



**STAFFORDSHIRE COMMISSIONER**

Police | Fire and Rescue | Crime

# **ANNUAL REPORT**

## **2019-20**

**DRAFT**

# Safer, Fairer, United Communities for Staffordshire



In 2013, the Commissioner published his strategy for policing and community safety in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent. Safer, Fairer, United Communities set out his vision for how public services, working together across four key areas, can make a positive difference to local people: Early Intervention, Victims, Offenders and Public Confidence.

These priorities continued into his revised strategy, published in 2017, and he added a fifth priority – to build a modern and transformed police service that is fit for a changing future.

## Fire and Rescue Plan 2019-20

On taking responsibility for the governance of Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service, the Commissioner issued an interim strategy. This set four priorities for the service which aligned to those in Safer, Fairer, United Communities:



This report outlines what has been achieved over the last eight years.



# Modernising Services

Even during the Commissioner's time in office, the landscape of community safety has changed massively. There has been a shift from acquisitive crime to what can be described as 'high harm' crimes against people.

Complex investigations into child sexual exploitation, modern slavery, human trafficking, honour-based violence and female genital mutilation have become 'business as usual' for police forces. High-profile national events have increased victims' confidence to report historical and current offences, and the proactive work of all agencies in the safeguarding arena has revealed previously hidden demand. The threat from terrorism has also increased significantly. Offending increasingly has complex cyber elements, national and international connections and links to organised crime groups. Managing this complexity has to be balanced against providing the traditional services that communities expect: being easy to contact, there when you need them, providing a reassuring presence and protecting people.

Locally, services have become increasingly stretched in dealing with complex societal problems – an ageing population and increases in domestic abuse, mental health and substance misuse alongside other factors such as climate change. These are complex challenges that cannot be addressed by individual services; they require more sophisticated responses. Our police, fire and rescue service and other agencies have had to find innovative ways of working together, focusing shrinking resources on people and places at the highest risk. Our local services also need to be able to dovetail into regional and national activities. This means they have to be easy to do business with, sharing information, skills and resources with partners to prevent and intervene early to deal with the root causes of problems before they become more complex and costly to address.

## Police Transformation

The force has responded well to the twin challenges of adapting to meet new pressures and doing more with less. From the outset, the Commissioner has been clear that local policing is the bedrock of the service; it needs to be protected, highly visible and focused on prevention. Despite financial pressures, he has encouraged the force to make some difficult decisions to do things differently in order to maintain neighbourhood policing numbers, and recently invested to further expand neighbourhood teams by more than 140 officers.

Technology has had to improve to enable this to happen. When the Commissioner took office, 43 police services across the country were broadly doing their own thing. It was clear that Staffordshire Police's IT was outdated and in need of significant investment. There was a need to provide the force with digital capabilities to meet the demands of modern policing. In 2016, an **IT strategic provider**, Boeing, was chosen from more than 50 companies to help us in that endeavour. Progress has been made over the last few years, but priorities for both Boeing and policing technology have changed, as have the demands upon them. Boeing wish to refocus their work elsewhere and this has come at an opportune time with our agreement to part company on the best of terms, after delivery of the key Niche system in 2020.

The Commissioner invested in **mobile technology** for officers, PCSOs and Special Constables to enable them to spend more time out in the community rather than wasting time having to return to police stations to access IT systems. This functionality has continued to develop since then, and Staffordshire remains at the forefront of this type of technology.

He was one of the first commissioners to invest in the allocation of **body-worn video cameras** to all frontline officers. The impact has been dramatic, with footage often providing vital evidence in bringing a prosecution. Crucially, they have reinforced openness and transparency in policing by providing an extra level of independent scrutiny to make sure police officers behave appropriately when dealing with people and follow procedures properly, and that activities such as stop and searches are fair and effective.

The **Niche Records Management System** is the biggest IT programme undertaken by the force. It replaces 13 existing systems with one integrated solution to improve data quality, better support data sharing with partners, provide real-time information to officers in the field and deliver efficiencies in business processes. The entire Niche programme will be delivered over 21 months, with the first set of modules being in place this year.

The recent establishment of a police 'Knowledge Hub' has brought together data management, research, analysis and reporting in a way that supports integration with other public services. It is a sound platform for the Commissioner's '**Connected Staffordshire**' strategy, a complex and long-term programme designed to address the barriers to multi-agency data sharing and integrated working. There has been a strong start to the programme, but there remains much more to do.

New technology has also made it easier to contact the police. The **Smart Alert** app introduced by us enables people and businesses to receive updates on incidents in their area. A new force website is helping people to engage with the police and access services online.

Staffordshire's police estate included some buildings in poor condition with surplus space, so **modernising the police estate** has been a priority. The Commissioner has progressed the disposal of the former police headquarters and police stations at Stoke, Newcastle, Chasetown, Wombourne and Kinver, with the money generated being used to fund technology and other projects. New developments at Lichfield and Smithfield in Hanley have provided modern accommodation for officers and staff and enabled police functions to be co-located from disparate sites. Opportunities to co-locate police and fire colleagues are being actively pursued, with Tamworth complete and Hanley on the way.

Good **regional policing** arrangements are an essential component in keeping Staffordshire safe in the face of new threats. These include the Regional Organised Crime Unit, counter-terrorism work and the policing of motorways in Staffordshire and the West Midlands. The Commissioner currently chairs the Regional Governance Group, which brings together the PCCs and Chief Constables from Staffordshire, West Mercia, West Midlands and Warwickshire with their Chief Executive Officers to oversee and guide this work.

The complexity of the **Criminal Justice System** presents a challenge in ensuring it operates wholly in the interests of victims and witnesses and deals effectively with offenders. Partner agencies such as the Crown Prosecution Service, HM Courts and Tribunal Service and the National Probation Service operate on a regional footprint which has required our office to work closely with other PCC offices in the region to look at the process from end to end, tackling delays and inefficiencies and improving quality of service.

### **Fire Service Reform**

From August 2018, the Commissioner took over governance of Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service, following approval of a business case submitted to the Home Secretary. He inherited a fire service that was in a good state and well regarded nationally, which is testament to the work of the previous Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Authority. In the intervening 18 months, our challenge has been to build on these foundations to ensure it is fit for a changing future and the most effective and efficient in the sector.

He has therefore been keen to make swift progress against the three pillars of the national Fire Reform agenda: Efficiency and Collaboration, Accountability and Transparency, and Workforce Reform. Some of the work that has been done is set out in other parts of this report.

The business case centred on new opportunities for the two services to collaborate more and to share some support and administrative functions, work more closely operationally and share buildings. The major benefit of the proposal was that, over time, more of the money available could be used by both services operationally, in the heart of our communities. Importantly, the professions of firefighting and policing remain distinct and separate.

By bringing a similar governance approach to that applied to policing, there is now a broader range of scrutiny arrangements that have increased accountability and transparency. The performance monitoring arrangements by us and the scrutiny of the Ethics, Transparency and Audit Panel are in place and plans are in development to expand the scope of Safer Neighbourhood Panels to hold their local fire and rescue manager to account for performance.

The fire and rescue sector firefighter workforce is not generally reflective of the communities it serves and organisational culture has been identified nationally as a major challenge in achieving the required change. It has therefore been satisfying to see the service in Staffordshire judged by Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary & Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) as outstanding in the way it promotes its values and culture, an endorsement of many years of hard work. While in a better position than many other services, Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service's workforce needs to better reflect the communities it serves, but they have made progress in this area too.

### **Police/Fire Collaboration**

Staffordshire Police and Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service have been working hard to enhance the areas of collaboration that were already in place for transport, logistics and occupational health services, and develop their approach to further collaborative working under the governance of our office. The first phase of this work went live in 2019, with joint teams now in place for delivering estates, communications, human resources, finance and procurement support. The financial savings from collaboration have been reinvested in additional specialist prevention staff.

In December 2019, Tamworth Neighbourhood Policing Team moved into Belgrave fire station. Taking police officers out of a dilapidated police station with excess space and into a modern fire station makes complete sense financially. However, the benefits of police and fire colleagues sharing information, planning, preparing and training together to keep the local community safe are invaluable. Progress is being made to share Hanley fire station and options are being actively explored to do the same at other locations across Staffordshire, where appropriate.

Protocols have been developed for Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service to assist the police in helping to search for missing persons and gaining entry to premises, where appropriate. These are great examples of creative thinking by operational staff and hopefully the first of many more opportunities to bring skills and resources together to help people.

# Protecting Staffordshire and its people

The Commissioner's role as the Fire and Rescue Authority carries with it specific legal responsibilities in the protection of life and property. The fire and rescue service delivers this through the right balance of education, advice and support, and the use of enforcement powers where necessary. This is vital to keep people safe by ensuring those responsible for buildings comply with fire safety regulations and help keep our firefighters safe in dealing with incidents. It also helps to limit the environmental damage caused by fires in public spaces.

