

Police, Fire and Crime Panel – 10 October 2023

Police and Crime Plan Update

Report of the Staffordshire Commissioner

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. This report is to update the Police, Fire and Crime Panel on the delivery of the Police and Crime Plan for Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1. That the Panel note the update on the delivery of the plan and make comment as appropriate.

3. Background

- 3.1. In December 2021, the Staffordshire Commissioner for Police, Fire and Rescue, and Crime (Staffordshire Commissioner) published his Police and Crime Plan for 2021-2024. The plan provides the strategic direction for how policing should be delivered during the Commissioner's term of office. It details how the Commissioner's Office (SCO) will work with Staffordshire Police, health, councils, the wider criminal justice system and community groups to reduce the number of victims of crime and anti-social behaviour (ASB), reduce casualties on our roads and prevent people suffering due to the actions of others.
- 3.2. The plan sets out the Commissioner's priorities, designed to 'Keep Staffordshire Safe':
 - **A local and responsive service:** Understand and deal with what matters to communities, respond promptly to incidents and work with partners to solve problems and prevent them from getting worse. This will mean that crime and ASB reduces, our roads are safer and confidence in Staffordshire Police increases.
 - **Prevent harm and protect people:** Prevent harm and protect people (particularly children and those that are vulnerable) by ensuring they are safeguarded and receive the help and support they need.
 - **Support victims and witnesses:** Ensure victims and witnesses are provided with exceptional specialist support services so they feel able to cope and recover from the impact of crime and ASB.
 - **Reduce offending and reoffending:** Ensure people are challenged and supported to make life choices that will prevent them from offending and perpetrators don't reoffend. Doing so will mean fewer victims of crime.
 - **A more effective criminal justice system:** Ensure Staffordshire Police, the Crown Prosecution Service, Courts, the Probation Service and HM

Prison Service all work seamlessly so that effective justice is delivered more quickly.

- 3.3. How effectively the Service performs against these priorities is a key part of how the Commissioner holds the Chief Constable to account on behalf of the public. To this end, the Chief Constable must have regard to the Police and Crime Plan in producing his Policing Plan for the force. Both the Police and Crime Plan and the Policing Plan will be kept under review and potentially refreshed during the Commissioner's term of office to take account of finances, changes in national policy or major events.
- 3.4. The [2022/23 Annual Report](#) was received by the panel on 3 July 2023. This report highlights progress since April 2023.

4. Progress to Date

4.1. A local and responsive service

- 4.1.1. The Police Operating Model established in June 2022 is providing more capacity to respond, investigate crime, give victims the attention they need and more time for proactive policing. Most importantly, by placing teams locally and aligning them with district boundaries, they are now more closely connected to local issues and working with partners to problem solve the recurring issues that matter most to communities. Response times to the most serious incidents remain stable but more incidents are being attended by response officers first, meaning that neighbourhood officers are free to focus on proactive work and community engagement.
- 4.1.2. The Police Uplift Programme has now finished and the force met its target officer number. Additionally, with local investment through increased council tax, I agreed a target with the Chief Constable of **2,000 officers by the end of March 2024**. The force is set to exceed this target, with the current strength sitting at 1,962. At the same time, sickness levels have reduced by 15% for officers and 16% for PCSOs and police staff compared to the previous year.
- 4.1.3. Productivity of local teams is increasing, with arrest rates up by 16%, stop searches up by 16%, vehicle searches up by 22% on the previous year and positive criminal justice outcomes slightly improving. Performance is expected to improve further as the model becomes fully staffed and officers complete training to become ready for independent patrol.
- 4.1.4. The most recent public perception survey, carried out in July 2023, demonstrates positive impact:
 - 77% of people feel they could rely on their local policing team if they needed them, compared with 72% in June 2022;
 - 65% agree that the force is responding effectively to emergencies (increased from 51%);

