881) to maximise the opportunities this provides while addressing any skills gaps.¹⁴

Establishment (FTE)¹⁵

Local Policing Portfolio	Police Officer	Police Staff	PCSO	Specials	Grand Total
Birmingham LPA	1873.3	62	150	-	2085.3
Coventry LPA	497	5	58	0	560
Dudley LPA	320.5	4	46	0	370.5
Sandwell LPA	411	4	54	0	469
Solihull LPA	245	3.82	38	0	286.82
Walsall LPA	325.5	5	44	0	374.5
Wolverhampton LPA	429	7	62	0	498
Integrated Offender Management	12	21	-	-	33
Grand Total	4113.3	111.82	452	0	4677.12

Strength (FTE)

Local Policing Portfolio	Police Officer	Police Staff	PCSO	Specials	Grand Total
Birmingham LPA	1744.49	49.97	115.41	0.00	1909.86
Coventry LPA	436.88	7.01	38.60	0.00	482.50
Dudley LPA	333.87	7.02	32.78	0.00	373.68
Sandwell LPA	403.88	9.48	39.16	0.00	452.53
Solihull LPA	253.86	6.73	27.40	0.00	287.99
Walsall LPA	329.38	8.00	31.96	0.00	369.34
Wolverhampton LPA	462.48	6.75	42.88	0.00	512.11
Integrated Offender Management	8.00	16.05	-	-	24.05
Grand Total	3972.84	111.01	328.20	0.00	4412.05

Community Engagement

In relation to community engagement we have a large pool of Key Individual Networks (KIN), Street Watch, Neighbour Watch and other community volunteers to work with local teams to support policing activity.

- **StreetWatch** – we have 186 groups and 1355 adult volunteers supporting StreetWatch activity force wide, these are in all LPAs in the force.

¹⁴ For analysis on how our newer officers will be equipped to respond to requests for service see chapter 3b. For information on our Learning and Development offer and how we will achieve our ambition to be an employer of choice see chapter 11b.

¹⁵ These figures were accurate at the time of writing in April 2023.

- **Chaplains** – we have 94 volunteer chaplains who support the organisation. They are from all faiths and are spread force-wide. They are aligned to LPAs and supporting local policing and the wider organisational functions.
- **Volunteers** - we have 330 additional volunteers who work in all areas of the organisation supporting policing. Some support directly in policing teams such as partnerships or forensics. Others support indirectly for example the dog breeding programme and the Force Museum.
- **Special Constable** - WMP has 264 Special Constables and have a targeted recruitment strategy to support Special Constables to join. We actively encourage females and individuals of colour to join the Special Constabulary and strive to ensure the Continual Professional Development (CPD) of our officers. They have full training and equipment to allow them to be deployed operationally within WMP. Their initial training is delivered over 12 weeks and they are attested as any other officer by a Justice of the Peace in a formal ceremony. Specials undertake to complete at least 16 hours of duties per month and last year the Specials in WMP devoted over 81,000 hours of volunteering to the force.
- **Cadets** – we have 148 volunteer cadet leaders operating in 24 Units with 462 Police Cadets. Police Cadets are young people aged 13-17 years old who meet weekly in Units and volunteer leaders deliver sessions and activities aligned to policing and community engagement. The Aims of the WMP Volunteer Police Cadets are: -
 - To promote a practical understanding of policing amongst all young people.
 - To encourage the spirit of adventure and good citizenship.
 - To support local policing priorities through volunteering and give young people a chance to be heard.
 - To inspire young people to participate positively in their communities.

Each LPA has Independent Advisory Groups, school panels and meetings with faith leaders to gather information and intelligence and participate in engagement and consultation activities. Before the changes to our operating model we allocated officers to focus on these activities and they have developed strong relationships with our partners. As of April, we still have these relationships but we have the addition of response officers and investigation teams now being placed in a defined LPA. The advantage of having a workforce with multiple operational backgrounds and length of service in the same geographic area means they can share knowledge and skills to connect the how and why a crime has occurred and gain a better understanding of what action is required to prevent or deter reoccurrence in the future.

Our officers are well placed to represent the neighbourhoods we serve due to their demographic profile. Year on year we have seen a rise in ethnic minority representation across all workforce types as demonstrated in the table below.¹⁶

Staff Type	Ethnic Minority Group %					
	Dec-22	Jan-22	Jan-21	Jan-20	Jan-19	Jan-18
Police Officer	13.70%	12.90%	11.90%	11.00%	10.50%	9.60%
Police Staff	17.70%	17.10%	16.00%	15.30%	13.70%	13.10%
PCSO	11.70%	11.10%	12.20%	13.60%	13.70%	12.60%
Specials	29.20%	27.20%	30.00%	29.10%	27.00%	27.20%
Force Total	15.30%	14.60%	13.70%	12.90%	11.90%	11.10%

¹⁶ See chapter 11b for further analysis into the demographic profile of our workforce.

A key ambition of our 2023-26 Strategic Plan is to increase confidence, community perceptions and trust in WMP. The use of Stop and Search (S&S) as a prevention and deterrent tactic is given a strong focus within the organisation to ensure officers use the power fairly and effectively. To govern this, monthly silver meetings review the Use of Force (UoF), Stop and Search and Section 60 stops across each business area focusing on disproportionately rates, types of force used, common themes and individual and organisational learning. There is a trigger review process in place that requires a supervisor review of body worn video for all black males aged 18-34 subject to a Stop and Search and of all children aged 10-13 years where police officers have used force. The quality and number of Use of Force form submissions is tracked and where data identifies operational performance or training issues positive action is taken to address this. Body Worn Video (BWV) usage is a key performance indicator in relation to UoF and BWV activation is tracked to ensure compliance. The recordings are scrutinised by various community groups, who can review videos of interactions and give feedback. Generally, the feedback is positive, which suggests that officers are effective in their communications with the public.

We are now in the 2nd year of our 3-year Professionalisation of Policing programme whereby local officers are recognised and respected for their discipline and we have used Neighbourhood Policing Week as an opportunity for greater media coverage. The strategy is going to be revised based on our changes to our operating model and the possibility of an accredited training programme is being explored to strengthen the programme further.

Projects and initiatives

Our service provision for prevention and deterrence often comes from collaborative working and the support of partners to effectively manage pressures placed on policing. The Trauma Informed Policing Programme (TIPP) is a continuing workstream that educates colleagues on how to identify and manage trauma when speaking with members of the public. Around 1600 colleagues across the portfolios have been trauma trained, with a target to train 400 more during 2023-2024, initially concentrating on investigators within the Force Criminal Investigation Department (FCID) and the Public Protection Unit (PPU) with a view to train further officers in LPAs. By adopting a trauma aware approach, we will be able to better understand why a person's situation has led them to ask for help from the police, or the circumstances behind their arrest. Linked to TIPP is the Right Care Right Person project which triages requests for mental health service to the most appropriate agency. A secondary benefit of this project is that policing associated with bed watches and welfare is likely to reduce and the individuals get the most appropriate help that they need.¹⁷ This will fundamentally change the police response to concerns for welfare, mental health incidents and missing persons by ensuring health calls for service are responded to by those with the right skills and expertise to provide the best possible service.

Linked to the public health approach to policing is our "Offender to Rehab" programme. Through proactive policing to meaningfully address underlying causes of prolific, repetitive, acquisitive crime, we navigate individuals to the best partner support, among various other measures. Following a successful pilot and being awarded the 2022 Howard League Community Award for Policing and Adults, funding has been secured to continue across Birmingham and the organisation has agreed to examine opportunities to roll out the programme across the whole force area.

There are a number of activities we continue to assess and refine with partners to improve the effectiveness of our response to anti-social behaviour (ASB). Primary actions include education, mentoring diversion activities and schools' panels to support people to change behaviour. Secondary activities relate to anti-behaviour contracts, Community Protection Warnings, Community Protection Notices, targeted visibility and Guardian patrols as well as our growing use of closure orders toward

residential addresses of ASB. We utilise other powers and civil orders under the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014. The support of the education sector is fundamental to our ability to identify, understand and then prepare for new and emerging trends affecting younger members of our society. We hold regular CPD events with school intervention and prevention officers to be more proactive in our approach to emerging trends and developing effective responses to them.