The tragic events at Grenfell Tower have increased the emphasis on technical fire safety inspections of premises and the use of enforcement powers. Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service is already responding positively to this challenge, but this is specialist activity which requires an uplift in capacity. The service is also adapting well to complex and challenging potential threats, such as dealing with terrorist incidents or severe weather events.

The Commissioner is pleased to have already been able to reinvest savings from the collaboration between police and fire in delivering support functions into growing our specialist **Fire Safety Teams**. Although firm proposals or requirements have not yet been made nationally, all responses to the Grenfell tragedy so far have indicated that there is an urgent need to do this. It is clearly a more effective way of using this money and is a strong start to improving our risk-based inspection programmes.

The **Community Sprinkler Project** has focused on the risks associated with high-rise building fires and specifically the levels of safety for occupants and firefighters. Funding has been allocated to this activity with match funding provided by partners, and significant progress has now been made to retro-fit sprinkler systems to high-rise buildings. All such buildings will have sprinklers fitted over the next three to five years, with technical support being provided to each project by the service's fire engineers. The service continues to work with businesses, architects, planners and partners to promote the benefits of fitting suppression systems in new buildings over five floors. The Commissioner has lobbied for changes to legislation so that such installations are mandated for new buildings of this type.

The service continues to play a lead role locally and nationally in addressing the issue of **illicit waste sites**, and the Commissioner has been happy to add to that process by engaging with politicians and officials nationally in an attempt to bring lasting change to a flawed system. He has brought together partners including the Environment Agency, county and district councils, the police and the fire and rescue service to tackle this issue. Services are now joining together to plan for emergency response, use the legislative powers of each organisation to coordinate enforcement activities, and explore options for the removal of waste at high-risk sites.

# Resources

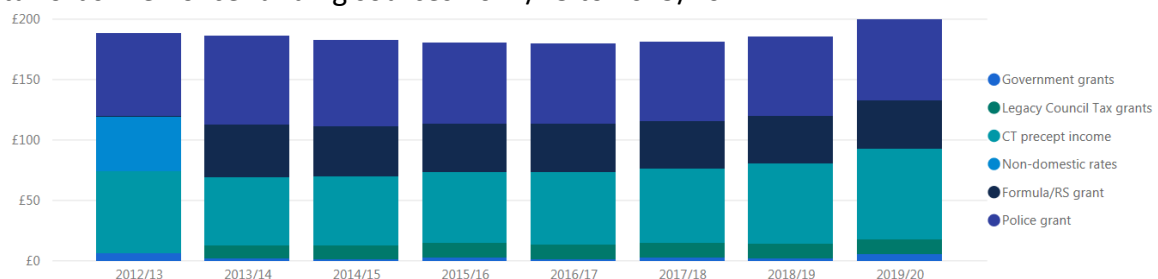
## Staffordshire Police

The financial context for policing has been immensely challenging, and a reflection of the Government's drive to reform the service. For many years, central funding has gradually reduced and limits have been placed on local commissioners' ability to make up that gap through council tax increases. This created a pressure to do more with less and the force has responded positively, implementing more efficient structures and processes, collaborating more, and focusing on priorities and new ways of working supported by new technology.


The Commissioner has resisted increasing council tax while more financial reserves were being held than was necessary, as he believes public money should not be sitting in the bank when it could be spent on services.

Following public consultation, he took the early decision to protect the public from council tax increases for four successive years until he was satisfied the force had taken forward the opportunities it had identified to become more efficient and effective. More recently, he reluctantly increased council tax, but only because he felt there was no other option to provide the investment needed by the force. It funded additional neighbourhood policing officers, new specialist capabilities to address new challenges in policing, proactive work targeting prolific criminals, and boosted teams dealing with missing persons. Nevertheless, the Staffordshire precept for policing still remains one of the lowest in the country.


Staffordshire Police funding sources 2012/13 to 2019/20




At the end of his term, the force is in a strong place. It is rated as 'good' across all areas by HMICFRS, and Staffordshire is one of just four areas out of 43 where overall crime has reduced this year.



The extent to which the force is effective at keeping people safe and reducing crime is **good**.



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Burglaries down 17%

Violence down 14%

Sexual offences down 7%

Robberies down 2%

Criminal damage and arson down 11%

Public order offences down 6%

Vehicle crime down 10%

Surveys show that 78% of people in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent are satisfied with the service provided by the police, 78% agree that they are value for money and 90% trust them. Over 80% of victims of crime and anti-social behaviour (ASB) are satisfied with the service they receive.






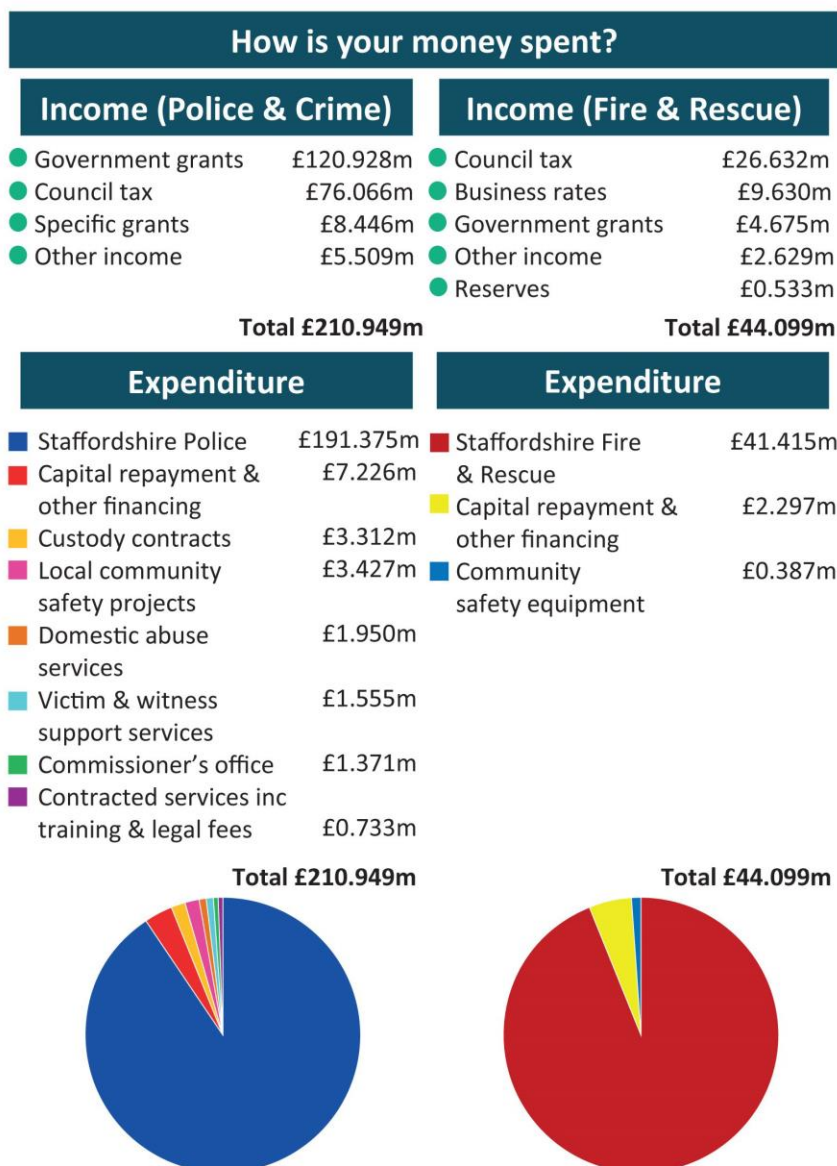
## Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service

Reductions in central government funding have placed similar pressures on the fire and rescue service and were capably addressed by the former Fire and Rescue Authority prior to governance transferring to the Commissioner in August 2018. An Efficiency Plan had been agreed to ensure affordability up to 2020, which included changes to crewing arrangements, reduced management levels and a robust approach to challenging non-pay expenditure. The service finds itself in a strong position, but there will still be difficult decisions to be made given increasing demands on the service and financial pressures.

HMICFRS recently rated it as 'good' overall and one of only four services to receive either a 'good' or 'outstanding' rating for all eleven inspection themes.

