

Report to the Thames Valley Police & Crime Panel

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Panel



Anti-knife crime lessons ahead of summer holidays

Almost 50,000 personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) and KS3 to KS4 teachers have received lesson plans which challenge the myths and communicate the consequences of carrying a knife.

The bespoke hour-long lessons, created in partnership with the PSHE Association, will support teachers and organisations working with 11 to 16 year olds, educating them about the dangers of social media, the impact carrying a knife could have on their future, and how they can develop strategies to resist peer influence.

This action forms the latest part of the Home Office's #knifefree campaign and contributes to the government's £40 million serious violence strategy to tackle the rise in serious violence and the start of an ongoing plan to engage with schools and youth organisations on knife crime.

Early Intervention Youth Fund will now receive £22m to support community projects

The Home Secretary has announced increased funding for a scheme to steer young people away from crime following a sharp rise in murders, stabbings and robberies. Sajid Javid said the cash available to the Early Intervention Youth Fund – part of the government's serious violence strategy – would be doubled from £11m to £22m.

The additional cash comes as police-recorded crime in England and Wales hit the highest level in more than a decade. In the 12 months to March, forces logged 5.5 million crimes – a rise of 11 per cent compared with the previous year, and the highest tally for an equivalent period since 2005-06. The number of recorded homicides increased by 12 per cent in 2017-18 from the previous year, from 627 to 701. Police registered 40,147 offences involving a knife or sharp instrument – a 16 per cent rise and the highest number since the start of the decade.

Data released by the Office for National Statistics on 19 July also found that the proportion of recorded crimes that result in a charge or summons has fallen below one in 10, while officer numbers are the lowest in at least 22 years.

Home Office awards over £100 million to police transformation projects

The Police Transformation Fund was launched in 2016 to prepare police to respond to changing crime threats and invest in digital technology. The government is investing more than £100 million of the Police Transformation Fund (PTF) in projects designed to prepare police forces to adapt to the challenges of the future.

The Home Secretary has approved up to £70 million for investment in 2018/19 in four national major police-led programmes covering forces in England and Wales and to manage the portfolio of projects to ensure maximum benefits are shared among forces.

The programmes will transform how police use technology, make it easier for the public to engage with police online, and boost capacity to deal with major threats.

Altogether this will help support the police in preventing and combating existing serious crime and being better equipped to deal with new types of crime.

The Home Office also announced 15 successful bids to the fund, totaling £42.7 million across 2018/19 and 2019/20. Thames Valley Police received £362k towards the Pay and Reward Framework.

The four police-led national programmes, which are already underway, include:

- The National Enabling Programme: this will deliver a unified IT system across policing and deliver more joined-up working within and between forces. In Cumbria, for example, cloud-based note-taking technology allows officers preparing to question suspects in custody to view real-time information from victim interviews being conducted by other officers elsewhere, improving the response offered to those affected by crime.
- Specialist Capabilities Programme: this will improve force-to-force resource sharing in key crime areas like roads policing and armed policing. In cyber-crime, for example, the programme seeks to ensure forces can tackle digitally-dependent crime, with oversight provided through regional organised crime units (ROCs).
- The Digital Policing Portfolio: this aims to improve police's use of technology, including by creating a single online hub. The hub allows members of the public to report low-level incidents – such as minor road collisions – online rather than having an officer manually record the information at their local station, providing a better service to the public and improving efficiency for the force.
- Transforming Forensics: this will improve how biometric services and digital forensics are used, including the development of a 24/7, faster, fingerprint identification service.

The national programmes are expected to deliver cash savings, as well as improving efficiency by, for example, freeing up officers for frontline policing roles. Funding will be released in stages to the programmes subject to progress in delivery to provide ongoing assurance of this major investment.

The UK's modern slavery legislation is to be reviewed as criminal gangs find new ways to exploit victims

Laws introduced in 2015 included tougher sentences and more help for people forced into labouring, domestic servitude, sex work and other tasks. Ministers say about 600 investigations

are now taking place into offences. The government also wants businesses to do more to tackle modern slavery in their supply chains.

The Home Office says research has found modern slavery costs the UK up to £4.3bn a year - made up of victim support, victims' lost earnings and law enforcement. It said officials were seeing new forms of exploitation that fell under the definition of modern slavery such as children being forced to commit crimes for gangs and the recruitment of rough sleepers.

A spokesperson said: "The criminal networks that recruit and control victims are constantly adapting and finding new ways to exploit victims, and the commissioning of this independent review is an opportunity to enhance the UK's legislation to effectively tackle this issue.