- 67% have confidence in Staffordshire Police (increased from 63%).
- 4.1.5. The force has recently developed a **Neighbourhood Policing Strategy** which aims to further increase the accessibility and visibility of local policing teams, develop engagement approaches, enhance capabilities in prevention, early intervention and problem solving, improve analytical proficiency and target hotspots.
 - 4.1.6. The Commissioner's Office has successfully applied for Home Office funding for additional **ASB hotspot patrols**. £2m has been awarded over the next two years as part of a national pilot and will be used to fund patrols at peak times for ASB, initially by police officers and PCSOs and subsequently by Community Wardens. In addition to providing an enhanced uniformed presence, the patrols will be supported by outreach workers to engage with people they identify as committing ASB and make referrals into existing support services, for example for drug and alcohol support, diversionary interventions, mediation. The patrol areas selected are Etruria & Hanley, Fenton West & Mount Pleasant, Stafford town centre, Newcastle-under-Lyme town centre and Burton Urban.
 - 4.1.7. His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) identified the **effectiveness of investigations** and appropriate support for victims as a cause of concern. The force has a wide-ranging improvement programme in place with the support of the College of Policing Investigation Standards Team and Performance Support Unit, plus peer support from other forces. This includes reality testing and support panels to critique interventions. The force has commenced the first phase of the development of a new Crime and Victim Bureau. Additional staff and process changes will improve crime recording standards and timeliness, and release capacity for supervisors in local policing to focus on improving investigation quality. A framework has been developed to assist supervisors to do this, with quality checkpoints in place to ensure compliance with standards and further oversight by senior managers. There has been further investment in staff to audit and quality assure investigation standards and officers continue to attend investigation 'masterclasses' to increase their capability.
 - 4.1.8. Improving the efficiency and effectiveness of both **999 and 101 call handling** is crucial to public confidence and an absolute priority in the Commissioner's Police and Crime Plan. Shortcomings were identified as a cause of concern by HMICFRS and progress against an improvement plan is a major element of the Commissioner's scrutiny and accountability process with the force.
 - 4.1.9. An additional 30 staff have been recruited into the Force Contact Centre to meet a sustained increase in demand. 236,000 calls were made to 999 in the past 12 months which is an increase of 28% on pre-pandemic levels. Despite these challenges, average answer times for 999 calls has improved significantly compared to this time last year; 85% of 999 calls are answered in 10 seconds, placing Staffordshire as sixth best performing of 43 forces.
- 101 demand also continues to increase. The triage function introduced

in June 2022 continues to be effective in managing demand and the Contact Centre uplift has enabled it to be expanded. Experienced officers can signpost people to partner agencies, transfer calls to local officers already dealing with an incident and can also offer a call back service for non-emergencies. The team services around 60% of incoming calls and deal with 50% of calls at the very first point of contact, reducing the number that would previously have gone through to 101 and therefore reducing waiting times for those that do.

Many of the calls received by the force relate to concern for people's safety, incidents involving people with mental ill-health and missing persons rather than crime. This is not unique to Staffordshire; other forces are observing similar changes in demand. The force is working with partner agencies towards implementing the **Right Care Right Person** approach from February 2024. This is a national programme that aims to ensure that health-related calls into police forces are responded to by the most appropriate agency, rather than the police, who in many cases are not the best organisation to respond. This particularly relates to calls made to police forces around concerns for welfare, be that mental health, medical or social care-related.

The force is working with relevant partner agencies to ensure that the necessary protocols, commitments and training are in place ahead of implementation. The new approach will mean police stop attending many health incidents, unless there is a significant safety risk or crime being committed. Instead, contact staff will refer these to an appropriate partner agency, for example mental health services.

Panel members are reminded that video recording of and reports for the Public Performance Meeting which I hold regularly with the Chief Constable can be found [here](#). The reports contain comprehensive information on force performance and resourcing.