According to local surveys, 91% of people in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent are satisfied with the overall service provided by the fire and rescue service, 93% agree they are value for money and 99% trust them.

|   |   |
|---|---|
|  | The extent to which the service is effective at keeping people safe and secure from fire and other risks is <b>good</b> . |
|  | The extent to which the service is efficient at keeping people safe and secure from fire and other risks is <b>good</b> . |
|  | The extent to which the service looks after its people is <b>good</b> .   |



# Early Intervention

**Evidence shows the best way of preventing crime and having a positive impact on community wellbeing, quality of life and safety is to stop problems arising in the first place. The Safer, Fairer, United Communities for Staffordshire Strategy emphasised the importance of prevention activities and intervening early to help those starting to experience problems and supporting them to address the issues they face.**

Intervening early not only benefits individuals now and in the future, but also wider society and the economy. The costs associated with late intervention are well publicised. Nearly £17 billion per year – equivalent to £287 per person – is spent in England and Wales by the state on late intervention. Locally this equates to £319 million across Staffordshire and can be broken down into £237 million / £274 per person in Staffordshire and £82 million / £328 per person in Stoke-on-Trent. <http://www.eif.org.uk/publication/the-cost-of-late-intervention-eif-analysis-2016>

There are a number of root causes which leave people more vulnerable to or at risk of becoming involved in crime or ASB, such as truancy, poor educational attainment, lack of access to training and employment opportunities, lack of aspirations and opportunities, poverty, family breakdown, exposure to substance misuse or mental health issues. On taking responsibility for the governance of Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service, it was clear the same societal factors impacted on demand for their services and it was pleasing to see that the principles of prevention and early intervention were at the heart of their work too.

Prevention and early intervention plays an important part in offering these children and their families the support they need to reach their potential, so it makes sense to focus on providing help early, addressing root causes. This can't be achieved by the police or fire service in isolation, so bringing local council, health and other services closer together has been a central part of the strategy.

Over recent years, this has become even more critical. Financial challenges have seen some organisations focus their efforts on delivering statutory duties, providing services to people with developed and complex needs. Despite this, we have worked tirelessly with partners to establish a range of successful preventative and early help initiatives.

## **Visible frontline services**

The financial challenges most public services have faced in recent years have driven many to reduce prevention work in order to maintain the services they provide to people in crisis. In Staffordshire, we chose to invest in the number of officers providing community-based policing by working with the force to find more efficient ways of delivering emergency response and support services. This has been challenging but, with different structures, better technology and new ways of working, the force has been able to maintain the local presence that is so valued by the community and has the capacity for prevention.

The principles of prevention and early intervention are at the heart of the fire and rescues service. The service has developed a highly effective and valued approach to prevention,

which is focused on those most at risk. Savings from collaboration with police colleagues to deliver support functions have already been reinvested in additional staff dedicated to specialist fire prevention work.

The Commissioner has encouraged both services to work more closely together to deliver practical solutions which can impact positively on individuals, families and communities.

### **Working with young people**

All children deserve the best possible start in life. Too many children face the kind of disadvantage that affects their development and threatens their future health and happiness. Early intervention can play an important part in offering these children and their families the support they need to reach their potential, so working with young people is the main focus of this priority. A range of projects have been led and developed by the Commissioner's office with this in mind.

Due to the prominence of early intervention within the strategy and the work being led by the office, Staffordshire was selected by the **Early Intervention Foundation** as a 'Pioneering Place' in 2013. Additionally, in 2015, Staffordshire was the only PCC's office in the country to form part of the Early Intervention Academy for Police Leaders. The Academy developed a Charter for Early Intervention and guidance for forces on reducing demand by tackling the causes of crime, freeing up police resources to tackle crime and protect vulnerable people by placing early intervention at the heart of policing.

Childhood experiences have a massive impact on lifelong health and opportunity. **Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs)** refer to stressful or traumatic events that children and young people can be exposed to as they are growing up. When children are exposed to adverse and stressful experiences, it can have a long-lasting impact on their ability to think, learn and interact with others. Studies have shown compared to those with no ACEs, those with four or more ACEs are more likely to have been in prison, committed violence in the last 12 months, and have health-harming behaviours (high-risk drinking, smoking or drug use), among other things. Much can be done, however, to build resilience in children, young people and adults who have experienced adversity in early life.

Understanding and helping people with this background is therefore an important element in tackling offending and supporting victims. The Commissioner's office has worked in partnership with Lancashire Foundation Healthcare Trust, national leaders in the field, and enabled the introduction of new practices to assess crime victims and perpetrators. Over 500 professionals from a range of organisations across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent have attended multi-agency training on assessing the presence of ACEs, and attachment and emotion coaching has begun.

In 2017, alongside Staffordshire County and Stoke-on-Trent City Councils, we commissioned Catch 22 to deliver prevention and support services for victims and potential victims of **Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)** and missing children. This was the first time a consistent service was available across the whole of Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent. Catch 22 is now fully embedded into local partnerships and has established a base in one of the Children's

Centres. To provide a snapshot, 1,062 young people positively engaged with Catch 22 in 2018-19.

We've worked with partners to develop a **CSE awareness campaign** for use in Staffordshire schools. By using new 360-degree technology, participating schools are provided with an innovative approach to promoting conversation and the development of 'safety tactics' within the school setting. The campaign includes a video, storyboard and classroom discussion pack and has now been delivered in many schools across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent.

**Education** is an important tool in preventing and supporting children to address any issues they may face, preventing any problems from escalating and becoming more complex. To this end, we've been working with schools to develop educational resources relating to crime and personal safety. The Commissioner provided funding to enable the introduction of a nationally recognised education resource, **Values vs Violence**, to schools in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent. The programme is delivered by teachers to raise awareness among children and young people and provide them with some of the necessary skills to keep themselves safe from abuse, sexual exploitation and radicalisation.

To provide another educational resource, we've worked with Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service on the implementation of the **Safe+Sound** project, which aims to support informed and positive lifestyle choices to improve health, safety and wellbeing. The project runs a variety of interactive and practical workshops for children, young people and the over-60s, delivered by multiple partners and agencies. The Safe+Sound team uses state-of-the-art interactive mobile pods to deliver its education programmes, creating an immersive learning environment to teach topics like fire safety in the home, road safety, water safety, CSE, substance abuse, gangs and youth violence, emotional wellbeing and CPR. Various scenarios are projected onto three walls of the pod, producing a 270-degree view for students. The software allows participants to answer questions and access more information by swiping sensors on the walls. <https://youtu.be/-LhIP9dZeTI>

The **Prince's Trust** programme aims to engage young people at risk of offending, those involved in risky behaviour and victims of crime, in order to improve their health and wellbeing, lifestyles, confidence and employment prospects. The 'Fairbridge' and 'Get Started' programmes have provided intensive support to 864 young people across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent with support from the Commissioner's office; around 60% achieved a positive outcome or progression on programme completion, with education and training being the most common outcome.

In a similar vein, we worked with **Stoke City Football Club Community Trust** and other partners to develop a bid to the Premier League / Professional Footballers' Association Community Fund. This provided the trust with the unique opportunity to secure a grant of £250,000 following the investment of £50,000 partnership match funding. The money has been used to develop the Rise Project, which is supporting vulnerable young people from across North Staffordshire who are at risk of exploitation and have multiple barriers to overcome.

We also commission early intervention services from Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent **Youth Offending Services** and provide support 'in kind' through Staffordshire police officers. We've worked to create a consistent approach no matter where you live by providing group and one-to-one support for young people at risk of offending and their families. First-time entrants have reduced from around 600 in 2010 to around 200 in 2018. A report was also commissioned to review the provision, which identified evidenced-based good practice and some recommendations for future models.

In 2017-18, the office submitted a successful bid to the Home Office Violence against Women and Girls Service Transformation Fund, which enabled the development and implementation of a new support service project to tackle **Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)**. The total award was for £250,000 over three years, together with additional investment from the Commissioner's budget. Barnardo's successfully bid for this work and has provided support to 800 people and training to 692 professionals on FGM-related issues. Some cases have involved FGM Protection Orders obtained through the Courts. In August 2018, Barnardo's and Staffordshire Police joined forces with a number of organisations – Border Force, the National Crime Agency and other police forces across the West Midlands – to implement Operation Limelight at Birmingham Airport. This joint operation was a proactive airside operation targeting inbound and outbound flights to 'countries of prevalence for FGM'.

The **Staffordshire Police Cadet Service** is all about encouraging young people aged between 13 and 17 – some from challenging backgrounds – to achieve new skills and confidence and connect with the police in a positive way through an exciting programme. Since I introduced the scheme in 2013, ten cadet groups have been established, with 950 young people continuing to attend regularly for more than a year.

The scheme is financially sustainable, thanks to donations from patrons, funding activities and the Commissioner's Corporate Social Responsibility Fund. It has been heartening to see the positive support from local businesses with a real sense of civic responsibility investing in the future of Staffordshire's young citizens. Through their passion and commitment, cadet patrons are helping to change young lives. Equally, the support provided by police officers, special constables, PCSOs, staff and volunteers, who have given their free time to support the scheme, has been a vital ingredient in its success.

Police cadets work towards nationally recognised qualifications in teamwork, citizenship and personal skills, following a detailed programme that covers every aspect of policing and how they can support the police in keeping our communities safe and reassured. They are not in training to be police officers, but are learning skills they will need in all aspects of their lives and gaining an enhanced sense of civic pride through the support they provide to many public events. Staffordshire Police Cadets have formed Honour Guards at the National Memorial Arboretum and marched on Remembrance Sunday, and help out in their local communities and at many events and functions every year.