In addition to our collaborative working approach we have a number of new and ongoing workstreams internally to improve our capability and capacity to provide a better service to the public. To meet requests for service associated with the night time economy, we are working with security companies to support their teams with training in relation to behaviour management. We have a dedicated licensing officers on all LPAs who take a robust approach to alcohol licensing by ensuring officers are well informed and briefed and that venues holding licences know their responsibilities. Our use of civil powers continues to increase so that in the event of a crime occurring in a licensed or unlicensed venue we have a clear process whereby we work with local authorities to shut them before they can embed into the night time economy. This year there will be a Superintendent lead for alcohol harm reduction and licensing, to continue to strengthen and coordinate our approach in this area.

WMP have a number of important strategies including Serious Youth Violence, Homicide Prevention (currently awaiting final approval), Serious & Organised Crime and at the time of writing, we are working on a Neighbourhood Crime Strategy and Delivery Plan, Neighbourhood Policing Strategy and Neighbourhood Abstraction Policy. The purpose of these documents is to take a strategic lens to operational issues and understand the root causes in the West Midlands of certain thematic issues so that we can identify clear prevention and deterrence focussed objectives for the organisation to deliver. For example, as part of Operation Seclusion (our response to vehicle crime), we are working with other Forces and industry representatives to influence legislation in regard to the devices used to steal vehicles which are sold openly via the internet. Locally, we have built a strong relationship with Jaguar Land Rover and now conduct joint policing operations to target hot spot areas, using industry equipment to help identify when vehicles are 'tampered' with. As an example, our Thatcham Working Group will continue to evolve. The development of this group and the cross-agency relationships will be key to our response to tackling organised vehicle theft in the future.

The WMNow Strategy has been rolled out across all LPAs following the success of a pilot in Sandwell. This was built around the concept of using digital Key Individual Networks (KIN) to meet the growing number of conversations happening in private forms of social media and the new media and influencer media market growing. The next phase of this work will focus on building high quality digital KIN as part of Corporate Communications content strategy and influencer marketing approach and it will link with our community insight work. The #LetsTalkAboutPolicing social influencer campaign has entered the second phase of a year-long project to develop progressive conversations with young black people in the West Midlands about policing. It is anticipated that we will see increased levels of social participation and active citizenship will increase. We have planned further Impact Area conferences to share best practice and discuss topical issues to spark debate and ideas. To further increase participation of community groups and channels, the organisation intends to increase the number of bid applications to the Active Citizen Fund and improve accessibility for more communities.

In relation to Stop and Search, a system has been introduced so that the recipient of a search is now offered a QR code which they can use to give feedback on how they were treated. We are developing the approach to how we can use this data, but it is hoped that the process of offering the code will re-enforce to officers to consider the needs of the individuals they are dealing with and offer members of the public a voice. The organisation has written a new UoF policy which at the time of writing is awaiting final review from the Force Executive Team (FET). To continue to improve confidence that WMP operates fairly, we have launched new app for s163 traffic stops, this allows greater scrutiny of any disproportionality in the use of this power. The organisation is committed to ensuring that all our

officers communicate in a way that builds confidence and that they use powers confidently but without bias.

Forward look

WMP is well-placed in relation to this area of service, confirmed by the 'Good' grades in our latest PEEL inspection for both 'Preventing Crime and ASB' and 'Engaging with and Treating the Public with Fairness and Respect.' Retention of our existing workforce is crucial to ensuring we have the workforce we need to deliver an effective service.¹⁸ The organisation welcomes the development of the National Neighbourhood Output and Performance framework that we will embed over the coming years to improve how we measure our prevention and deterrence work so that benefits can be fully established, local officers get the recognition they deserve and it can help secure further funding to continue positive, upstream neighbourhood led policing and deliver a service the public want.

We recognise the socio-economic climate of the West Midlands region may worsen as a result of the cost of living crisis and that this may lead to further requests for service than already predicted and accounted for. We acknowledge our prevention and deterrence approach relies heavily on partners and any impacts on their budgets may affect the effectiveness of the programmes and work we have in progress. We are however confident that our strong internal governance such as monthly Performance Days, quarterly Strategic Tasking Coordination Groups (STCG) and other various governance forums along with our strong relationships with place-based and regional partners will allow us to closely monitor trends and changes, and if required escalate so effective mitigation can be put in place swiftly. The new operating model, launched in April 2023, has been an informed decision of the Chief Constable. It recognises these future issues and challenges, and enables the organisation to be best placed to respond swiftly and effectively to changing local and community issues.

¹⁸ Our retention activity can be found mainly in chapters 2 and 11b.

5: Investigations

Executive Overview:

The organisation has seen a significant change to how we investigate crimes – the new operating model allows West Midlands Police (WMP) to investigate a greater volume of offences, more effectively and efficiently. Local investigative teams now investigate a broader range of crimes, including neighbourhood crimes, whilst the central Major Crime Unit investigate the more complex and organised crime types. The allocation of crimes to local neighbourhood teams increases overall investigative capacity and capability whilst aligning local officers to local crimes.

The organisation has surpassed the target for officer uplift. To counter the known shortage of trained and accredited Detectives, a Detective Pipeline Strategy has been developed to identify internal talent and ensure a range of entry routes such as the DC Detective Degree Holder Entry Programme (DHEP) and DC Police Now. The strategy and subsequent delivery plan will ensure WMP has sufficient investigators to manage demand across all areas of investigation in the future, there continues to be sustained incremental improvements in positive outcomes against key crime types.

A new Digital Investigations Strategy will ensure appropriate training, equipment and coordination for investigators. This approach recognises the ever-increasing role of digital media, CCTV and telecoms data in our day-to-day investigations. Investments into Forensic Services and Case Management Units (CMU) will ensure files can be prepared swiftly and evidence provided at the earliest opportunity. WMP have recently opened an additional two custody facilities, ensuring more cell capacity is available across the force area, enabling frontline staff to progress investigations more efficiently.

Current and Future Demand

Over the past year, WMP has seen an increase in the intelligence and investigative demand associated with acquisitive and economic crimes, particularly vehicle and cyber-enabled crime.¹⁹ Resource investment over the last four years into identification of hidden crimes such as exploitation, modern-day slavery and child sexual exploitation (CSE) has generated further calls for service, referrals from partners and the identification of complex criminal networks. As discussed in other chapters, it is likely that the cost of living crisis will continue to have an impact linked on the volumes of acquisitive crime types and the economic impacts of unemployment and deprivation that typically act as drivers towards criminal behaviour.

Post-pandemic there has been a noticeable stabilisation and reduction in some traditional crimes like burglary. However, demand from an investigative perspective now exists more in the complexity of individual investigations as opposed to a higher volume of crimes.²⁰ With the rise of the digital world, the digital footprint of investigations has risen significantly – for one crime we can now have multiple CCTV viewpoints and digital device examinations. The new Digital Investigations Strategy will support officers ensuring they have access to training and equipment to support them in these types of investigations.

Serious youth violence (SYV) reached its peak in 2021-22 and began to fall after our investment into Project Guardian (our operational response to reduce SYV). As a result of this investment, we are now delivering benefits.²¹ We have utilised conditional cautions and out of court disposals as part of a

¹⁹ See chapter 4 for an analysis of burglary and vehicle crime.

²⁰ Further information the complexity demand of SOCEX crime can be found in chapter 8.

²¹ Evidence of these benefits can be found in chapter 4.

designed intervention package to reduce recidivism of child offenders. Similarly, a Homicide Problem Profile and Prevention Strategy have been written. Acknowledging the range of influences that contribute to homicide, the focus is on implementing a range of activities (undertaken by internal teams and in collaboration with partners) to reduce the volume of homicide and corresponding demand on investigative resources. In addition, we have seen significant investment into the County Lines Task Force with dedicated Digital Media Investigators (DMI), Digital Forensics and Financial investigators working alongside teams targeting the highest risk Organised Crime Groups (OCGs).²² The impact of this work has seen a reduction in the number of firearm discharges and homicides in the reporting period. We expect to realise the benefits of the investment we have delivered to reduce the prevalence of these crimes by end of 2023-2024.