4.2. Prevent harm and protect people

4.2.1. HMICFRS re-inspected the force in March 2023 following an initial inspection in 2021 which found systemic failings and made 15 recommendations for improvement in its services to children. The **National Child Protection Re-inspection** report, received in August 2023, acknowledged the progress the force has made in improving delivery structures and leadership, information management and IT, its response to online child sexual abuse, management of registered sex offenders and its contribution to multi-agency child protection arrangements. HMICFRS highlighted, however, a number of areas that the force continues to address, including the quality of child protection investigations, responses to children reported missing from home, accuracy in data recording and processes to assess and share information with other organisations to help protect children. Further realignment of resources is taking place to help address these challenges and additional investment in Public Protection work is under

active consideration.

- 4.2.2. The Commissioner has established a Staffordshire-wide **Community Safety Forum** to improve collaboration between agencies, align their strategic direction and ensure prompt joint action to tackle community safety issues. A major focus area for the forum is ASB. The Commissioner's Office supported ASB Awareness Week from 3-9 July, which aimed to encourage communities to take a stand against ASB and highlight the actions those experiencing it can take. This year's theme was 'Know your Rights', with a particular focus on the **ASB Case Review** (previously known as the Community Trigger) – a powerful tool allowing victims to request action if they have reported multiple incidences of ASB but are unhappy with the response they received. In Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent, a new approach has now been agreed which will bring consistency to how Reviews are managed and align to national good practice.
- 4.2.3. The Commissioner has made available a range of **community funds** to support innovative projects which focus on ASB and other local community safety priorities. This funding will give a boost to local initiatives by supporting community or voluntary groups to address priorities in their area, helping local people to build on the great work they are already doing in keeping their communities safe. Each Community Safety Partnership (CSP) receives a share of the £724,750 Locality Deal Fund to address community safety-related concerns. Additionally, each CSP receives £10,000 to tackle ASB, funded from money seized under the Proceeds of Crime Act. A further £100,000 is made available to new or existing community groups, through small grants of up to £5,000, to build community resilience, designing and implementing community safety projects to address locally identified concerns.
- 4.2.4. Following the successful completion of projects under the first three rounds of Home Office **Safer Streets Fund** initiative, the SCO was successful in its bid for funding under Round 4 which completed in September 2023. £750,000 has been invested in tackling ASB and violence against women and girls (VAWG) in Stafford, Burton, Newcastle and areas of Stoke-on-Trent. This funding is in addition to over £2 million already secured by the SCO through Safer Streets and £300,000 through the related Home Office Safety of Women at Night (SWAN) initiative.
- 4.2.5. Round 4 has enabled a range of partnership interventions including physical crime prevention improvements, community awareness campaigns and engagement work, personal development programmes, diversionary activities and street pastor schemes. Education resources have been developed for Key Stage 2 (9-11 years old) and Key Stage 3 (11-14 years old) around ASB. In addition, a targeted personal development programme is being delivered to support 28 young people to change their behaviours and perceptions at school and within the community. Another awareness campaign on VAWG will run from 'freshers week' through to Christmas.
- 4.2.6. Two funding proposals have recently been submitted to the Home Office

under Round 5 of the Fund, and a decision is awaited. If successful, these will provide a further £1m to fund a range of interventions over the next 18 months to tackle ASB in locations not previously targeted.