They also play a key role in supporting police operations, such as assisting officers conducting roadside checks on vehicles as part of crackdowns on drink driving. Cadets were

on hand to give out leaflets advising motorists on the dangers of drinking while over the limit.

Cadets at all units have taken part in interactive training over a two-week period by Staffordshire Police's Prevent CSE Team. The awareness sessions looked at how to spot the signs of CSE, its effects, the law, and where to go to for help. They also included discussions about how to stay safe online and the dangers of 'sexting'.

A Junior Cadet scheme was introduced for children at primary school. Consisting of six one-hour sessions led by a PCSO during school time, the programme includes encouraging good behaviour, road safety, school security, and the impact of anti-social behaviour. There are now more than 6,600 junior cadets from primary and junior schools.

In 2015, I relaunched the **Space** scheme, an activities programme for young people to enjoy during the school summer holiday with the aim of reducing low-level crime and ASB. The programme, managed by my office, brought a new approach linking various voluntary and public organisations, including councils across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent. The scheme seeks to benefit young people through confidence building and personal health and social development, providing positive activities for young people aged 8-17 years during the school summer holiday period. A minimum of 30% of Space funding is provided for targeted activities for those young people considered vulnerable, with defined referral pathways from key agencies such as the Youth Offending Service and Local Support Teams and in areas where there is evidence that young people are at risk of either committing ASB or of social exclusion.

Investing up to £180,000 annually and supported by local authority partners and other stakeholders, Space has grown year on year. In 2019, there were over 38,000 attendances by local youngsters (68,361 hours of engagement), compared to 15,000 in 2015. Levels of police-reported, youth-related ASB have reduced by 50% since 2016 (1,365 reported incidents, down to 652 in 2019).



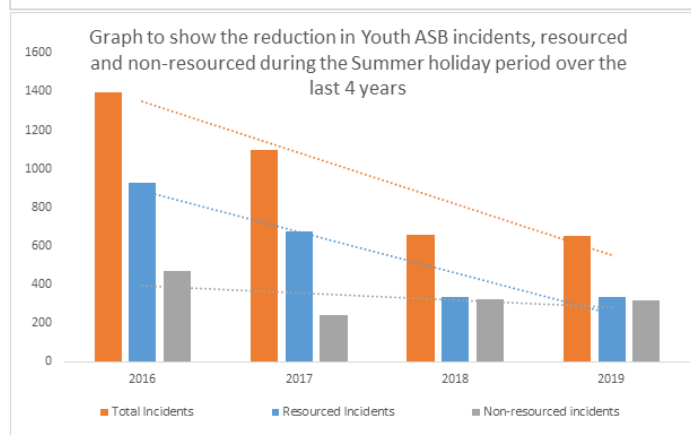
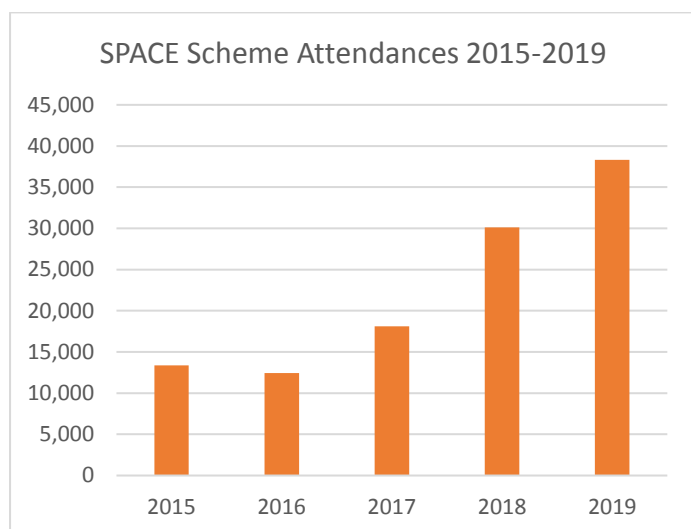
Space Champions Olivia Hopwood, Adam Yates and Lacey Dutton

*"I just wanted to let you know how much we appreciate you and Phil/Rob with regards to the excellent support and positive influence you have had on K and, in turn, this has had an invaluable positive knock-on effect within our family. I also wanted to mention how the numerous different activities K has been introduced to, and enjoyed, has shown him what he is capable of doing and has*

*boosted his confidence, self-esteem and self-worth. If it hadn't been for the above, I think that K would be continuing on a downward spiral."*

*"L really enjoyed all of the activities that he went on, it gave me some peace and quiet as he can be difficult at home sometimes, it's one of the positive things that Youth Offending do."*

*"M's mother said she felt her son's behaviour was getting better, she was pleased that staff engaged and spoke to him on his level and fully supported him and them. She felt if there weren't places and activities like this that kept kids occupied and off the streets, there would be a lot more kids in trouble with the police."*



## Tackling Serious Violence

Serious violence can affect people at all stages of life. Many survive serious violence, but suffer physical, mental or emotional health problems throughout the rest of their lives. While Staffordshire does not have the same levels of serious violence as many other areas, it has increased steadily over the past five years, so it is important to take the opportunity to improve this position through early intervention and prevention. This is not purely a policing issue. It is now, rightly, being viewed as a public health problem, which requires agencies to collectively deliver sustainable reductions in serious violence and improve the health and quality of life of all people in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent. To this end, we've played a pivotal role in bringing partners together to develop a multi-agency strategy and action plan and, while it is early days, we look forward to seeing this approach deliver the expected

results. The Commissioner has funded a lead officer to ensure this important work area is implemented.

Additionally, we submitted a successful bid to the Home Office **Early Intervention Youth Fund** in 2019, being allocated £392,700 to fund a multi-agency approach to prevent young people from committing violent crime. The project will seek to identify the risks they face and address them through a programme of prevention and early intervention. Schools will develop 'critical thinking skills' among their pupils, with tailored support for the most vulnerable youngsters. Professionals across various agencies will be trained in how to spot risk factors, while parents and families will also be given more support.

### **Preventing Cyber Crime**

The internet has brought new and changing threats from crime and criminals, whether for individuals or for businesses, and the sometimes international nature of cyber crime makes it a complex area for police and other agencies to tackle.

The Deputy Commissioner spearheaded work to develop a partnership approach to cyber crime, which involved a more collaborative approach to tackling the challenges it brings. The **Cyber Safe Staffordshire** campaign was launched in 2016 to raise awareness of cyber crime and to encourage people to be more confident in taking steps to protect themselves online. The Deputy Commissioner also established the Online Fraud Forum, a partnership of local business and public sector organisations, and a scheme to train and support 'Cyber Champions in the Workplace' to act as single points of contact on cyber security within their organisations. Training is provided by Staffordshire Police and the Regional Organised Crime Unit and over 300 people have now been trained.

In 2017, we hosted the first Online Fraud Conference attended by representatives from hundreds of local businesses to raise their awareness of cyber crime and how they can protect themselves from becoming victims. We also teamed up with Trading Standards, working with the Adult Safeguarding Board to identify ways to support vulnerable people to prevent them from becoming victims of financial abuse. We also supported the appointment of a specialist digital PCSO, advising residents across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent on how to stay safe from online criminals.



# Managing offenders

Nationally, 50% of all crime is committed by 'career' offenders who, typically, by the age of 40 will have cost the system £500,000 each. In Staffordshire alone, the costs of offending is £250 million a year.

In 2014, the Commissioner established the Staffordshire Offender Management Commissioning and Development Board, bringing together all key partners with a responsibility or interest in the offending arena to support a coordinated, whole-system approach to reducing offending and reoffending in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent.

Partners agreed an ambitious county-wide strategy to guide local action in relation to this agenda with the aim of:

- Promoting timely interventions across agencies in Staffordshire to reduce the risk of people becoming involved in offending behaviour; and
- Ensuring that where people do offend, they are brought to account for their actions while being given the appropriate support and encouragement to move on and to avoid reoffending in the future.

A comprehensive action plan was produced to support implementation of the strategy based around four key themes – Prevention, Diversion, Offender Management and Offender Rehabilitation and Resettlement – and multi-agency groups were established to oversee delivery.

## Prevention

Reducing first-time offending and reoffending is at the heart of the Commissioner's Early Intervention priority and associated initiatives such as Values vs Violence, Youth Offending Prevention Teams and the Serious Violence Strategy, and actions are detailed in that section.

## Diversion

Diversionary approaches allow low-level offending to be dealt with at an early stage and outside of the criminal justice system, where it is appropriate and with the victim's consent. This avoids unnecessary court proceedings, prevents problems from escalating and gives first-time offenders, in many cases young people, an opportunity to change direction.