Burglary Residential

Since the Covid pandemic there has been a societal shift with more people working from home, which has coincided with a reduction in burglary residential offences when compared to 2019 levels. WMP have seen a reduction of 16% since 2019 and it is anticipated that volumes of recorded residential burglary will now remain stable.

Hate Crime

Hate Crime saw significant increases during the various periods of lockdown, with a particular increase in offences committed online, but post-pandemic hate crime offences have begun to return to previous volumes. We anticipate this trend will continue until levels return to pre-existing levels.

Homicide

The number of homicides in WMP remain lower than previous years with 40 recorded in 2022-23. This represented an 18% reduction on the previous year. The positive outcome rate for homicide is currently stable at 95% for the period. Our work on homicide prevention and reducing SYV is key to the continued reduction of homicide. The Homicide Prevention Strategy is focused on the core drivers of and influences on homicide, those drivers are serious violence, organised crime, the drugs market and vulnerabilities. Key corresponding influences include propensity for youth violence, knives used as weapons, organised crime group/county lines membership and vulnerability-based challenges such as mental health.

Robbery

Recording of robbery offences have remained stable and are at levels similar to pre-pandemic. There have been incremental improvements in positive outcomes for robbery offences during the last reporting period. The tracking of stolen mobile phones remains a challenge to both robbery and theft from the person offences.

Serious Youth Violence (SYV)

WMP continues to face a challenge in terms of a shortage of qualified detectives and investigators. These challenges are particularly noticeable in the investigation of financial crimes and in relation to the review of mass digital media. Workforce strategy and planning seeks to ensure there is a balance of experience across investigative functions. By summer 2023, WMP will have reached the target numbers for the recruitment of Detectives and will continue to offer a Detective Academy to open up entry routes into investigations.

Vehicle Crime

²² More detail of the County Lines Task Force can be found chapter 8.

Like the majority of Police Forces, WMP is seeing significant increases in vehicle crime (a 19% increase on previous the 12-month period) which is linked to worldwide shortage of vehicle crime parts. Whilst a lot of effort has been put into preventative measures and there has been a significant upturn in detections, the volumes of recorded offences continues to rise. The organisation identified a Superintendent to lead on vehicle crime under the banner of Operation Seclusion. This has led to a more coordinated effort to disrupt these involved in organised vehicle crime but we are not seeing or forecasting a reduction in offences.

Workforce and Assets

WMP continues to face a challenge in terms of a shortage of qualified detectives and investigators. These challenges are particularly noticeable in the investigation of financial crimes and in relation to the review of mass digital media. Workforce strategy and planning seeks to ensure there is a balance of experience across investigative functions. By summer 2023, WMP will have reached the target numbers for the recruitment of Detectives, and will continue to offer a Detective Academy to open up entry routes into investigations.

In addition to our uplift programme, Special Constables innovatively receive bespoke training and work alongside Homicide teams. Training has been aligned to increase the number of DMI and Financial Investigators within WMP. This will create a tiered DMI capability across all investigation teams with central oversight to provide support and consistency. The formation of the major crime team has seen an uplift in dedicated resource for CCTV, DMI and Holmes support. This provides the organisation with specialist resource outside of the homicide department to enhance investigations into OCG violence, attempted murders and the criminal use of firearms.

The changes to our operating model have enabled the organisation to increase our investigative capacity and therefore improve positive outcomes for victims. There will be a larger number of officers engaged in the investigation of crime and management of suspects which enables local teams to investigate a broader range of offences. Training for officers engaged in investigations, but who work outside of core investigative functions, is being rolled out and the Force Criminal Investigation Department (CID) and the Public Protection Unit (PPU) are providing additional support to local officers as investigative work fully transitions.

To complement the above, the 'Management of Suspects Toolkit' has already been produced in collaboration between the PPU and FCID. This was delivered to supervisors through Continual Professional Development (CPD) sessions within the PPU and FCID during winter 2022-23. The toolkit has been adapted and amended to include changes to the Bail Act, and Code of Practice for Victims of Crime (VCOP) compliance. This includes guidance on how to record victim consultation and updates correctly. The toolkits provide a framework for the effective review of investigations, and gives supervisory guidance around the THRIVE assessment process as a mechanism of secondary risk assessment for all non-DA offences (all offences not covered by the Domestic Abuse Risk Assessment). A seminar will be held online to follow up the CPD sessions, and to support supervisors across WMP. Over the remainder of 2023, our efforts will be centred on ensuring all of the workforce now involved in investigations are capable and their CPD training needs are identified and actioned.

Projects and Initiatives

Work continues to improve the capacity and capability of our investigation function. Our Detective Academy is in its fifth year of functioning and is continuously assessed and refined to develop our approach to recruiting the next generation of detectives even further. This is going to have a positive impact on our ability to cope with the specific challenges outlined above in relation to demand.

WMP have continued to develop an investigative approach that seeks to prevent recidivism. Specifically, investigators are utilising out of court disposals in support of our wider preventing youth violence approach. Working with partners such as the Youth Offending Teams, we have ensured

appropriate support and diversion is delivered to young offenders. The Crime Free Programme has seen great success in both resolving over 1200 crimes of burglary and burglary-related offences and preventing prolific offenders from reoffending. WMP are investing additional posts in a dedicated out of courts disposal team, who will take all Out of Court Disposals (OCD) from investigative teams once the referral or diversionary activity is agreed. This will allow for greater consistency in the delivery of the OCD and release time for investigators to focus on progressing investigations.

Additionally, a Digital Centre of Excellence is being created, to bring together in one place resources from Digital Forensics, the Communications Data Intelligence Unit (CDIU), Internet Intelligence Investigation (III) and the central Digital Media Investigator functions. Additional investment is being made into a new Digital Scene Attendance and Triage capability which will reduce the time taken to provide investigators with the critical digital evidence they require to progress investigations.

The Digital Evidence Store (DES) was launched initially to 100 colleagues and then implemented in November 2022 to FCID, PPU, Response, LPAs, Operations, the Regional Organised Crime Unit (ROCU), the Central Motorway Policing Group (CMPG) and some roles in Force Contact. DES, an extension to the Body Worn Video (BWV) system evidence.com, will manage and store all digital evidence in a secure manner and allow safe electronic transfer of all digital data from collection to the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), through to disposal, in compliance with legislation. DES provides WMP with the ability to expedite the capture and transfer of vital evidence, creating a better citizen experience and greater opportunity to secure positive outcomes. It supports quicker charging decisions and reduces the time to perform investigations and bring offenders to justice. Moving away from storing evidence on hard media enables better and safer collaboration with partners and the public, as well as delivery of approximately £5 million worth of savings across a 6-year period.

Work continues to deliver a clear service offer for acquisition of data from a vulnerable victims' digital devices. It will reassure and increase satisfaction among victims by operating in a timely manner. To assist with understanding the levels of complaints and the quality of service issues from victims, a Standards Manager is embedded into the department to identify and share any common themes or areas of improvement and development.

To improve our effectiveness even further, WMP is in the process of designing a new Force CID model that will see dedicated reactive and proactive major crime teams working alongside homicide teams. The investigation of fraud and cybercrime will be enhanced as it forms part of the major crime command with dedicated specialist resources supporting them. The Initial Investigation Team and Locate will form part of the next stage of the operating model review, seeking to improve the timeliness of our initial investigations and the effectiveness of our work with missing people.

Implementing the ten year 'From Harm to Hope' drugs plan has improved our county lines approach to tackling reoffending. A crime managers meeting has been established to provide oversight, assess performance and identify any training needs quickly so that a solution can be implemented. This will be useful in ensuring a consistent level of service is provided across the West Midlands region despite the fact that different partnership funding arrangements exist between local areas for example Coventry compared to Birmingham.

Forensic Services

Demand from a forensic services perspective is likely to match the forecasting for the various crime types as Local Policing Areas focus on their local priorities. From a traditional acquisitive crime perspective, requests have remained fairly stable with the exception of an unpredicted increase in the volume of vehicle related crime.²³ On the digital side there remains a noticeable complexity in SOC

²³ See chapter 4 for an analysis of our plans to reduce vehicle related crime.

and homicide criminality whilst submissions for Indecent Images of Children continue to be submitted at a consistent rate.