"Key areas of focus for the review will be developing an understanding on the nature of modern slavery offences, the provisions around legal access and compensation to victims and improving the support given to child victims."

Victoria Atkins, Minister for Crime Safeguarding and Vulnerability, said: "It is our responsibility as citizens, businesses and governments to do all we can to stop exploitation. This independent review will help us identify what more we can do to tackle this terrible, global injustice by enhancing the Modern Slavery Act where necessary."

While the majority of regulations in the **Modern Slavery Act 2015** only cover England and Wales, certain areas - including protections for overseas domestic workers and rules relating to business transparency - do extend to Scotland and Northern Ireland.

The transparency provision requires companies with an annual turnover of more than £36m to publish a statement on their website outlining what they are doing to prevent and tackle modern slavery.

The Home Office said the review will look at what can be done to strengthen the legislation to "minimise the risk that the goods and services available in the UK are produced through forced labour and slavery". It also said there will be further funding of £2m for a scheme that works with trafficked child victims of modern slavery, in partnership with the charity Barnardo's.

The scheme will begin in the West Midlands in the autumn, joining existing projects in Greater Manchester, Hampshire and Wales.

Crime Figures

Only 9% of crimes end with suspects being charged or summonsed in England and Wales, Home Office figures suggest. In the 12 months to March, 443,000 crimes resulted in a charge or summons out of 4.6 million offences - the lowest detection rate since 2015.

Data also shows police closed nearly half (48%) of all cases because no suspect could be identified.

The Home Office statistics on crime outcomes are published at the same time as quarterly crime figures and the Crime Survey for England and Wales, which is based on people's experiences of crime.

Overall, crimes recorded by police went up 11% in the year to March according to figures published by the Office for National Statistics. The Home Office said that along with a growing caseload, there was evidence to suggest that more recorded crimes were in the most challenging offence types to investigate.

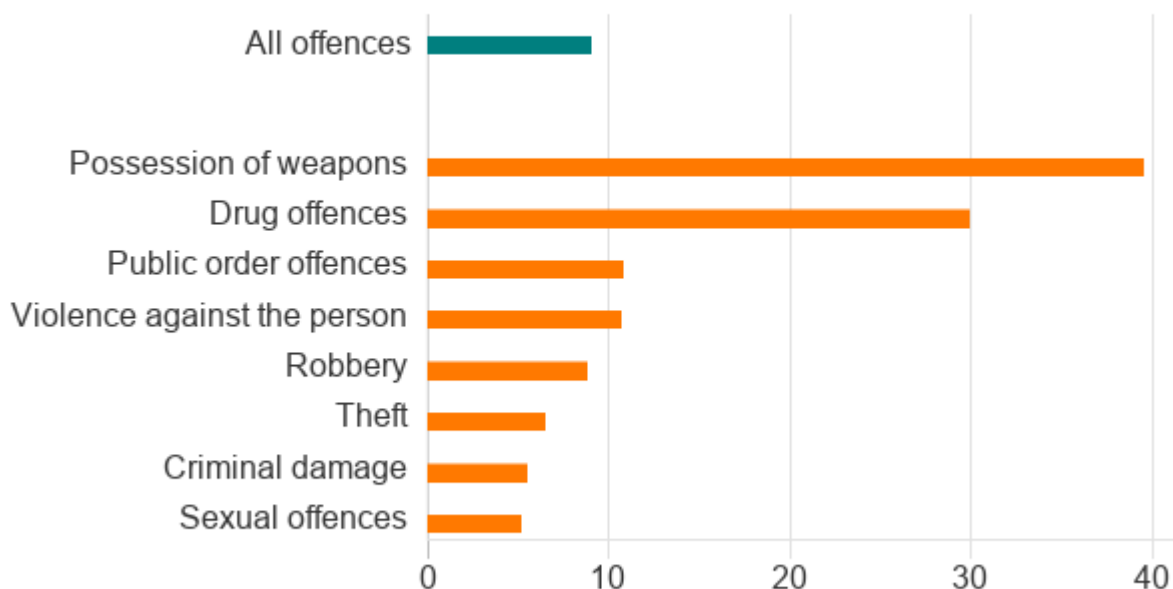
It gives the example of sexual offences - up 24% on last year - giving officers a bigger workload and becoming more complex. Rape cases take an average of 129 days to solve compared with, for example, two days for theft or criminal damage.

The Home Office figures show a continuing downward trend since 2015 in the proportion of cases police have resolved, falling from 15 to 9%.

They also showed a fall in the number of cautions and penalty notices served to adults and young people - from about 112,000 in the 12 months to March 2017 down to 88,000 a year later.