- 4.2.7. Two **Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education (PSHE) Coordinator** posts continue to support schools and the quality of PSHE curriculum delivery. The PSHE Coordinators have launched a website providing guidance and resources for young people, education providers, parents and carers. More specifically and additionally, a national approach to delivering PSHE has been tailored for local use and a training package developed which has been delivered to 38 PCSOs so far. This aims to ensure a consistent PSHE offer to all schools across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent by Staffordshire Police. The programme has clear learning outcomes, mapped to curriculum outcomes, appropriate resources and an evaluation process to monitor feedback and learning for local policing teams.
- 4.2.8. Since the publication of the Serious Violence Strategy in 2018, the Government announced a set of programmes to tackle serious violence across England and Wales. To reinforce this as a national priority, the new Serious Violence Duty has been introduced through the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts (PCSC) Act 2022. It places a legal obligation on specific organisations to plan and collaborate to prevent and reduce serious violence. The [Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Violence Reduction Alliance](#) (VRA) continues to prepare the local response to the Duty. A strategic needs assessment has been produced and research carried out by the Staffordshire Centre for Data Analytics, both of which will inform a refresh of the local Violence Reduction Strategy. Consultation is key to understanding serious violence locally and informing the strategy. 1,600 young people have been surveyed online by Staffordshire Council of Voluntary Youth Services (SCVYS), parents and carers have also been surveyed and a second conference held with 110 attendees. The VRA has now been assessed as 'ready' to deliver the Serious Violence Duty by the Home Office.
- 4.2.9. The VRA and the Commissioner's Office have placed particular emphasis on **knife crime** in recent months through a number of initiatives. Following the successful visit of the Knife Angel to Stoke-on-Trent, there has been a further visit to Lichfield which is important in promoting discussion about the impact knife crime has on communities. Knife bins were also stationed in Lichfield and Burntwood as part of the campaign. Virtual reality resources have been designed to help interact with young people on issues around knife crime and gangs. This approach is led by the PHSE Coordinators and uses hardware purchased through the Safer Streets Fund. A Responsible Retailer scheme has been developed for retailers selling knives which could be used as weapons.
- 4.2.10. Two hundred police cars now have **bleed control kits** on board as part of a jointly funded project between the Commissioner and the force. The specialist kits complement existing first aid supplies and are designed to control bleeding from trauma injuries caused by stabbings or serious road traffic collisions before the ambulance or paramedics arrive. These

build upon the static kits introduced in Burton-on-Trent by Rob Freckleton in memory of his son, Oliver, and in Stoke-on-Trent by Chit Chat 4U, a group created by mums with lived experience to support victims of or involved in gangs, youth violence and knife crime.

- 4.2.11. The VRA has continued to develop campaigns and education initiatives to tackle **VAWG**, and Safer Streets funding has enabled a broader approach to be taken. Vulnerability awareness training continues to be rolled out and a training programme on 'Signs of Spiking' has been developed for implementation from October. Safe places for women have now been implemented in Hanley and Stafford and Newcastle-under-Lyme town centres. A media partner pack has also been developed to raise awareness of the Hollie Guard app.
- 4.2.12. The **Child Criminal Exploitation/Child Sexual Exploitation/ Missing Service** continues to be delivered by Catch22. The service carries out return home interviews with children and young people who go missing to try and identify the reasons why they have gone missing, signpost support and prevent any future missing episodes. The CCE and CSE Services support children and young people who are at risk of exploitation, aims to prevent them from committing violent crime and seeks to address the risks faced by young people. Between April and June 2023, 1,122 missing incidents were reported for 497 individual children, the service completed 942 return home interviews, 151 children were supported for CSE and 123 children were supported for CCE. Staffordshire Police has developed the 'Are you listening?' campaign to improve awareness of the behavioural signs that children and young people that are victims of potential exploitation by serious organised criminals might exhibit.
- 4.2.13. The **Staffordshire Safer Roads Partnership (SSRP)** is a collaboration between public sector organisations within Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire, who work together to make our roads safer. The SSRP is currently co-chaired by the Commissioner and his Deputy Helen Fisher and aims to achieve a long-term, sustained reduction in road traffic collisions through joint work by partners including Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent councils, Police, Fire & Rescue Service and National Highways. Significant investment has been made by the partnership to upgrade safety cameras in the area, including more average speed cameras, continued migration to digital technology and units that are more effective at night. Similar investment has taken place to upgrade the partnership's fleet of safety camera vehicles.
- 4.2.14. The Commissioner earmarked £0.5m capital funding in 2023/24, to increase the number of Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) cameras across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent. This investment will greatly increase pro-active opportunities to target offenders who utilise road networks across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent to commit crime.
- 4.2.15. The number of volunteers taking part in Community Speed Watch schemes continues to increase and a new initiative has been launched to support communities to nominate locations for enforcement activity where speeding is a concern. The **Neighbourhood Speed Check** facility has

been funded by the SSRP and enables a mobile app to be used to check traffic speeds without the need for a full roadside traffic survey. This then allows community groups, led by local councillors, to evidence that a location meets the criteria for mobile enforcement or, if not, to reassure people with speeding concerns.