With the uplift in police officers, the team are preparing for an increase in the requirements for drug analysis and drug expert witness reporting and will go live with an in-house drugs analytical laboratory, reducing our over-reliance upon external forensic marketplace and delivering a timelier service.

Over the last 12 months there has been further investment in Digital Forensics of eight posts with a further 10 resource uplift planned. To improve the sustainability of our digital capability, the Cloud is now being utilised for digital forensic storage, we use an electronic Go to Guide application for submissions based on a risk matrix and we have implemented an automated review tool. We are seeing a continual trend of increased kiosk use for examination of exhibits. There are instances of same day turn-round-time (TRT) for investigations who needed it (such as PACE clocks). This service has primarily been used by the PPU and Homicide for examination of devices belonging to suspects. While year-on-year 2022 has seen a 13.4% increase in exhibits, 31% of TRT work was completed in the same week as submission. We have a Digital Investigations Board that connects the work of the investigation and forensic teams.

Over the past year the vacancy rate within the forensic function has remained high as per the national trend. In Digital Investigation it has been around 40% at its highest point and there has been some challenges within Forensic Collision Investigators given the seven-year training timeframe. The organisation has invested a number of resources into recruitment including the utilisation of police officers and we now have the majority of roles filled. Our focus for the next year is to onboard, induct and provide training to the new members of staff so that we can sign-off their competency as soon as possible. This will increase the timeliness of particular digital investigations while ensuring each investigation follows the high-quality scientific process.

Despite various challenges, the forensic services offering remains in a strong position and on track to be accredited for the Forensic Science Regulations Act ahead of the October 2023 deadline. We remain active participants in the Forensic Collision Investigation Network to provide the various accreditations necessary to operate.

Criminal Justice Services (CJS)

The new operating model provides far-reaching developments to how the CJS department operates. Up until May 2023 we had four custody facilities staffed by 110 Custody Sergeants, 123 Detention Escort Officers (DEOs) and 68 Custody Officer Assistants (COAs). As of May 2023, we have opened an additional two custody suites at Bloxwich and Stetchford, to provide greater geographical coverage, limit travelling times post arrest and the ability to flex to ensure we can accommodate the increase in arrests we have seen since December 2022. Since the beginning of 2023, our average number of prisoners has increased by circa 20% from 800 arrests per week to 1000.

With these changes, and as a consequence of a large proportion of the custody block workforce joining the Police Uplift programme, there remain some challenges with vacancies. Throughout summer 2023, the priority is to increase external recruitment to the DEO role and ensure we have a pipeline of Custody Sergeants.

Case Outcomes & DG6

Our DG6 compliance has continued to improve over the past 12 months from around 20-25% to, in a more recent data set, achieving 48% compliance. Disclosure compliance remains around 78%. Significant work remains to improve the overall process and reduce rejections on Pre-Charging Decisions (PCD).

From a Case Management Unit (CMU) perspective, we are in the process of recruiting Case Progression Officers (CPOs), to support the provision of quality case files. The purpose of these

dedicated teams is to quality assure any files before they are submitted to the CPS. This should improve our triage rejection rate at PCD and then ultimately, our overall file quality. We are expecting outcome rates to increase as the quality of cases improves.

In respect of our Digital Remand courts on a Saturday, consultation was started in January 2022 and resulted in an agreed shift pattern change for CPOs which was amended in September 2022. Whilst waiting for the uplift in the team, we have used overtime to bolster the number of CPOs and comply with the process for digital remand courts.

Forward Look

Over the coming months and into 2024, the focus for our investigation teams is to fully embed and maximise the changes delivered by the new operating model. There is going to be a continued focus on the training and development of new and existing employees and the implementation of new initiatives so that, as an organisation, we can continuously improve our service offering to the public.

Any inspections or reviews into our performance that provide recommendations will be assessed and actioned. This includes the nine recommendations set from the recent HMIC thematic inspection on digital forensics.

6: Protecting Vulnerable People

This chapter will begin with an assessment of the overarching theme of vulnerability and then the main subsections will be segregated with an in-depth analysis of each category in isolation as opposed to presenting the information together.

The Public Protection Unit (PPU) has an established departmental structure with thematic Superintendent leads for Child, Adult and Complex (which incorporates the investigation of Rape and Serious Sexual Offences (RASSO)). The balance of investigations across Adult Abuse and Complex Teams is under review as part of the new operating model and WMP) is cognisant of the learning through Operation Soteria. The organisation has a Vulnerability Strategy that covers all strands of vulnerability. There is a Vulnerability Improvement Board chaired by a Chief Officer which monitors activity across these strands and each strand is led by a senior leader with minutes and action trackers. We continue to observe high levels of complexity when supporting those with wide- ranging vulnerabilities.

As will be outlined throughout the chapter, the organisation has a strong commitment to improving the skillset and knowledge of our teams so that they can better protect vulnerable people. A Skills Matrix Audit was completed early 2023 to understand what skills and training the PPU has across the department and to inform a training needs analysis which will drive the allocation of courses. From July 2022 to January 2023, 59 PPU officers and 21 Police Staff Investigators have passed the National Investigators Exam (NIE) and either been enrolled on or are in the demand for the Detectives Development Programme (DDP) course in the next financial year. Further recent changes include the publication of a New Starter induction pack on the intranet and change of shift patterns to ensure Child and Complex Officers have one Continual Professional Development (CPD) training day every six weeks.

Domestic Abuse

Over the past four years there has been a significant rise in recorded domestic abuse cases but over the past 12 months the volume of cases reported has begun to stabilise. Positive outcomes for Domestic Abuse (DA) offences have seen incremental improvements over the past 12 months. The department is building on this as it strives to improve positive Criminal Justice outcomes, increase receipts to the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) and improve the use of civil interventions. The PPU is supporting Local Policing Areas (LPAs) in upskilling their staff who will be investigating a proportion of lower risk DA cases under the new operating model. This will release capacity within the PPU investigation teams to focus on higher risk and more complex cases.

Domestic Abuse			
	Crime	Outcome	% Rate
19/20	41,627	3,978	9.56%
20/21	57,667	3,219	5.58%
21/22	67,680	2,243	3.31%
22/23 (31/03/23)	65,894	2,989	4.54%
Mar 23	5,285	392	7.42%

There has been a recent focus within the department to increase the number of Domestic Violence Protection Orders (DVPOs) and Domestic Violence Prevention Notices (DVPNs) used to manage offenders and safeguard victims where a positive CJS outcome has not yet been secured.²⁴ The Year to Date figures are provided in the following table:

YTD Summary				
Year	Central	Eastern	Western	Grand Total
2021 YTD	79	20	60	159
2022 YTD	33	24	36	93
2023 YTD	87	59	98	244

Since January 2023, the organisation has increased the number of arrests it is making in DA cases in order to maximise early investigative opportunities, safeguard victims and improve outcomes, as detailed in the below chart:

Month	No of Crimes	No of Arrests	Arrest Rate
October	5,377	1,495	27.80%
November	5,119	1,436	28.05%
December	5,405	1,480	27.38%
January	5,651	1,672	29.59%
February	4,954	1,645	33.21%
March	5,287	1,693	32.02%

As the organisation recognises that a CJS outcome isn't the only means of reducing vulnerability and safeguarding victims, the ambition is to increase the use of other alternatives and Out of Court Disposals (OCCD) including Office of Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) funded courses, conditional cautions and other civil interventions. These activities are necessary to better protect victims of Domestic Abuse, improve satisfaction among victims, encourage victims to report with confidence and to prevent and deter further abuse occurring.

The DA Desk has recently been brought under the management of the PPU. The staff on the DA Desk provide an initial virtual response to DA calls to service which are suitable to be managed over the phone or by video conference. DA desk staff will complete the initial investigation and safeguarding referrals. A recruitment process is underway to build the team to full strength and progress is being made on ensuring the technological platform is in place to allow the DA desk to function to its maximum capacity. The DA Desk will help to increase opportunities for Evidence Led Prosecutions, earlier safeguarding and intervention with partners to support victims. The creation of this has been supported by an uplift of 11 Sergeants and 45 Constables to the PPU establishment.

²⁴ Further detail on our investigative capability can be found in chapter 5.