Proportion of offences resulting in charges (%)

Year ending March 2018 in England and Wales



Source: Home Office, Crime outcomes in England and Wales



Other notable findings from the Home Office include:

- In **sexual offence** cases, only 5% resulted in someone being charged or summonsed
- That figure falls to 3% for **rape** cases. In about a third (34%) of rape cases, the victim did not want to take the case to its conclusion
- In all, one in five cases went unresolved because the victim did not support action, usually meaning they did not want to go through the courts
- Three quarters of **theft** cases were closed with no suspect identified
- This was also the case in more than half (57%) of **robberies**, including **muggings**

Thames Valley courts custody staff 'too stretched'

HM Inspectorate of Prisons said services provided by private contractor GEOAmev suffered from "insufficient staffing" and "inadequate training". A report from an unannounced inspection in March said many detainees were held in "unacceptable conditions". But inspectors added they also found "positive features" during the visit.

GEOAmev, which provides court custody and escort facilities in the region, is contracted by the Prison Escort and Custody Services arm of the prison service, on behalf of HM Courts.

Despite managers' ambitions to improve outcomes for detainees and willingness among staff, their ambitions were not always achieved, inspectors said.

Among the main areas for concern were inadequate staffing of court docks and supervision of legal visits. The report said risk assessments for those sharing cells were not always carried out and there was not enough focus on whether vulnerable detainees could get home safely after being released. It said detainees, including children, were routinely handcuffed and cells were dirty and covered in graffiti.

The Thames Valley "cluster", which covers Oxfordshire, Berkshire and Buckinghamshire, includes 10 courts with custody facilities - four crown and six magistrates' courts.

Police and Recording of Crime in Lincolnshire

Nearly 10,000 crimes, including violent crimes, sexual offences and domestic abuse, have gone unrecorded by a UK police force over the course of a year, the police watchdog has said. Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) found that nearly one in five crimes reported to Lincolnshire police were undocumented, potentially leaving some victims shut out from support services.

The issue was "of very great concern", the inspector of constabulary, Zoë Billingham, said. "Although safeguarding measures were in place for many of the victims of crimes, there was little evidence of investigations being undertaken where the crime had not made it on to the books. This is particularly true for cases of domestic abuse. "The importance of correctly recording crime cannot be overlooked, or simply passed off as a bureaucratic measure. If a force does not correctly record crime, it cannot properly understand the demand on its services, nor provide support to those who need it most."

Victims can only access certain support services when a crime is recorded and a lack of accurate statistics can leave senior officers with insufficient information when allocating resources.

The watchdog examined records from the period 1 June to 30 November 2017 and estimated that about 9,400 reported crimes were not recorded per year – more than 18% of the total reported to Lincolnshire police.

The report said a "large proportion of common assaults and malicious communication offences and a small number of more serious crimes, including sexual offences, grievous bodily harm and rape", were not recorded.

Of particular concern was violent crime, where only 72.7% of reported incidents were recorded, with some crimes of grievous bodily harm and wounding where victims were badly injured not being properly documented.

Lincolnshire police's deputy chief constable, Craig Naylor, said measures had been put in place to improve recording and insisted the force's "service has not slipped".

New legislation could help tackle surge in officer assaults

Police officers across the Thames Valley faced nearly 800 assaults last year. Data from the Home Office shows that between April 2017 and March 2018, there were 794 assaults against officers of Thames Valley Police, of which 116 caused injuries.

This year is the first time that assaults causing injury to police officers have been recorded separately from those against members of the public.

A new law is to be introduced in the coming months that is likely to see harsher sentences handed down to people who assault emergency workers. **The Assaults on Emergency Workers (Offences) Bill**, which will be passed into law this autumn, will allow judges to take into account that the assault was committed against an emergency worker when sentencing offenders.

There are currently 260 frontline officers trained to use the protective weapons, but a surge in brutality towards staff will see a 50 per cent rise from Thames Valley Police.

Thames Valley Police is set to Taser-train 130 response officers to tackle the surge in the assaults, a measure which has been welcomed by the federation.

Significant increase in knife crime

The number of people Thames Valley Police have arrested for carrying a knife or blade has doubled over the course of five years. A Freedom of Information request sent to the force by the Oxford Mail revealed that officers arrested 651 people for carrying a knife or 'bladed article' in 2017, up from 328 in 2013.

Out of a total of 2,746 arrests from 2013 to June 30 of this year, 664 were in Oxfordshire. Of those, 313 were in Oxford - the second highest figure for an area in the region after Milton Keynes.