4.2.16. The SCO continues to lead the local implementation of the Government's new National Drugs Strategy through the new pan-**Staffordshire Drug and Alcohol Partnership (DAP)**. The Partnership is governed by a multi-agency Board, chaired by the Commissioner. It has three delivery priorities;

- Break Supply Chains – rid neighbourhoods of drugs; making them safe and secure places and enabling all areas to prosper and grow by cutting off the drug supply that is causing the most harm;
- Deliver a world-class treatment and recovery system – delivered via a highly trained and motivated workforce offering a full range of evidence-based interventions and available to anyone experiencing substance addiction, from entrenched heroin users and people struggling with cocaine, cannabis, and alcohol, to young people using psychoactive substances;
- Achieve a generational shift in the demand for drugs – raising awareness and targeting interventions so that fewer people take drugs or feel drawn toward taking drugs, and today's children and young people grow up in a safer and healthier environment.

The DAP has three comprehensive delivery plans outlining a range of partner actions to deliver against priority areas.

4.2.17. The Commissioner's **SPACE programme** brings together public, voluntary and private sector organisations to provide fun, positive activities for potentially vulnerable young people to help increase their skills, improve their health and wellbeing and create opportunities with an additional aim of reducing levels of ASB. Since being relaunched, SPACE has gone from strength to strength, with a 75% reduction in youth ASB during the summer period since 2016. 1,395 reports of youth-related ASB were recorded during the school summer holidays in 2016 compared to 353 in 2023. Over 2,400 activities took place including DJ sessions, canoeing, wildlife sessions, sports, swimming, trips out and arts and crafts

4.2.18. The **Prince's Trust Targeted Prevention Programme** supports and engages young people who are at risk of offending and victims of crime to improve their lifestyles and employment prospects. Between April and June 2023, 34 young people were supported to achieve improvements in social and personal skills as well as training and employment outcomes. The Prince's Trust has also supported the Commissioner in developing a **Peer Mentoring Programme** for vulnerable children moving from primary to secondary school. It provides mentoring and guidance to help children settle into the new

education setting, whilst offering an avenue for support. This programme was piloted in a number of schools and is currently being evaluated with a view to roll out.

- 4.2.19. A series of hard-hitting videos have been launched to encourage Staffordshire businesses to take advantage of the free **Staffordshire Business Crime Helpline** to help reduce the risk of business crime. The videos showcase examples of crimes that are affecting Staffordshire businesses, the wide-ranging impacts they can have and how preventative measures could have stopped them being a victim. The videos encourage businesses to contact the helpline to get free support. Operated by Staffordshire Chambers of Commerce and funded by the Commissioner's Office, the helpline offers expert advice to help local businesses combat various forms of criminal activities.