As part of the change to the organisation's operating model, some lower risk DA crimes will now be investigated by LPA investigative functions. PPU DA teams will continue to investigate the higher risk, higher injury, stalking, repeat victim and serial perpetrator crimes, to ensure the effective management of risk, improve our service to victims, and provide the greatest rigour and scrutiny to the management of offenders. PPU will retain its Review and Allocation function which means that all DA crimes will be reviewed by the department regardless of where the investigation will ultimately sit. This will ensure there is consistency in ensuring the risk assessment is appropriate, investigative opportunities have been considered and appropriate safeguarding referrals have been made.

Governance for DA will remain within the PPU utilising the monthly DA performance and quality improvement meeting, as well as the department wide service improvement meeting. Where DA is dealt with locally, LPA crime manager's meetings will monitor performance and any issues will be escalated. Over the past 12 months we have seen an incremental increase in DA outcomes, DVPN applications, a reduction in outstanding suspects and a reduction in open investigations.

The organisation continues to chair the regional Multi-agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC). MARAC volumes have been exceptionally high and have caused significant pressure upon resources across the partnership, in addition to creating unsatisfactory delays for victims. After an in-depth review commissioned by the OPCC, MARAC will be moving to a triage model which seeks to minimise the duplication of discussion and the unnecessary referring of cases into MARAC, where appropriate safeguarding is already in place. In the meantime, the MARAC processes continue to run, holding agencies to account, bringing agencies together to form meaningful action and safety plans, and seeking intervention opportunities for perpetrators.

Child Abuse

Rates of child abuse have stabilised in the past year and have followed predicted seasonality trends.

Child Rape Victim <18			
	Crime	Outcome	% Rate
19/20	919	60	6.53%
20/21	1,089	73	6.70%
21/22	1,337	62	4.64%
22/23	1,142	72	6.30%
Mar 23	77	7	9.09%

From April 2022 until March 2023, the organisation has been made aware of 91 sudden unexplained child deaths (SUDI) which exceeds the average of 50 deaths in a given year. The team are monitoring closely the underlying causes of unexplained deaths to establish which require a review at the various child death overview panels (CDOP) and Joint agency response (JAR) meetings that take place following every SUDI. This has an impact on the volume of work for the on-call SUDI senior investigating officers (SIOs) and we are reviewing the on-call provision.

Multi-agency arrangements for child protection concerns and investigations are managed by dedicated Child Abuse teams and dedicated Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) officers for seven local authorities. An integrated central referral unit covers the Western and Eastern side of the organisation. Birmingham has its own CRU integrated within the MASH.

There are exploitation hubs, and through our SOCEX uplift, we have invested cross-discipline resources within the cities of Birmingham, Coventry and Wolverhampton, to provide a multi-agency response to concerns of child sexual exploitation (CSE) and child criminal exploitation (CCE).

The organisation continues to work through its action plans and recommendations set by various reviews, including HMICFRS and the OPCC. We have recently signed off three of the outstanding HMICFRS recommendations relating to child protection. In addition, we are working nationally with all leads to gather best practice for child protection to see what we could implement in the West Midlands, specifically any activities to increase officer's confidence in handling cases. A themed delivery plan has developed that will detail actions and approaches to be taken in response to recommendations from Child Protection Reviews both locally and nationally.

Following the Solihull JTAI, there were a number of actions for WMP. All of these have now been actioned and closed. The priority action was the improvement to the CONNECT system to reduce duplicate records. A technology solution has now successfully removed and merged over 500,000 duplicate records allowing officers and staff to see a single view of all information held on an individual.

The second action was to improve our capability to accurately and consistently capture voice of the child when attending incidents. The organisation have adopted the AWARE principles and training has been delivered to all response staff.²⁵ The AWARE principles have been built into a Go to Guide to support front line officers across the organisation. Embedding the AWARE principles is fundamental to improving awareness of child protection issues across the force and supporting the development of officers' professional curiosity in the early identification of vulnerability warning markers. The AWARE principles have now been included within the Child Abuse App available to frontline officers through their mobility devices. This training together with the Child Abuse guide contains reference to Police Protection powers, provides further clarity on the use of Body-Worn Video (BWV) in responding to incidents involving children, and details for referral routes into each local authority. Training days have been delivered to officers across the organisation to help them to maximise initial investigative opportunities and an enhanced understanding as to how to safeguard the victim and their family. These protected training days have been retained in the new operating model.

From a resourcing perspective, over the course of the past year we have increased establishment by 39 staff, comprising of three Sergeants and 36 Constables. This is part of the ongoing work to improve staff resilience and training, and reduce the number of open cases and length of investigations. Investment has been made in the number of school based PSCOs who perform a critical function in the education sector.

Outstanding suspect numbers are monitored through the PPU service improvement meeting where scrutiny is applied and the data is reported into the force performance panel. The data discussed at SIM is broken down by team and monitored to establish if there are any changes from month to month or escalation points reached that requires remedial action, any strategic issues are raised into the Crime Governance Board.

Child Sexual Exploitation

As part of child safeguarding, the Online Child Sexual Exploitation Team (OCSET) receive referrals from the National Crime Agency (NCA) to inform them of an online crime such as downloading indecent images or via the Child Protection System (CP-Sys) which captures peer-to-peer paedophile activity based on Global Unique Identifier (GUIDs). Demand continues to increase for OCSET – between 2016 and 2022 we have seen a 300% increase in referrals, which totalled 1202 last year.

Our OCSET intelligence function has a capacity of [REDACTED]. OCSET have moved location from Ladywood to [REDACTED] to provide an enhanced working environment. In January 2023, 18 officers within OCSET were trained in the use of the Child Abuse

²⁵ Appearance, Words, Activities and behaviours, Relationship dynamics, Environment

Image Database (CAID). This is further to the [REDACTED] intelligence staff already trained and provides greater flexibility and resilience.

Following the HMICFRS thematic review of OCSET we have developed an action plan to ensure we embed the recommendations. The backlog has been reduced and staff have attended training on the national system. The OCSET team have been supported by an end-to-end review of the process to further identify improvements. Over the course of summer 2023, WMP is commencing a trial whereby information is shared between police intelligence systems and then via our partner agencies including health, education and social services to identify any children living at an address who may be at risk of harm due to [REDACTED]. Where there is deemed to be a child at risk, a referral is made to other statutory safeguarding partners via the MASH. Once an address or an individual is identified, the risk factors are considered against the nationally recognised KIRAT risk assessment. West Midlands OCSET go beyond this nationally recognised risk assessment and submit partner referrals where the suspect has access to children. Any intelligence referrals meeting the high-risk criteria and include a position of trust are immediately brought to the attention of the Detective Inspector and prioritised. Intelligence development is turned around within a few days with the support of partner agencies to provide information where necessary. West Midlands OCSET has direct access to the court booking systems in order to provide warrants and there are emergency slots available each day which can be accessed if deemed proportionate and necessary.

OCSET has access to a number of specialist software systems. [REDACTED] is monitored on a regular basis and, on average, five cases are initiated per week. The Detective Superintendent is able to manually look through the referrals and seek out first generation indicators such as [REDACTED] which might suggest [REDACTED]. Additional resources will be trained to ensure there is resilience in place to monitor the risk contained within the system.

Vulnerable Adults

Adult safeguarding remains another key priority for the PPU and it receives referrals from agencies or family members with care concerns. Our Adult Abuse investigation teams work and investigate alongside Adult Complex to review each referral on a case by case basis. The dedicated Adult Care Abuse Investigation Team (ACAIT) is a team of specialist Detectives who conduct secondary investigations into physical abuse, sexual abuse (excluding domestic abuse), neglect and financial abuse offences where the victim is an adult with care and support needs and where the suspect is either, in a position of trust, a registered carer or another adult with care and support needs.

The team deals with investigations into the deaths of adults with care and support needs within the community, hospital, or care home setting which are considered to be suspicious yet are not identified as a homicide.

With the backdrop of Covid, social care and the mental health crisis, the care industry is now facing unprecedented demands which are greatly impacting on the quality of care provided to service users. This correlates directly to the acute increases in cases for the team.

The demand for both forensic and non-forensic death investigations has risen sharply against the baseline year of 2019.