Staffordshire was selected as a pilot area for **out-of-court disposals**, designed to improve collaboration and ensure consistent decision-making between Youth Offending Teams, police and partner agencies, when considering instances of minor offending and ASB by young people. The Commissioner supports this approach, which encourages greater use of community resolutions and conditional cautions as an alternative to prosecution, where appropriate.

We've worked with partner agencies to develop a **Looked After Children** protocol to guide multi-agency action aimed at reducing the number of young people in care coming into contact with the criminal justice system.

The Commissioner has also provided funding for a coordinator post to support multi-agency work across the county aimed at diverting young people away from **gang-related activity and youth violence**.

### **Mental Health and Offending**

Before being elected as Staffordshire Commissioner, it wouldn't have occurred to me how mental health issues, offending and policing are quite so inextricably linked.

At an early stage, I was particularly concerned at the extent to which police cells were being used as so-called 'places of safety' for those in mental health crisis because other facilities were unavailable. In some situations, the police may well be needed initially, but once things are under control the police are not equipped, nor best placed, to take responsibility for that person for any longer than is absolutely necessary. They need healthcare support and, too often, people ended up criminalised in the justice system when they shouldn't have been.

In 2014, I commissioned a piece of work to understand the scale of the issues police faced. The 'Staffordshire Report' provided detailed analysis over an eight-week period of all police incidents involving mental health. It illustrated, case by case, the human aspect and the pressures on police officers, often in the middle of the night, dealing with individuals who have some sort of mental health condition.

The report led to the agreement of an action plan and a new shared commitment across agencies to improve how they jointly responded to incidents. This included the introduction of a new Community Triage Team in which community psychiatric nurses work with frontline officers to provide support in response to calls from individuals with mental health issues, and an increase in NHS provision for people needing a place of safety. As a result, the number of individuals ending up in custody in these circumstances reduced by over 80% in Staffordshire.

I also pushed for a change in the law in this area. The initial change, which outlawed using cells as a place of safety for under-18s and placed a time limit on their use for adults, was a step in the right direction but did not go far enough, and in Staffordshire we have continued to strive to reduce the use of cells as a place of safety for adults to zero.

Building on this work, I established a new Mental Health and Community Safety Strategic Board in 2017 to oversee improvements in health and justice services more generally to ensure that, where appropriate, support is available to divert individuals with mental health needs and other vulnerabilities who come into contact with criminal justice agencies away from the criminal justice system and into appropriate treatment and care.

I commissioned NACRO to undertake a needs analysis to get a clear picture of the level of demand for mental health diversionary services at different stages of the criminal justice

process. The findings have been used to review the adequacy of existing services and gaps in service provision and to guide the strengthening of services in key areas.

This has included work with NHS England to support the roll-out of criminal justice mental health liaison and diversion services in Staffordshire. Services are now in place to provide essential assessment and early intervention services for individuals with mental health needs and other vulnerabilities in police custody suites and magistrates courts throughout the county.

My office has also worked with partners to review and to refresh the existing Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent multi-agency Mental Health Crisis Care Concordat, which will provide a framework for continued joint working on the mental health and offending agenda for the next two years and beyond.

### **Offender Management**

We've worked with key criminal justice partners – Staffordshire Police, Youth Offending Teams, the Ministry of Justice, the National Prisons and Probation Service and Staffordshire and West Midlands Community Rehabilitation Company – to further develop and strengthen local offender management arrangements to ensure that offenders subject to custodial and community sentences are effectively supervised and supported to comply with the terms of their sentence and avoid further offending, and that services are tailored to local needs.

Work also took place to review, refresh and reinvigorate the operation of **Integrated Offender Management** arrangements in the county, which are designed to ensure an effective multi-agency approach to the management of the most prolific offenders. This resulted in a number of recommendations, which will ensure the model remains fit for purpose in managing offenders in a way that protects the public, while effectively supporting their rehabilitation into society and stopping them committing further crime.

A new county-wide **Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Service**, offering a range of rehabilitative programmes, is now being provided as part of a broader set of services by New Era. So far, 330 cases have been referred to New Era where people have sought help to change their abusive behaviour.

We've worked with Ministry of Justice and National Probation Service partners to progress the local implementation of the national **Women Offenders Strategy**, resulting in a more structured whole-system approach based on what has worked elsewhere. This work is ongoing and will include provision for early intervention for first-time offenders, improved availability of gender-specific sentencing options, and better resettlement provision.

### **Offender Rehabilitation and Resettlement**

The availability of housing, employment and training opportunities, substance misuse services and other support services is critical to offenders' successful long-term rehabilitation and reintegration into the community.

The Commissioner provides funding towards a county-wide floating **housing support service** for offenders. This scheme provides a practical tenancy support service for up to 120 offenders at any one time and has been at 100% occupancy since inception, with 60% of those supported being helped to access training or employment and over 80% being supported to comply with their statutory orders.

Addressing the link between unemployment and offending and **improving access to the labour market** is a key component of the refreshed strategy and is critical to reducing offending and reoffending. Work has been undertaken to support the establishment of a new training / employment brokerage service for offenders, aimed at offering employment opportunities in the construction sector.

The Commissioner contributed funds to support the provision of **substance misuse services** across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent to ensure that more offenders – where their offending is related to substance misuse – are able to have their treatment needs met. Funding from partners for these services has become increasingly sparse, so it has become vital to ensure future resources are targeted directly on services and interventions proven to reduce offending and improve recovery outcomes. A new investment model has been agreed between partners which will strengthen local service provision in key areas – enabling the introduction of drug testing, assessment and referral services in police custody suites on a consistent, county-wide basis for the first time and providing the treatment capacity to support an increase (in appropriate cases) in the use of community orders with an alcohol or drug treatment requirement.

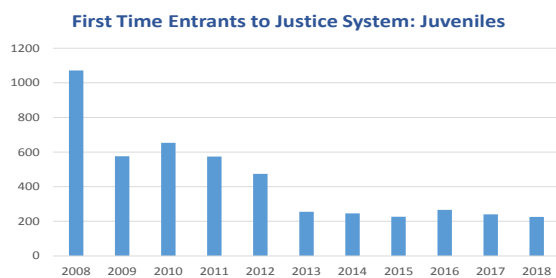
Building on work undertaken to better respond to the needs of offenders with **mental health** needs, we've contributed funds to support a two-year pilot project designed to increase the use of community orders with a mental health treatment requirement (MHTRs).

Under the pilot, which is being funded jointly with NHS England, magistrates in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent will be provided with an important new sentencing option when dealing with individuals whose offending is linked to their mental health. Offenders will be directed to receive mental health treatment and support as part of their community order. The pilot, which is being supported by the Ministry of Justice national Community Sentencing Treatment Requirement (CSTR) programme team, will run from April 2020 and, if successful, it is intended that MHTRs will be made available more generally as a sentencing option across courts in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent.

## **Outcomes**

The strategy seeks to:

- Reduce first-time entrants to the youth justice system; and
- Achieve a sustained reduction in youth and adult re-offending.



Since 2010, there has been a continued downward trend in the number of young people entering the criminal justice system in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent. Since this sharp reduction, the numbers of new entrants remain consistent.



Recent changes in the way reoffending rates are calculated makes direct comparison with previous years difficult, but these initial results indicate that since the strategy's launch in October 2015, in both Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent there has been a measurable, albeit small, reduction in youth reoffending. Adult reoffending levels have

remained fairly static. These are interim results, but provide an indication of the impact of the strategy, suggesting that work undertaken to date is on track.

While much remains to be done, given the challenging financial climate of the past 8-10 years which has had an adverse impact on the lives of many offenders and their families, with shrinking local authority budgets, the reduced availability of local services and changes to universal credit, overall performance in addressing offending has been positive.

### Crime in Prisons

In 2018, I took the lead on behalf of the PCCs in the West Midlands region in examining the issue of crime in prisons. The hard-hitting six-month study involved months of research, visits to prisons and multi-agency work, and proposed straightforward solutions to tackle criminality across the prisons estate. Staffordshire itself has eight prisons – one of the highest number of prisons in a single county across the country.

I commissioned Staffordshire University's Professor James Treadwell and the University of Leicester's Dr Kate Gooch, both experts in the field, to carry out the study. They spoke to prisoners, prison governors, staff and multiple agencies throughout the West Midlands over a period of six months.

The study showed that staff were all working very hard to tackle the problem, but it became clear that no single agency could bring about effective change on their own – it needed to

be done together. Prisons must be places of law and order, where staff are confident and in control and where criminality is targeted and challenged, not allowed to thrive.

This multi-agency approach resulted in all key agencies coming together to tackle the systematic and deep-rooted problems and led to the development of a five-point plan to address them which was presented to Government.