4.3. Support victims and witnesses

- 4.3.1. The Ministry of Justice (MoJ) will be consulting on the new **Code of Practice for Victims of Crime** to be introduced under the Victim Bill. This will update and strengthen the existing Code to ensure it reflects the latest legislation and guidance. The Commissioner's Office is working with the MoJ with regard to new Code compliance which will consist of new performance metrics, victim feedback mechanisms and process narratives.
- 4.3.2. A local feedback group has been formed with representatives from Staffordshire Police, CPS and HMCTS to review victims' experiences of engaging with the criminal justice system and instigate improvements. The new end-to-end victim survey is being piloted, and results are yet to be analysed. A video production company has been commissioned to produce two police training videos on quality of service to victims.
- 4.3.3. The MoJ will quadruple its funding for **victim and witness support services** by 2025, up from £41m in 2009/10, enabling Commissioners to build resilience into services, safeguard consistent delivery and ensure support is available to victims when they need it. For Staffordshire, this includes additional funding for a further 3.5 Independent Sexual Violence Advisors (ISVAs) or Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVAs). The office is working with local providers to introduce this additional support.
- 4.3.4. The SCO is working with NHS England and regional PCCs/police forces to recommission the provision of West Midlands region **Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC)** services. The successful bidder will be announced in September and there will be a six-month mobilisation period with the adult service commencing 1 April 2024. This service provides access to prompt, very specialised support for the victims of rape and sexual assault and abuse.
- 4.3.5. The **Staffordshire Victims and Restorative Justice Gateway** received 18,288 referrals between 1 April and 30 June 2023, of which 12,196 received advice, guidance and signposting. 5,397 were triaged for

enhanced support, with 3,367 signposted to other services including specialist services such as New Era, Survive, Uniting Staffordshire Against Hate (USAH) and ASB Harmony. 160 victims remained with the Gateway for 1:1 support. The Restorative Justice (RJ) service received 18 referrals during the same period, 24 people are currently pursuing an offer of RJ and 10 people completed an intervention.

4.3.6. Services commissioned by the SCO continued to provide **specialist support to victims**. From 1 April to 30 June:

- Survive (sexual assault and abuse) – 160 referrals received. Of those 63 accepted 1:1 support and 42 accepted counselling.
- USAH (Hate Crime) – 269 referrals received, of those 43 received advice, information and guidance. 54 requested 1:1 support.
- ASB Harmony – 124 referrals received, of those 106 accepted 1:1 support.
- Business Crime Support Service – 1169 business crimes dealt with by the service. Of those, 626 accepted support. Businesses were contacted within 1.5 days from the point of the crime being reported.

4.3.7. Access to support from the Gateway is dependent on prompt transfer of victims' details by Staffordshire Police. As a result of changes to the force Crime and Victims Bureau, almost all victims' details are now being transferred to the Gateway within the 48-hour limit set in the Victims Code of Practice.

4.3.8. New contracts have recently been put in place by the Staffordshire Commissioner's Office, as the lead commissioner, working with Staffordshire County and Stoke-on-Trent City Councils for the continued provision of New Era's **Domestic Abuse (DA) service** from 1 October 2023. The contracts are now worth £3.3m per year for the next three years, compared to £1.9m a year when launched in 2018. These new arrangements will see the Staffordshire Commissioner's Office funding contribution for these vital services, increase by more than £0.7m over the three year contract period; an overall investment from the Staffordshire Commissioner's Office of circa £4.5m. The DA Victim Service will continue to be delivered by Victim Support, who will now also deliver perpetrator services. The service offers help and support to all those affected by DA across the area, providing free and confidential support for victims, perpetrators and their families.

4.3.9. In terms of the existing services, between October 2018 - March 2023 the victim service received almost 30,000 referrals and provided support to 19,000 adults and 3,300 children; and the perpetrator service received almost 2,000 referrals and provided interventions to 682 adults and 168 children. In the first quarter of this year alone, the victim service received 1,884 referrals and provided support to 1,276 victims, and the perpetrator service received 155 referrals and provided interventions to 153 perpetrators.

4.3.10. A **DA in the workplace** programme, delivered in conjunction with Staffordshire Chambers of Commerce, has achieved CPD (Continuing

Professional Development) Accreditation. New Era deliver the programme which has trained almost 400 people since October 2018 to recognise the signs of DA, and signpost those who might want help to specialist services. Supporting DA victims in the workplace is an investment in the health and wellbeing of employees. It is available to local businesses and partner organisations across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent free of charge.

4.3.11. **Sexual Assault and Abuse Services** are currently being recommissioned by the Office. The service will cover Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire and will provide support to any victim aged over four years as well as the victim's family members. The service will commence 1 April 2024.