In Dudley and Wolverhampton, we have dedicated adult Multi-agency Safeguarding Hubs and over the course of the next year, the organisation is striving to duplicate this to create a more consistent referrals pathway across the region.

Violence and Intimidation against Women and Girls (VAIWG)

In April 2023, WMP began the pilot for the serious violence duty and violence reduction strategies and have begun incorporating into VAWG accordingly.

The WMP VAWG Delivery Plan was submitted to the National Taskforce in March 2023 and feedback to forces has been delivered. The OPCC VAWG framework is embedded across the organisation through the WMP VAWG action plan. The WMP VAWG action plan has been subject of a mature assessment and each work strand lead have set out their priorities for year three. Following the publication of the WMP VAWG problem profile, a piece of work is in progress to tackle VAWG offending in the digital space and an additional piece of work is in progress to embed the Problem Profile recommendations into the WMP VAWG action plan.²⁶

Rape and Serious Sexual Offences (RASSO) & Operation Soteria

As one of the four Operation Soteria pathfinder forces, WMP are involved in an extensive academic review, and have accepted a number of recommendations in respect of how we; investigate RASSO offences, our organisational culture, difficulties surrounding reporting. Consequently, we are well prepared to embed the recommendations and the Soteria National Operating Model

Adult Rape Victim 18+			
	Crime	Outcome	% Rate
19/20	2,008	48	2.39%
20/21	2,342	47	2.01%
21/22	3,263	46	1.41%
22/23	2,924	83	2.84%
Mar 23	247	17	6.88%

Rape Outcomes (YTD)		
Outcome	Adult	Child
OC1 (Charges)	67	61
OC5 (Died)	3	3
OC9 (CPS)	0	1
OOC0	0	3

Since 2019-20, WMP have experienced significant increases in reports of rape, with 3263 adult rape offences being recorded in 2021. The chart above shows the increase in reporting year on year since 2019. WMP currently record, on average, 400 rape offences each month. The recording levels appear to have stabilised during 2022 (post-Covid). There will be several potential reasons for this increase including improved Home Office Counting Rules (HOCR) compliance, high profile media reporting and improved working relationships with partners and third sector to increase victim trust.

Throughout 2022, positive outcomes have steadily increased and are now comparative with those achieved during the performance year 2019-20. The table above provides an oversight of year-on-year outcome levels specifically in relation to adult rape, with an improving picture reflecting improved governance and oversight.

Over the past 12 months, under Operation Soteria, WMP have successfully uplifted Early Advice (EA) rape submissions from a single case to 156 cases. WMP have strived to improve relationships and communication at every level with CPS RASSO Prosecutors. The scope of the pilot has now been extended to include cases which are 12 months old and are not restricted to Domestic Abuse (DA).

Challenges persist within our investigative capacity, with a reliance on student officers and high turnover of staff. It was recognised that areas such as non-recent investigation were not being prioritised effectively. To address this, a non-recent function was created with the uplift of 21 staff. The shortage of accredited detectives continues to place pressure on the investigation functions and the Complex teams are no exception but this increase in staffing will start to alleviate some of these pressures.

²⁶ Our response to the Baroness Casey Review is detailed in chapter 11a.

Digital capability has been a challenge, especially in processing phone downloads, but a support team has been established to improve the timeliness of digital investigations and to reduce the backlog and consequently complete more investigations.

In early 2023 [REDACTED] was designed to undertake a thorough review into unallocated complex investigations. A Senior Investigating Officer analysed each case to determine if the original risk assessment and supervisor review was appropriate in the circumstances. The early stages of this have been completed and there is some learning for the department from this and a plan to produce a supervisor checklist to support in the review of cases.

Other Areas of Vulnerability

Forced Marriage & FGM

As legislation has recently passed increasing the legal age to marry or enter a civil partnership in England and Wales to 18 and given the West Midlands has a disproportionately higher population of teenagers than the national average, we predict that we may see a rise in referrals for children between the ages of 16-18 into forced marriage. Despite this, the numbers are small and we are confident we have sufficient capacity to respond to any increase.

Stalking, Harassment & Cyber-bullying

Offences of stalking, where DA related, will all be managed by the Adult Investigation Team within PPU. If it is non-DA related then it will be managed by local investigation teams. Both teams have an option to direct their case in to the newly established bi-weekly stalking Triage. This is a multi-agency function that looks to give early direction to stalking cases – this will lead to an increase in application for Stalking Protection Orders (SPOs).

There is a monthly stalking and harassment working group meeting that looks to bring together both PPU and Force Criminal Investigation Department (FCID) and LPA teams to improve how WMP acknowledges stalking, deals with breaches of orders such as non-molestation orders and SPOs. To monitor and drive improvement, we have a Detective Superintendent lead that oversees this area of business. There has been an increase in the number of stalking charges since the triage and meetings have been in place.

Under the DA Perpetrator funding there is an extension and expansion of the Early Awareness Stalking Intervention (EASI) project. This will provide a team of one Sergeant, three Police Staff Investigating Officers, and three Police Staff Investigators to support DA stalking cases, manage the triage process and provide wider for support for all stalking cases.

As discussed in the child safeguarding section, we have increased the number of PSCOs in schools to tackle the ever-growing issue of cyber bullying and prevent its occurrence.

Mental Health & Missing Persons

Upon a request for service linked to mental health vulnerability or a missing person, the Force Contact team has a robust THRIVE assessment that is completed during initial contact to gain as much information as possible to respond appropriately. The THRIVE assessment covers a number of areas - there are questions that cover evidence preservation as a prompt and another box asks about safeguarding.

The organisation is in the process of launching the “Right Care Right Person” programme which aims to support teams in directing those with mental health and other needs to the most appropriate agency for care.²⁷

Forward Look

The organisation will continue its focused work to address the areas for improvement raised in our latest PEEL inspection where Protecting Vulnerable People was assessed as “requires improvement.”

It is crucial we develop our strong relationships with partners even further, particularly in safeguarding, so that any negative effects of the cost of living crisis can be identified and referred quickly so that we can effectively respond and safeguard vulnerable members of our community. Looking forward, the recently formed ‘People & Progression Board’ together with the Vulnerability Improvement Board are the means of considering recommendations and learning from inspections and reviews, and will help focus our efforts on delivering actions that will deliver the biggest impact to those who need our help the most.

As we complete the transition into a new operating model and officers gain experience in the types of cases that need referring into the PPU department, we may see increasing volumes of work in the short-term while the AWARE principles and other vulnerability assessments become normal practice. It is preferable to have more information being submitted than less and it will be the responsibility of the PPU teams to use established processes and risk assessments to ensure the most vulnerable are prioritised. If trends do not follow as predicted then we have the option to commission our in-house Data Analytics Lab to complete further insightful analysis so that we continue to proactively protect the most vulnerable in society.²⁸

Specifically, for Domestic Abuse management there is a potential risk to performance outcomes as new constables and Sergeants are dealing with those cases on the LPA teams. DA only cases have a number of alternatives that can be accessed. Training, shadowing of PPU staff and awareness of all these programmes and options have been rolled out to minimise this performance variable.

At the beginning of May 2023, there were changes to Home Office Counting Rules which could mean a variation to recorded DA crimes. Harassment, Stalking and Coercive Controlling Behaviour – new guidance means there is no longer a requirement under HOCR, to record these conduct crimes in addition to any other victim-based crime.

²⁷ More detail on how we identify mental health vulnerability can be read in chapter 3a and more information on the Right Care Right Person programme can be found in chapter 12.

²⁸ For more information on DAL please see chapter 10

7: Managing Offenders

Executive Overview:

The management of offenders within West Midlands Police (WMP) is undergoing significant change in its structure and functioning as we complete the transition into our new operating model. Sex Offender Management is now delivered by the Public Protection Unit (PPU) and the Violence Multi-agency Public Protection Arrangement (MAPPA) nominals are owned by Local Policing Areas (LPAs). Responsibility for Integrated Offender Management is retained by LPA commanders.