The Government is installing body scanners in some prisons to stop drugs getting in, but the findings of the West Midlands study showed that simply sharing information better between the police and prisons can impact significantly. An information-sharing pilot at HMP Dovegate, a Category 2 prison in Staffordshire, resulted in not only identifying prison staff linked with organised crime, but also visitors who were trafficking drugs into the prison.

Proposals such as giving prisons access to the Police National Database (PND) were highlighted as an example of the simple measures that could be taken to stop organised crime in its tracks.

The work also found that vulnerable individuals were being deliberately targeted, threatened and coerced into getting themselves recalled shortly after being released, with the sole purpose of trafficking drugs and contraband, driving reoffending rates.

The study helped develop an approach which could be adopted nationally to tackle some of the cultural and organisational flaws in the system. The recommendations focused on five key areas, from ensuring crime doesn't pay by taking money off criminals, sharing information and intelligence, to ensuring vulnerable inmates are protected from those who would use them to bring drugs into prisons.

# Public Confidence

The role of Commissioner is to be the voice of the people and hold services to account. This priority was about ensuring that people are better informed and involved in how policing, the fire and rescue service and community safety arrangements are delivered, hopefully increasing public confidence and, in the case of policing, reducing their fear of crime.

It is also about ensuring services are public facing, visible, capable and responsive to the diverse needs of our communities. Trust is an essential ingredient and services need to be transparent and open to examination and scrutiny to help provide reassurance and improve services.

## Transparency and Accountability

Strong governance arrangements are essential to improving service delivery and accountability to ensure our intended outcomes are met and we operate in the public interest. We've developed an effective **corporate governance framework** which is supported by:

- Performance management frameworks focused on delivering the Police and Crime Plan and Fire and Rescue Plan;
- Budgeting systems that align resources with priorities;
- Good financial reporting that informs decision making;
- A commissioning framework;
- Engagement in value-for-money benchmarking;
- Rules and procedures for effective working within and between the Commissioner's office, the police and fire and rescue service;
- An independent Ethics, Transparency and Audit Panel (ETAP), charged with seeking assurance over risk, governance and internal control;
- Independent Custody Visitors scheme, Dog Welfare scheme and Safer Neighbourhood Panels;
- Risk Management Strategy;
- Appropriate statutory officers within the Commissioner's office, the police and fire and rescue service;
- Clear codes of conduct and standards of behaviour; and
- Appropriate communications to ensure transparency.

The Commissioner established the **Ethics, Transparency and Audit Panel (ETAP)** to perform a public scrutiny role. It has been recognised nationally for its work in holding policing to account across a number of areas and its remit has now been extended to cover fire and rescue. The work of ETAP covers the statutory responsibility to scrutinise the accounts and financial arrangements of our office, police force and the fire and rescue service, however the panel also conducts thematic reviews around service delivery and has helped improve services across Staffordshire. Recent reports from ETAP have included a review of whistleblowing, out of court disposals and care in custody. Reviews are all published on our

website and full ETAP meetings are open to the public. The work of ETAP can be found at [www.staffordshire-pfcc.gov.uk/volunteer/ethics/](http://www.staffordshire-pfcc.gov.uk/volunteer/ethics/)

The Commissioner introduced **Safer Neighbourhood Panels** at Cannock, Staffordshire Moorlands and South Staffordshire in 2014 and expanded them across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent the following year. Panels are made up of residents, local councillors and magistrates and meet regularly with their area policing commander. They shape local policing and community safety and shine the spotlight on the work done by police in their area to ensure greater transparency and help build public confidence. They examine the performance of neighbourhood policing and the impact it has on their communities. Panel members receive training to help them carry out their role, so they can be involved in innovative work such as examining body camera footage captured during stop and searches by local officers. Recommendations arising from this work prompted a force-wide review of policies and procedures relating to the retention of body-worn video footage of stop and searches, resulting in briefings being issued to operational officers. Their reports are available at <https://staffordshire-pfcc.gov.uk/get-involved/volunteer/snp/>. There are plans to extend their remit to cover fire and rescue activities.

**Independent Custody Visitors (ICVs)** have a statutory responsibility to visit people detained in police custody, an important way of reassuring local communities of fairness and lawful management of the custody process. Our scheme in Staffordshire has been awarded the Gold Standard in a quality assurance assessment by the national Independent Custody Visitor Association. There are now two ICV Panels for Staffordshire, one covering the Northern Area Custody Facility at Etruria, the other covering the Watling House Custody Facility at Gailey. ICVs make around 210 unannounced visits to these custody suites every year. During those visits, on average 462 detainees per year agree to be visited where ICVs ensure their rights and entitlements under the law are being extended to them. ICVs are volunteers who are selected, trained, monitored and supported by the Commissioner's office. You can find out more about the various ways to get involved with the work of our office at [www.staffordshire-pfcc.gov.uk/volunteer/](http://www.staffordshire-pfcc.gov.uk/volunteer/)

The Commissioner's office also oversaw the introduction of arrangements to ensure the availability and training of **Appropriate Adults** to support vulnerable adults detained or interviewed by the police and ongoing compliance with national standards for the scheme.

#### **Police, Fire and Crime Panel**

In order to promote openness and transparency, my work is scrutinised by the Staffordshire Police, Fire and Crime Panel. The panel ensures I am delivering against my strategy and that I am effective in holding the Chief Constable and Chief Fire Officer to account and properly scrutinising the work of their organisations. The panel consists of local councillors and independent members who are interested in community safety. I am invited to attend their meetings, where they can question me on my work. They are also responsible for scrutinising key appointments, my annual budget and council tax precept decisions and dealing with any complaints made against me. Meetings of the panel are webcast live and available to view afterwards.



For the second year running, we've been awarded the **Open and Transparent Quality Mark**. This is awarded annually by CoPaCC following a rigorous assessment process designed to ensure statutory transparency requirements are fulfilled and facilitate an ongoing process to raise standards.

We've introduced a **Dog Welfare Scheme** in partnership with the Dogs Trust and Staffordshire Police to enhance public confidence surrounding those animals engaged in police work. Members of the local community observe and report upon the conditions under which police dogs are housed, trained and transported.

### **Investing in community projects**

Supporting local community safety priorities is key to meeting the needs of local communities and businesses.

With this in mind, we've provided local authorities with strategic assessments identifying local crime and disorder-related issues, enabling local community safety plans to be put in place. Supporting their delivery, the Commissioner has provided **Locality Deal Fund** monies on an annual basis since 2014, totalling £6.1 million. This includes almost £440,000 locally for substance misuse support, almost £800,000 for young people's activities and £200,000 on supporting victims of hate crime.

Additionally, our Proceeds of Crime Fund, made available to our partners to support strategic activities through two funding rounds per year, has seen investment of over £820,000 since 2014, reaching almost 64,000 people and involving over 500 volunteers. Similarly, the Commissioner's People Power Fund, available to community groups to help support their local areas, has seen over £850,000 invested in local initiatives, involved over 48,000 people and encouraged over 2,200 volunteers.

### **Examples of projects funded + photos used in social media**

|  |  |   |  |
|--|--|---|--|
| <b>Burton Albion Trust</b><br>Knife crime awareness project    | <b>Right Stuff Project</b><br>Diversionary activities for young people | <b>Tamworth Taxi Marshalling</b><br>To reduce violence and ASB      | <b>Biddulph Youth &amp; Community Zone</b><br>Projects to reduce ASB |
| <b>Liberty Staffordshire CIC</b><br>Community safety programme | <b>Voice of Hope</b><br>Increasing awareness of modern day slavery     | <b>Street Chaplains</b><br>Volunteers patrolling night time economy | <b>Brighter Futures Housing Association</b><br>Outreach service      |

Recent legislation has given commissioners a greater role to increase independence and improve the way **complaints against the police** are handled. We've prepared for these changes, which are designed to simplify the complaints system so that complaints are dealt with more quickly, effectively and proportionately, and the Commissioner's office will have a direct role in conducting reviews of the way in which complaints have been managed by the force.

Our office has also managed a number of hearings of officers' appeals against gross misconduct findings by Staffordshire Police. **Police Appeals Tribunals** were designed to bring greater transparency to the process and members of the public are entitled to attend as observers. We're responsible for the appointment and training of the legally qualified chairs who conduct these proceedings.