The figures have sparked concerns around rising levels of violent crime but the force has put at least some of it down to its own proactivity.

Police spokesman Jack Abell said: "Arrests for these offences are often driven by police proactivity.

"These statistics also represent cases where the reason for arrest was recorded as either possession of a knife blade/sharp pointed article in a public place or on school premises.

"Ultimately they may not have ended up as a recorded crime following investigation - for example, if the person arrested had a reasonable excuse for carrying the item in question.

"Nationally there has been an increase in knife related crime, and this is reflected in the Thames Valley."

The rising number of arrests is being linked to a general rise in crime - particularly violent crime - both across the country and in the region.

Police and Crime Panel Workshop – LGA

This event was held on 11 July 2018 at Westminster and delegates were provided with the following

- An update from the Home Office
- The new complaints framework
- Learning from Essex on their experience as a new Police, Fire and Crime Panel
- An introduction to the new National Association of Police (Fire) and Crime Panels
- News from the APCC
- Learning from other sectors on successful scrutiny

Victims First service launched to support victims of crime in the Thames Valley

On 26 June 2018, the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Thames Valley launched “Victims First” as a new service for victims of crime in the Thames Valley.

Victims First is available across Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire and provides free emotional and therapeutic support to all victims and witnesses of crime, as well as family members of victims if they require it. The service provides support and is available to all victims in the Thames Valley regardless of:

- Crime type
- If the crime has been reported to the police
- Whether they were a victim of a recent or historic crime
- Wherever the crime happened.

The aim of the service is to help people cope and recover from the impact of the crime by ensuring that they have access to a range of services depending on their needs, including:

- Telephone support
- Face to face support
- Advocacy, including, help to access other services such as sexual health clinics, drug and alcohol services and legal services
- Support through the criminal justice system
- Therapeutic counselling

Victims First can provide support to any victim of crime including domestic abuse, sexual violence, stalking, harassment, cyber-crime, fraud, theft, burglary and exploitation. When a victim contacts Victims First they are allocated a Victims First Officer who will discuss, over the phone, the impact of the crime on them and their emotional or practical needs. They will then work with the victim to put in place a support plan which could involve referral to one of Victims First specialist services for face to face support.

Specialist services include help for both male and females who have been victims of sexual violence and domestic abuse, a Young Victims Service, a Restorative Justice Service and therapeutic counselling. A new service supporting victims of exploitation will also begin in July 2018.

FROM THE DEPUTY POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONERS AUGUST NEWSLETTER

The Herbert Protocol -A new tool to help find missing people with dementia

A new tool to help find missing people with dementia is being used by Thames Valley Police in partnership with search and rescue teams of Thames Valley. The Herbert Protocol is a form to record key information about a person with dementia. This should be completed by carers or family members in case they go missing. Memory problems are one of a number of symptoms that people with dementia may experience; this can lead to feelings of confusion, fear and vulnerability and consequently can result in a person going missing.

The Herbert Protocol was adopted in January and it is helping to ensure that the police and partner agencies, including the volunteer search and rescue teams, have the best possible information should someone with dementia go missing and a search needs to be conducted to find them. It helps avoid any unnecessary delays as the right information is immediately available. This may include if the person is on medication, favourite places they like to visit or key people they know.

New Rural Crime Reporting Line

The NFU in partnership with Crimestoppers has launched 'The Rural Crime Reporting Line' for farmers and the public to give information anonymously about rural crime. If you have any information about rural crime you can call 0800 783 0137 or by visit www.ruralcrimereportingline.uk

Rural crime is on the rise and it is a serious issue for farmers, businesses and those who live in the countryside. Whether it is large-scale, industrial fly-tipping, hare coursing, livestock theft or machinery theft, rural crime has a devastating effect on farms and other rural businesses. Those responsible for this blight on the countryside are suspected of having links to organised crime. It is vital that they are brought to justice.

Educating Children about Healthy Relationships

Thousands of children in Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire will learn from the performance of a special play highlighting what does and doesn't constitute healthy online relationships with people.

The 40-minute play is being staged across the Thames Valley thanks to a £51,000 grant provided by the Police and Crime Commissioner. Pupils will go away from the play with a better understanding of:

- What constitutes a healthy relationship
- Pressure to conform with peer group online
- Risks when sharing inappropriate images online, including online sexual exploitation,

cyber-bullying and other online abusive behaviour

- The impact of online abusive behaviour with a view to developing empathy.
- Coercion and control within online relationships and strategies for managing this.
- Where to go for information and support.