Current and Future Demand

The organisation currently manages 1577 offenders within the IOM scheme. The breakdown of these are as follows:

- Fixed cohort: 368 nominals
- Flex cohort: 506 nominals
- Free cohort: 296 nominals
- Other cohorts: 407 nominals (held in the youth, Violent MAPPA cohort)

The span of control ratio for Offender Managers (OM) varies across the cohorts due to the complexities and nature of offenders and their management needs. Fixed and flex cohort ratios are set at 1:20, whereas free and other cohorts such as youth are set at 1:15. On average each OM holds a caseload of 1:11, which is within the recommended ratios and down from 1:12 in the last reporting period.

There has been a 13.9% increase in managed offenders in the last 12 months. Demand from the management of acquisitive crime offenders released from prison on a GPS electronic monitoring device (EMAC), has had an impact upon the overall volume of offenders managed by WMP and has undoubtedly resulted in most of this increase. IOM manages or monitors 330 offenders that are currently fitted with an EMAC tag. These offenders sit across both the fixed and the flex cohorts, however the majority are in the flex cohort, which has seen an increase of 23%. There is likely to be an increased number of managed offenders in the future. There are opportunities to increase the ratios of offender managers to offenders, whilst remaining in recommended tolerances and without the need for additional investment in IOM. Future demand within IOM is likely to increase as more offenders are anticipated to be managed using tags. At the time of writing, there are approximately 18,700 nominals nationally on a tag within communities, with just over 1400 currently living in the West Midlands Policing area. Latest forecasts suggest this will rise to 25,000 nationally and WMP are anticipating an increase of 500 within the West Midlands policing area. The net result of this is likely to see our IOM offender to offender manager ratios head towards its upper levels in the next reporting period.

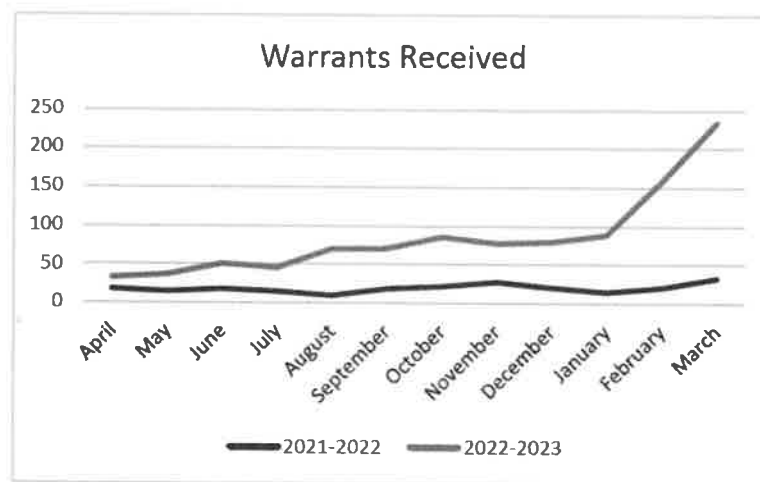
Sex Offender Management (SOM)

Between 2022-23 the number of sex offenders has grown by 0.8% which is less than the predicted 2.1% forecasted increase per annum. There are currently 4695 offenders being managed. This is still an impact post-Covid and we anticipate over the coming year we will see those numbers return to normal growth levels. Given our work through Operation Soteria to improve outcomes for victims of Rape and Serious Sexual Offences (RASSO), and additional investment in capacity in the PPU, we forecast growth in prosecutions and the use of civil powers, which will likely lead to an increase in the volume of registered sex offenders to be managed by WMP. Investment in our digital capabilities

(outlined below) will provide greater opportunities to identify breaches and substantive offences, both of which may lead to an increase in the volume of cases managed by WMP. A Digital Forensic Strategy has been implemented with a number of digital tools commissioned to support the robust management of Sexual Harm Prevention Orders (SHPOs) and Sexual Risk Orders (SROs). As these tools become embedded into working practices, we anticipate improvements in the management of registered sex offenders.

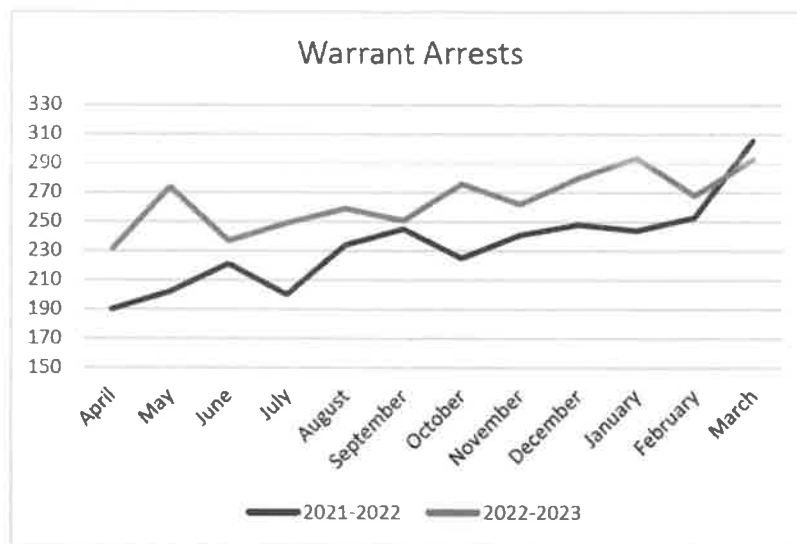
Warrants

Failed to appear, court to court, electronic monitoring service (EMS) breach, TaCA Drug Intervention Programme breach, recall and out of Force warrants have all increased and there are 2660 live warrants - an increase of 8.5%. This represents an increase of approximately 208 extra warrants across the organisation. The increase of these warrants is most likely due to the backlog caused by Covid to the courts systems and the increase of offenders being released on tag as an alternative to prison.



It is anticipated we will continue to see an upward trajectory on the number of warrants issued by the courts. In addition, we are seeing an increase in "Breach of pre-charge police bail" warrants being issued, which we will continue to monitor over the next performance year. The lower numbers in 2021-22 are likely to be down to the Covid pandemic, court closures during 2022, and more nominals being kept out of prison.

The execution of warrants remains a multi-departmental task and arrests are monitored by each LPA and individual departments, with daily updates being produced through the Business Insights performance portal. As shown in the graph below, between the 2022-23 financial year, WMP executed 3174 warrants, averaging approximately 264 per month which is an 13% increase of the 234 per month averaged between 2021-22.



Electronic monitoring service breaches

The number of EMS breaches has increased greatly and the team deal with approximately 250 nominals a month, compared to 165-170 in the last reporting period. As part of the flow of enquiries, the central monitoring team service in excess of 50 emails per day, averaging between 1300-1500 per month, which is an increase of approximately 500 per month on the last reporting period. We are currently exploring automated options to reduce some of this workload as well as some changes in working practices, that are supported by academic evaluation. Following the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill, which allows for EMS tags to be applied as a condition of a Sexual Harm Prevention Order or a Sexual Risk Order, we are working with national partners to understand the practicalities involved in implementation and the impact this will have in terms of overall demand.

During 2021, the organisation invested in Attenti GPS tags, which provide a discreet GPS tracking service that can be used to accurately track an individual's movements, with those offenders motivated to change. Throughout 2021-22, 75 have been used, and the use of these has continued to be popular across Local Offender Management Units and remains consistent. These assets will continue to be monitored and evaluated, with performance produced and monitored through the Local Policing governance board.

Recalls to prison

The volume of arrests for standard and emergency recalls in this period was 1399 compared to 1146 last year. This represents an 18% increase in arrests for recalls to prison from the last reporting period. It is anticipated that we will continue to see this rise through the next 12 months. The numbers of outstanding offenders for recall to prison does not reflect this large number as these requests are generally picked up through Police National Computer (PNC) Bureau and an immediate task is created through an incident log.

Foreign National Offenders (FNOs)

Our International Desk offers bespoke advice to all teams within WMP including ROCU and CTU colleagues. The desk advises on all aspects of international policing, including locating wanted suspects who are abroad, obtaining international warrants, informing other countries about risks posed by travelling "managed" offenders and investigating offences jointly with other nation states.