The Commissioner launched **Staffordshire Smart Alert** in 2016. It provides real-time crime and community safety information to businesses and communities across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent. Taking the form of a downloadable app and a website, users are able to select their preferred method of receiving information, advice and guidance direct from local officers. It has continued to develop with additional 'geo-fencing' functionality now in place, enabling alerts to be issued to residents (over 12 years of age) and businesses signed up to the system located within a 3km radius of an incident or issue at the time it arises. This key tool in reaching out to local people now has over 10,000 members with more sign-ups daily. To access the app, go to [www.staffordshiresmartalert.uk](http://www.staffordshiresmartalert.uk)

A wide range of **community engagement** activities and meetings with members of the public take place across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent every year and the Commissioner has met with around 28,000 people at over 500 events. These events provide the opportunity for the Commissioner and his Deputy to inform local people of the work taking place and, importantly, listen to their views on crime, policing and community safety. Typical engagement activities include community groups such as youth groups, school events, rotary clubs, women's institutes, religious festivals, parish council meetings and many more. In addition to face-to-face engagement, we've established a strong online presence. Our social media accounts now have a combined following of more than 15,000 people. Members of the public can also sign up to receive electronic newsletters from the office – [www.staffordshire-pfcc.gov.uk/news/updates](http://www.staffordshire-pfcc.gov.uk/news/updates)

The Commissioner's office has also organised a number of major engagement and consultation events:

- Annual Youth Commission events – 'Big Conversation'
- Knife crime event with partners
- Online Fraud Conference
- FGM conferences
- Modern Day Slavery awareness events
- Mental Health Summit
- Violent crime debate with US criminology students and the Youth Commission
- 'In Conversation with the PCC' at Staffordshire University on Hate Crime

The **Staffordshire Youth Commission** has undertaken a significant amount of youth engagement on behalf of our office. They have engaged with thousands of young people to develop understanding and obtain evidence relating to their key priorities, which were identified through the Big Conversation in 2017.

To date, 29 interactive peer-to-peer workshops have been run on the topic of knife and gang crime with young people from Stoke-on-Trent sixth form, Burton & South Derbyshire College and Nacro, specifically targeting young people who are at risk or who have been directly affected. In addition, the Youth Commission has also undertaken workshops on mental health, hate crime, exclusion, abuse and CSE. They have also held advisory meetings with Staffordshire Police, focusing on priority areas such as hate crime and exclusion.

Commission members also attended a meeting of the Sport and Youth Justice Steering Group to help present the findings and evaluations of the Space project to partners from across the county. The Youth Commission has undertaken a great deal of engagement work across the county to determine youth awareness of the Space project, its potential impact and how it could be developed in the future.

In 2015, the Commissioner instigated an **independent review into the policing of football matches** in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent. The review was conducted by a leading national academic on crowd safety, looking at the effectiveness of the arrangements for policing local football matches. It focused on Stoke City and Port Vale and included visits to policed games at both clubs' grounds. Our office had previously introduced new formal audit and appeal arrangements between local clubs and Staffordshire Police to improve the consistency and transparency of decisions made on the level and costs of policing matches. The review assessed the effectiveness and impact of policing arrangements, identified opportunities to improve based on best practice and suggested ways to strengthen relationships between Staffordshire Police and local football clubs and take a more community-policing approach to football matches.

# Supporting Victims and Witnesses

**On taking office, the Commissioner was struck by the complexity of the criminal justice system and found it not as effective or joined up as it could be. He therefore made it a priority to push for reform to ensure that victims, witnesses and their families are supported in a way that recognises their individual circumstances and places them at the very heart of all criminal justice processes. This has been about better understanding people's needs and providing tailored support to help them cope and recover.**

There has been a wealth of reforms since the 1990s, which includes the Victims' Charter (1990), subsequently revised in 1996 and replaced in 2006 by the **Victims' Code of Practice** (VCoP) for Victims of Crime. The Victims' Code was revised in October 2013 and subsequently revised again in November 2015 to incorporate the principles of the European Union Directive (2012/29/EU). It established two priority outcomes for victims: to **cope** with the experience of becoming a victim, and to **recover** from any harm caused by the criminal conduct.

The aims of our strategy were therefore to ensure:

- Victims and witnesses were able to cope and recover; and
- Victims and witnesses would have access to prompt and appropriate support.

There is a statutory duty under the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004 to publish and consult on a draft amended Code. The Ministry of Justice is therefore currently seeking views on its initial proposals for change and the priority issues to focus on. A revised Code incorporating those views is planned for spring 2020.

**Baroness Newlove** was appointed as the Victims' Commissioner by the UK government in 2012, with the role of liaising with ministers to offer advice on aspects of the criminal justice system that affect victim and witnesses. In September 2018, Baroness Newlove visited Staffordshire to meet the Deputy Commissioner to talk about our successes and achievements. The visit also focused on the support for non-recent victims and survivors of child sexual abuse. Baroness Newlove said, "I am grateful to the survivors I met, with the PCC, in Staffordshire who shared their experiences".

In 2018, the Government produced their first **Cross Government Victim Strategy**, which builds on the good progress made over the past few years to ensure victims have the right help in the aftermath of a crime and are properly supported in the process of seeing justice delivered. In line with the Government's Victims' Strategy, PCCs received £67.85 million in 2019/20 from the Ministry of Justice to deliver or commission victim support services in their local areas. For 2020/21, PCCs will receive £69.1 million, including a commitment by the Ministry of Justice to develop a new delivery model for victim support services. Officials are considering the possibility of multi-year funding settlements and a wider review of the funding formula for distribution of the victim services grant funding to PCCs as part of the next Spending Review in 2021.

To ensure that services continue to meet victim demand, we commissioned a **Victim and Witness Needs Assessment** in 2014 and subsequently again in 2018 to provide an up-to-date picture to inform our local strategy and future commissioning priorities. The first stage of the 2018 needs assessment explored the current position in terms of crime, levels of victimisation, the criminal justice process and the broad impact of crime on victims and witnesses. The second stage focused on the detailed experiences of victims and witnesses, identified through interviews and focus groups. Staffordshire is a diverse county, and we have recognised that parts of it, such as rural communities, face different threats and need to be supported in different ways.

The **Victim and Witness Commissioning and Development Board** was established in 2017 to develop an effective, integrated structure for all victim and witness services that tackle the delays and inefficiencies in the system that can have a negative impact on victims and witnesses. This multi-agency board, chaired by the Deputy Commissioner, is now well established and works to develop and deliver the strategy to improve services for victims and witnesses in Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire. The board is supported by strong governance and partnership arrangements. Many projects have been commissioned to support victims and witnesses of crime. Some are shown below.

Following a Victim and Witness Needs Assessment in 2014, the **Staffordshire Victim Gateway** model was developed and introduced in 2015 to provide a 'front door' for victims of crime in Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire, regardless of whether the crime has been reported to the police or not. The whole-system approach covers everything from the victim reporting the crime or recognising they need support through to them receiving specialist support.



The Gateway supports the delivery of the Code's key entitlements and provides prompt, professional, victim-led support to help people cope and recover from the impact of crime and the harm they have experienced. It is delivered in a respectful, sensitive and professional manner without discrimination. The service encompasses a triage assessment, tailored advice, emotional and practical support and a managed and supported onward referral to specialist services. As such, the Gateway forms a central and essential part of the victim support system.

Last year, we worked with Triangle Consulting who design, develop and implement Outcome Stars. Outcome Stars are an evidence-based tool which measure and support change when working with people who require one-to-one support. Triangle has recently designed a new 'Victim of Crime' Star, which has been piloted by Thames Valley Police and Staffordshire Victim Gateway. The Star will support change with regard to emotional wellbeing, money and practicalities, close relationships, safety at home and navigating the legal process.

The Gateway has successfully supported a number of victims from high-profile cases, including the Manchester Arena bombing and the West Midlands breast surgeon case.

Since it was established, there have been **219,092** victim referrals into the Victim Gateway, with **8,286** victims referred to specialist support agencies.

More information on the Gateway service is available at [www.staffsvictimgateway.org.uk](http://www.staffsvictimgateway.org.uk)

*"I used to be a shadow of my former self, but now I am back working and living my life again. I only have my support worker to thank for that. She has been fantastic with me, she picked me up when I was at my worst and supported me right through to the end. I can't thank her enough."*

*"Thank you very much for your support. Your help was invaluable and you were there when I most needed support. You were kind and human, but professional at the same time. It would have been so much harder going through everything on my own and more traumatic for me. Massive thank you to you."*

As part of the Government's commitment to improve services to victims and witnesses, the Victims' Code stipulates that every victim should receive information about **restorative justice (RJ)** and how they can take part. In 2016, as part of our commitment to the Code, we commissioned the creation of a centralised multi-agency RJ Hub. The Hub, staffed by a core team of skilled practitioners, provides coordination and support for the delivery of victim-led interventions before, during and for an appropriate time after any investigation or criminal proceedings. Since its inception, the Hub has provided victims with the opportunity to have a say in the resolution of offences committed against them and offered an opportunity to come face-to-face with their offender as part of a resolution. For victims, when used appropriately, this is often more effective than a criminal justice process.

Since it was established, there have been 707 referrals into the RJ Hub. More information on the Restorative Justice Service is available at <https://staffsvictimsgateway.org.uk/help-for-victims-2/restorative-justice/>

The Commissioner's strategy has also focused on **business crime**. Successful businesses are the lifeblood of thriving communities and crime plays a significant role in their development; it can cause high costs and damage to companies.