4.3.12. NHS England have provided funding to the Staffordshire Commissioner to undertake a **mental health needs assessment** specifically for victims and survivors of sexual assault and abuse. A proposal submitted to NHS England for £50,000 per year for three years to address the recommendations outlined in the assessment has been successful and the project is now underway with local service providers. Elements of the project include:

- Training in alternative therapies,
- Upscaling wellbeing workshops,
- Training in mental health interventions with proven positive outcomes for this cohort of victim.

4.3.13. Staffordshire University has undertaken an assessment of our local response to the needs of **sexual offence victims/survivors from ethnically diverse communities**, and its recommendations are now being addressed, including:

- Introduction of the 'Recite-Me' tool for those accessing support from the 'Survive' website who need the text translated in to a different language.
- Inclusivity training for staff and volunteers from 'by and for' organisations to ensure a greater understanding of needs of people from ethnically diverse backgrounds.

4.3.14. The Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Integrated Care Board (ICB) successfully applied for £1.2m **NHS England Pathfinder funding** in conjunction with the Commissioner's Office and locally commissioned sexual assault and abuse service providers. The Pathfinder service will augment (but not duplicate) existing mental health service provision and improve services for people accessing care by improving coordination between NHS services and specialist sexual violence and abuse voluntary sector organisations.

4.4. Reduce offending and reoffending

4.4.1. Since the last report to the Panel, work has been focused on the launch of the new countywide **Reducing Reoffending Strategy** and Action

Plan 2022-25 and taking forward priorities for 2023-24. Building on the previous strategy, the new strategy has two key aims:

- Promoting timely interventions across agencies in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent 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 whilst being given the appropriate support and encouragement to move on and to avoid reoffending in the future.

4.4.2. Actions under the strategy are grouped under four themes:

- Early Intervention / Prevention,
- Diversion,
- Offender Management,
- Rehabilitation and Resettlement.

4.4.3. The Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Reducing Reoffending Board continues to meet regularly to provide effective governance / oversight of the delivery of the strategy, with progress reports on implementation being provided to the Police, Fire and Crime Panel, Local Criminal Justice Board, Strategic Community Safety Forum and other partnership boards as appropriate.

4.4.4. The SCO continues to work with local authorities and other partners to ensure an appropriate focus on offending behaviour within local prevention and early intervention strategies and to support specific measures aimed at addressing the root causes and preventing the onset of offending behaviour.

4.4.5. Work is underway to increase the range of existing rehabilitation courses offered as part of an **Out of Court Disposal** (O OCD) for different types of offence. A streamlined assessment and referral process is being developed to ensure that these options are used appropriately and effectively.

4.4.6. The Partnership is strengthening the current **Integrated Offender Management** (IOM) operating model, in place to ensure effective oversight of offenders considered to be at highest risk of reoffending. The model ensures offenders are brought to account for their actions through appropriate punishment and effective disposals while being given the appropriate support and encouragement to move on and avoid reoffending. The SCO continues to provide support for the implementation of criminal justice (Youth Offending, Probation) delivery plans in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent, with a focus on planned improvements in the delivery of offender management arrangements. This include the introduction of a new IOM Quality Assurance tool and measures to increase the number of appointments offered / attended with the aim of improving offenders' compliance with Court Orders. The SCO has maintained funding for two dedicated mental health nurse posts to provide specific input to offenders managed by the IOM team.

4.4.7. The SCO continues to support the multi-agency pilot scheme aiming to increase the use of Community Orders with **Mental Health Treatment**

Requirements by local courts. Over the past 12 months the scheme has been effective in delivering an improvement in the uptake of Orders, with recent monitoring indicating a 15% increase in the use of Orders for people with mental health needs.