In the last financial year 2022-23, the desk dealt with approximately 1300 formal requests (both internal, domestic and abroad). In the first two months of this financial year, there have been 513

formal requests, which, if this trend continues will mean approximately 3000 requests this year which is double on the previous year. The increased numbers supports the ongoing work to educate the organisation on the correct methods to communicate with our overseas counterparts which the international desk strives to embed in day-to-day policing activity. The team gatekeep and record all international enquiries into WMP to ensure quality, consistency and to maintain corporate knowledge. Without this specialist resource there would be a risk to victims, witnesses and offenders and to WMP and the UK Government's reputation if formal international cooperation processes are not followed.

The first step in identifying and managing FNOs is often through ACRO, the UK Criminal Records Office checks. They provide criminal record history from the FNO's home country (or any other country as requested). WMP are currently in the process of building a robotic solution that automates ACRO conviction checks on all foreign born detainees that come into custody. When the automated system goes live, the number of ACRO checks will increase from on average 50 to over 500 per month. This will better enable the Officer in Charge of an Investigation (OIC) who charge an offender to court to add any overseas convictions to court files to allow the courts to make informed decisions on the mode of trial, bail and sentencing. LPAs will be able to look at the results and make immigration referrals where previous convictions could change the immigration status of that person, or identify the management of offenders where previous convictions could present a need to manage their offending.

To assist our colleagues, an "FNO Go-To-Guide" has been created for mobility devices and desktop computers. The guide is available to all employees, and it walks the user through the checks necessary to identify any known threat and risk posed (overseas convictions), the immigration status of the subject and how to identify if another country is seeking their arrest for any offence (Interpol i24/7). There is a plan to include statistics on ACRO and immigration checks undertaken at the point of custody into WMP's performance reporting mechanism to provide greater management information to drive performance across the LPAs and at custody sites.

Workforce and Assets

Targeted Integrated Offender Management is delivered across seven LPAs and the staffing across the whole of the WMP to deliver offender management is comprised of:

- 9 x Inspectors
- 27 x Sergeants
- 136 x Police Constables
- 13.5 FTE x Offender Management Assistants

At the time of writing the LPAs have 16 vacancies across this area of business. The delivery of IOM is overseen by LPA Command Teams supported by central governance resources of one Inspector and one Performance Research Analyst.

There have been some challenges in respect of staff resilience during times of sickness. However, the teams support each other well in managing surplus offenders and the move to a local policing model allows a larger pool of resource to be agilely placed where there is greatest need. A further benefit of our new operating model is that offenders can be managed by teams who work in that geographic area. Every six months, Continual Professional Development (CPD) events have been delivered based on learning requirements requested by the teams themselves. The PPU remain committed to delivering this important CPD. In addition, annual quality assurance exercises are conducted to ensure compliance, identify learning and establish good practice.

To support the teams in decision-making and risk management, the organisation uses the Active Risk Management System (ARMS) and Risk Management plans as the nationally recognised tools to manage registered sex offender risk, as well as ensure compliance to the ratios of 1:50 sex offenders

per sex offender manager. Performance is monitored on a monthly basis which allows interventions to be planned should teams risk breaching the upper limits of the ratio. MAPPA Panels are well established to manage risk in line with Authorised Professional Practice (APP). There is a specific Reactive Management Force Policy and a dedicated team who own reactively managed Registered Sex Offenders (RSOs). There is clear guidance detailed within the policy on who they receive and what their core functions are. Additionally, there are quarterly peer reviews that are conducted to monitor the quality of risk management plans to ensure we meet the relevant requirements.

The IOM blueprint is now in place across all our LPAs and our training package has been adopted as national best practice. To govern, yearly internal quality assurance audits are conducted whereby the team thoroughly assess compliance against the Blueprint and against nationally set criteria. Simultaneously, during the quality audit (QA) process, peer reviews occur. These reviews provide an opportunity for colleagues to analyse a sample offender, assess their risk management plan and advise one another on any learnings. Monthly meetings are held with senior leaders to identify and share any improvement opportunities across the other LPAs.

Projects and Initiatives

To support how we can be more proactive in the methods and tools we use to manage sex offenders, the MOSOVO Digital Forensic Strategy continues to be implemented across WMP. This involves the development of a number of new tools. The majority of staff are now trained and LPA leads are encouraged to register their new SOM staff training requirements with Learning and Development (L&D). LPAs who are not maximising the usage of these tools are being contacted to understand any learning, challenges or barriers they may be facing so that extra training can be delivered. This is governed through Local Policing Governance Board.

Further systems and programmes are being explored and over the next 12-18 months we will monitor license usage and what tools are being used the most to understand and evaluate which ones have provided the most benefit to the management of offenders.

Similarly, to digitise and improve our IOM offender risk management, the Data Analytics Lab (DAL) have designed an offender dashboard that scores offenders against recency, frequency, severity, drugs and intelligence - whereas the current tool only considers conviction rates. This dashboard has been tested across two areas of WMP and the feedback has been positive. An organisational-wide rollout is planned once approved through the Independent Data Ethics Panel. Once endorsed, the dashboard will provide IOM officers with crime severity scoring, to support their decision making around selection and de-selection of offenders for management. In addition, a separate domestic dashboard to support and aid selection of offenders to manage through the Free cohort has been designed and built for imminent release and use.

In partnership with The Probation Service we have secured funding for an Analyst dedicated entirely to the IOM function to understand and measure our effectiveness which will support leadership in performance management and improvement opportunity identification.

Forward Look

Over the next year, the primary focus in respect of managing offenders will be to maximise the opportunities presented through the changes to WMP's operating model in order to improve the IOM's resilience and efficiency. We are committed to the Home Office's review into MAPPA and will implement any national recommendations and bills accordingly.

There is an expectation as per the IOM Blueprint that management of offenders will not be solely conducted by the Lifetime Offender Management Unit (LOMU), but some flex cohort nominals will be assigned to Neighbourhood Teams. This is a priority piece of work for the forthcoming year.

8: Managing Serious and Organised Crime

Executive Overview:

West Midlands Police (WMP) has enhanced capacity and capability in Serious and Organised Crime and Exploitation (SOCEX) over the last 12 months and as part of the operating model changes further strength will be added. The organisation has a mature understanding of the threats faced from SOCEX and the now embedded approach provides consistency to identifying, assessing, managing and disrupting a broader range of threats.

Progress has been made in identifying and tackling the threats from organised exploitation networks, which can often be hidden beneath the surface, but our threat grid now consistently includes networks who exploit both children and adults for criminal purposes.

The embedding of dedicated SOCEX resources into partnership hubs has enhanced our response to threats at a tactical level and has improved the sharing of information to inform our longer-term strategic partnership approaches. The organisation continues to have strong working relationships with the Regional Organised Crime Unit West Midlands (ROCUWM) who are a key contributor in tackling those threats that require the deployment of capabilities held in and accessible by the ROCU.

We are continuing to deliver a greater volume and wider variety of disruptions against those SOCEX networks who cause our communities the greatest harm. In 2022-23, the organisation recorded 3047 disruptions against identified SOCEX threats.

However, some significant threats persist. The threat from unlawfully held firearms is ever present and is felt most intensely locally, when firearms come into the hands of younger members of Organised Crime Groups (OCGs) or those operating as part of less organised but often far more chaotic and unpredictable Urban Street Gangs (USGs).

The threats relating to the criminal exploitation of vulnerable people, both child and adult, continue to be better understood and addressed with the existence of the networks driving this criminality more visible in our threat grid. The complexity involved with these type of investigations means we are seeing the end-to-end process of - identification of threat to dismantling of networks – which adds time and requires more resource.

The development and delivery of a dedicated County Lines Task Force (CLTF) has improved performance against dismantling drugs lines and achieving Criminal Justice outcomes. The development of this capability continues, supported by plans for the organisation to create a dedicated force-level surveillance capability in the summer of 2023.

Current and Future Demand

The organisation uses a number of tools and methods to identify and make visible the new and emerging threats from SOCEX networks. These include our Threat Grid and tasking approach, use of the Agency and Partner Management Information System (APMIS) including the SOC master list, the Management of Risk in Law Enforcement (MoRILE) methodology and OCG mapping. When used together, these tools provide an in depth and mature understanding of the threats to the West Midlands region and allow us to consistently escalate threats into regional and national capabilities whilst prioritising those threats at an organisation and local level. The hierarchy of top tier threats is depicted below.