In 2015, the Commissioner established the Business Crime Advisor project, delivered by Staffordshire Chambers of Commerce to provide specialist support for victims of business crime. Its focus is on ensuring practical advice, guidance and support is provided, in a timely manner, to ensure business continuity following a crime. The Business Crime Advisor is located within Staffordshire Police's control room, which enables them to make contact with victims of business crime within one day of a report being made. This allows them to provide advice and guidance on how to deal with the crime in a timely manner. All victims of business crime are entitled to receive one hour of free confidential specialist support, which can include areas such as ICT, security or insurance.

Since it was established, there have been 15,854 businesses identified by the Business Crime Advisor as being eligible for support.

*“The service was really efficient, and the advice was fantastic. It was tailored to what we needed and we were also able to query what was happening with our crime.”*

*“It was just good to speak to someone and for us to run ideas past people. The list of businesses was also useful as we were able to get some expert opinions with no pressure.”*

To take our work with businesses further, we’ve recently commissioned Staffordshire University to conduct research to assess the scope, scale and impact of business crime in Staffordshire and the support available to businesses nationally, regionally and locally. The University has engaged with businesses to understand their experiences and perspectives on business crime, their awareness of the support available and its effectiveness, and to seek their views on how services could be improved.

In 2017, the Commissioner provided funding to establish a **video link** facility in Burton to support our most vulnerable victims. The video link provides a positive experience for victims and enables vulnerable and/or intimidated victims to give their best evidence without having to sit in the court room in front of the alleged offender. Professional staff and a witness service volunteer are available to meet users of the facility, and there is a separate waiting area and kitchen for family and carers who accompany victims to the facility.

**Victims of cyber crime** in Staffordshire are now signposted by the national Action Fraud Service to the Victim Gateway and its staff have received training to ensure they are providing the right support. The Chambers of Commerce have also been commissioned to support businesses which fall victim to cyber crime. Our office has commissioned research to better understand the extent of the problem and inform the response across Staffordshire.

**Modern slavery** presents a great number of overlapping issues and crimes, which require a strong, coherent partnership approach. It is essential that all of us recognise that protecting people from slavery is everyone’s business. We have worked with partners to develop a modern slavery training framework, to enable organisations to prioritise their staff for training and to identify what type of training is required. This coincides with a recent funding award which has enabled the office to co-ordinate the delivery of ‘train the trainer’ training across the county.

We’ve recently commissioned a modern slavery support service, delivered by Voice of Hope, after identifying a gap in service provision for adult victims of modern slavery. The service provides effective, consistent, coherent and coordinated advice, guidance and support

across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent, bridging a gap until the Ministry of Justice's national modern slavery service is established in September 2020.

### **Sexual Abuse**

In 2018, NHS England published their 'Strategic Direction for Sexual Assault and Abuse Services – lifelong care for victims and survivors: 2018 – 2023'. This strategy outlines how services for victims and survivors of sexual assault and abuse, across all settings of the health and care system, need to evolve between now and 2023. We continue to work with NHS England, who have provided us with funding to host a local sexual abuse strategy lead, whose role is to deliver the national strategy at a local level.

In addition, NHS England have also funded a pilot Sexual Assault and Abuse Family Support Service, which covers Stoke-on-Trent, Stafford and Cannock. The focus of the pilot is on supporting family members and significant others, where one or multiple members of the family has been a victim of sexual abuse, either historic or current. The service encompasses a whole family approach and is tailored towards their needs, so that the family unit is able to cope and recover.

So far, since June 2019, the service has received 83 referrals from family members and significant others.

We continue to work closely with NHS England to shape the local direction of our adult and child sexual abuse services provided by SARC (sexual assault referral centre). Grange Park SARC is located in the north of Stoke-on-Trent. It is a free, confidential service providing co-ordinated forensic examination, health assessment, SARC counselling sessions and referral into local services for support and follow-up care to men, women and children who have experienced rape or sexual assault, either recently or not. Adults can access the service 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Staffordshire has a 'hub and spoke' model for children. Children who are identified as 'acute' are seen at the 'hub' in Walsall 24 hours a day, seven days a week, while all non-acute children cases are seen at Grange Park – the 'spoke'.

Annual **Victim Grant funding** from the Ministry Of Justice enables the Commissioner to allocate resources accordingly in order to enable victims to receive the support they need from victim support services. The Victim Grant has supported a number of projects/services during the Commissioner's time in office:

- BRAKE – a UK road safety charity and a well-established provider of support services to people who have been bereaved or seriously injured in a road crash, as well as their family, friends and professionals supporting them;
- Challenge North Staffs – a service for victims of hate crime in the north of the county;
- Therapeutic support for children who have been sexually abused; and
- Support for adults who have been sexually abused.



We commissioned research on **rural crime** in Staffordshire to understand its extent and impact. This research takes us beyond perceptions and gives us hard facts, which the Commissioner's office and Staffordshire Police are taking forward to get real results in tackling rural crime.

Rural areas typically tend to be safer, but the impact of crime is often disproportionately greater on victims in the countryside. Due to the often remote and isolated nature of the locations, it can heighten feelings of vulnerability and levels of concern. Many crimes are common to both rural and urban areas such as domestic abuse, cyber crime and serious sexual offences, but the challenge of preventing and solving these crimes is often exacerbated by remoteness and isolation. Other crimes are specific to rural areas, for example livestock rustling, poaching and hare coursing.

The Deputy Commissioner has worked with Staffordshire Police to ensure research informs their approach, as well as key stakeholders, to ensure rural communities are aware of the support available and ensure that services commissioned take into account the special characteristics of rural communities. Further information can be found at [www.staffordshire-pfcc.gov.uk/rural-crime-strategy](http://www.staffordshire-pfcc.gov.uk/rural-crime-strategy)

## Domestic Abuse



Historically, funding for domestic abuse (DA) services was provided in an inconsistent manner, with both commissioned and grant arrangements through a range of providers resulting in a postcode lottery of services. While initially I provided top up-funding in an attempt to mitigate demand and manage waiting lists, clearly this approach was not sustainable.

We established strategic leadership for DA in Staffordshire through the DA Commissioning and Development Board (DACDB). This group includes representation from my office, local authorities, providers, health, CPS, courts and other key stakeholders, and the Board owns the first ever pan-Staffordshire Domestic Abuse Strategy (2017-2020). The strategy is delivered through the multi-agency DA Action Plan, supported by three themed DA working groups.

My office negotiated a collaborative commissioning approach with Staffordshire County and Stoke-on-Trent City Councils to meet the locally identified needs and provide a consistent service offer.

In October 2018, this resulted in the pan-Staffordshire New Era DA service, providing support for victims, families, communities and businesses. The victim service comprises

prevention and early intervention which aims to stop the generational cycle of abuse while also supporting high-risk victims through targeted and acute support.

The perpetrator service provides a range of programmes aimed at rehabilitative support for those wanting to change their abusive behaviour.

New Era has received almost **6,000** enquiries / referrals to the victim service and seen over **330** perpetrators access rehabilitative support during its first 12 months.

New Era has ensured a consistent service provision across the whole geography, with clear referral routes for partners and the public. Synergy between victim and perpetrator services has been achieved for the first time across the whole area.

Victim comments to Independent Domestic Violence Advocate (IDVA):

*"You helped to build me back up and get my life back in order, keeping both myself and my daughter protected and safe in the process."*

DA victim accessing the New Era children and young people's service:

*"The safety plan your Children and Young People worker did with my child saved both of our lives that day."*

DA perpetrator seeking rehabilitative support from the perpetrator programme:

*"I thought it was just physical violence, which I have never been, however now I realise it covers a range of behaviours – shouting, arguing, controlling behaviour, verbal and emotional abuse."*

*"I now understand the ways it can affect my children, my partner, ex-partner or future partners and the mental impact it can have, the physical effect and that it can ruin people's lives."*

Intensive training aimed at increasing awareness of DA is taking place with professionals, businesses and in local communities consistently across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent.

The service also provides the DA in the Workplace programme, extended to cover both victim and perpetrator behaviour and building on the earlier successful work undertaken in Staffordshire and led by the Deputy Commissioner. My office has commissioned Staffordshire Chambers of Commerce to provide additional business support for this element of the DA agenda.

*"The training has given me a much better understanding of situations that you can come up against – whether you're dealing with colleagues, customers or members of the public, or even family and friends. It's brought a lot to light and makes you realise the importance of supporting anyone affected by domestic abuse – whether they're a victim or a perpetrator."*

The approach taken locally was fully supported by national DA victim charity SafeLives and aligns with the national Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy.

We also commissioned the provision of **personal safety devices**. These electronic devices and associated services are highly effective in providing additional support for the small number of people at the highest risk of harm or who are considered to be at the highest level of vulnerability. They are considered as part of a package of support available for officers to use when dealing with vulnerable individuals.