- 4.4.8. Improving the availability and effectiveness of housing, employment and other **rehabilitation support services** (e.g. drugs and alcohol and mental health) is important in helping people in prison or in the community reintegrate successfully and achieve stable lifestyles away from crime.
- 4.4.9. A new cross-agency forum – the Staffordshire Forum for Offender Accommodation – has recently been established to provide a focus for information sharing on housing need and an improved basis for joint service planning to help address gaps in accommodation provision for offenders and their families.
- 4.4.10. A new employment support service has recently been commissioned, focused on the IOM cohort, aiming to support more offenders to successfully take up and retain training and employment opportunities. Since the commencement of the contract at the beginning of the year, there have been 54 referrals to the service with 21 going on to take up full-time training (13) or employment (8).
- 4.4.11. As part of the local **Drugs Strategy**, the SCO has worked with public health leads in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent to prepare local substance misuse delivery plans with the aim of securing improvements in the availability and delivery of treatment services and interventions for offenders at different points of the criminal justice system. Additional one-off grant allocations have recently been awarded to each authority to support delivery.
- 4.4.12. The SCO continues to work with NHS England in support of the delivery of the new Integrated Contract for Health and Justice services which includes provision for the introduction of an enhanced **resettlement support service** (Reconnect) for prisoners with mental health needs returning to Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent following release from custody. The new service is being introduced on a phased basis during 2023/24 and will be fully operational by the end of the year.

4.5. **A more effective criminal justice system**

- 4.5.1. In the role as Chair of the **Local Criminal Justice Partnership Board**, the Commissioner has refreshed and refocused its work to focus on key deliverables including the level of early guilty pleas and reducing the time taken to compile cases. Significant backlogs in the Crown Court system remain and the work of the Board to address this is increasingly challenging as Staffordshire is the worst affected area for court space and judiciary availability within the Midlands CJS.
- 4.5.2. Improvements have been seen in the timeliness of investigations from police recorded crime to charge. A recorded high of 109 days in Q4 2022/2023 to the most recent figure of 74 days for Q1 2023/2024. This

is encouraging and there are several police improvements in place to maintain and improve on this reduction including introduction of a crime bureau and improved supervisor training and monitoring.

- 4.5.3. Improving the quality of investigations is a current priority for Staffordshire Police and the increase of early guilty pleas in the last quarter suggests that the victim focus is reaping benefits. Guilty pleas at the first hearing (year to date) at Magistrates Court is just above the national average 75% and in Crown court is well above the national average of 34.3% at 43.1%.
- 4.5.4. Within the wider CJS, reduction of backlogs of criminal cases within the Magistrates and Crown Courts is the priority for the LCJPB and a cross agency task and finish group has been convened to focus on specific deliverables to assist in this and should demonstrate additional progress in the coming months.
- 4.5.5. Part 2 of the Government's review of the role of PCC and the Victims' Bill contain complementary proposals to strengthen the role of PCCs in relation to the oversight of victims' experiences in the criminal justice system and commissioning support services. It is expected that this will provide a statutory framework to assist PCCs in leveraging their support in improving the system for the benefit of victims and witnesses.
- 4.5.6. This will be supported by proposals to improve PCCs' access to criminal justice data. Sharing relevant data in a timely way is essential to understanding how effective the system is but the process is often constrained by technical difficulty and a risk-averse culture. The [Home Office Delivery Data Dashboard](#), alongside Staffordshire Police, HMCTS, CPS, Probation, Prisons and Health data, is being used to populate the **CJS Performance Framework** and highlight areas for improvement. Whilst Staffordshire is in a relatively good position, national guidance and examples of good practice will support the work of the Local Criminal Justice Board in delivering improvements.
- 4.5.7. Work continues to develop an end-to-end victim satisfaction survey which seeks victims of crime's experiences from the point of reporting a crime through to exiting the criminal justice system. In addition to helping to understand the emotional impact this might have, it will provide crucial insight into where problems with processes, communication and delays occur, enabling agencies across the system to make informed improvements.

Ben Adams

Staffordshire Commissioner Police | Fire and Rescue | Crime

Contact Officer: Ralph Butler

Telephone: 01785 232437

Email: ralph.butler@staffordshire-pfcc.gov.uk