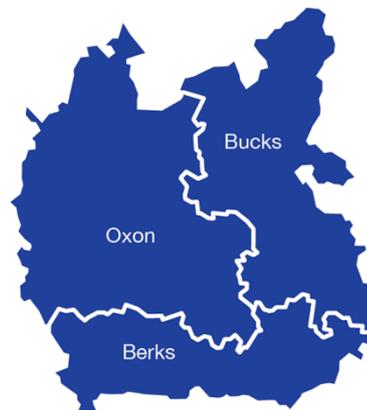


Report to the Thames Valley Police & Crime Panel

Title: Topical Issues

Date: 6 September 2019

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Panel



PC Andrew Harper

At the start of the meeting Thames Valley Police and Crime Commissioner and the Chief Constable of Thames Valley Police will make statements regarding the murder of PC Andrew Harper, whilst on police duty at Sulhamstead, Berkshire.

Recruitment of 20,000 extra Police Officers

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-49123319>

The recruitment of 20,000 new police officers in England and Wales will begin within weeks, Prime Minister Boris Johnson has said. The College of Policing welcomed the pledge but warned of "logistical challenges", partly because of concerns of a lack of instructors for training.

Home Office figures show that forces in England and Wales lost 20,564 officers between March 2010 and March 2019. Mr Johnson said he wanted the recruitment - which will be overseen by a new national policing board - to be completed over the next three years.

Downing Street said a recruitment campaign would begin in September, with forces held to account for meeting the target by a new board, bringing together police leaders and led by Home Secretary Priti Patel. Newly-appointed policing minister Kit Malthouse said the plans would cost around £500m in the first year, but said "we still have to work out the exact number".

Forces in England and Wales lost more than 20,000 officers between 2009 and 2017. Home Office figures show the three largest forces lost the highest number of officers: the Metropolitan Police Service (2,932), West Midlands Police (2,131) and Greater Manchester Police (1,704).

Cleveland Police lost the largest share of its total force - down 31% - while Surrey Police lost the smallest proportion at 0.4%.

The College of Policing welcomed the recruitment pledge as a "huge opportunity", but warned that some forces were concerned they did not have enough training instructors and police stations to support a rapid expansion.

Thames Valley Police: Crime Data Integrity re-inspection 2019

<https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmicfrs/publications/thames-valley-crime-data-integrity-re-inspection-2019/>

In November 2017, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) conducted a crime data integrity inspection of Thames Valley Police.

A report of this inspection was published in February 2018 and concluded that the force's crime recording arrangements were not acceptable. As a result, Thames Valley Police received an overall judgment of inadequate.

The 2018 report gave numerous recommendations and areas for improvement aimed at improving crime recording in Thames Valley Police. This re-inspection, completed in May 2019, assessed the progress made since that report.

From its low base Thames Valley Police has improved its crime recording arrangements since the 2017, however, it was found that still more need to be done.

The most significant change that it has made is to implement crime recording at the first point of contact in its contact management centre.

It has also:

- improved its overall crime recording, including of violence and sexual offences;
- significantly increased how often it records crime reports at the first point of contact;
- developed and implemented a CDI delivery plan; and
- provided comprehensive crime recording training to call handling staff in its contact management centre.

The force is determined to get crime recording right. But despite its new approach, it needs to achieve higher recording standards. To do this it should make sure it trains all staff in the contact management centre, including dispatchers, in crime recording. Failure to do this is limiting the accuracy of those recording decisions made at the point of contact.

Crime reports from 1 October to 31 December 2018 were examined. Based on this, it was estimated that the force records 87.9 percent of crimes reported to it (with a confidence interval of +/- 1.70 percent). This is a statistically significant improvement of 7.5 percentage points when compared to the 2017 inspection finding of 80.4 percent (confidence interval +/- 1.75 percent).

It was estimated that, compared to the findings of the 2017 inspection, this improved accuracy meant that the force recorded an additional 13,800 crimes for the year in the inspection audit period.

But despite these improvements, the overall recording rate and the recording rate for violent crime are still too low. Supervision of the crime recording process and decisions remains inconsistent. And there are still not enough safeguards in place to make sure reported crimes are recorded.

Also, since the last inspection the force has got worse at:

- using classification N100 for rape reports it decides not to record as crimes;
- making decisions when cancelling recorded offences; and
- informing victims of its decision to cancel their crime.

Summary of inspection findings

The force has made some progress with its crime recording arrangements since the 2017 inspection. It has:

- identified gaps in its systems and processes for recording crime reports arising from domestic incidents and public protection referrals;
- made changes to address these gaps;
- introduced a process where contact management staff review the domestic abuse and vulnerable victim reports from the previous day to make sure all crimes have been recorded;
- implemented a supervisory review process and started to brief frontline supervisors on their crime recording responsibilities; and
- issued operational crime recording guidance for officers and staff responsible for making crime recording decisions.

However, at the time of the inspection these changes had not yet created the improvement required to achieve accurate crime recording.

The force still needs to address various issues.

- Frontline officers, including supervisors, have a poor understanding of the force's crime recording system (NICHE). The force relies on NICHE to record crime and assess demand. But officers and supervisors clearly still do not understand how crime records are created and what entries constitute recorded crimes.
- Officers and supervisors who work outside the contact management centre have a poor understanding of the national crime recording standards (NCRS). They have not received crime recording training.
- Incidents which have been disclosed directly to public protection teams, in particular those reported by professional third parties, and which amount to a crime in law, are not always recorded as such.
- Officers and staff are still failing to correctly identify and record domestic abuse and rape crimes.

The force has failed to make sure officers and staff fully understand and apply changes made in April 2018 to crime recording requirements for stalking, harassment and coercive and controlling behaviour. Together with common assault, these crime types made up the vast majority of missed domestic abuse crimes.

It was noted that the force has been conducting its own crime recording audits, which have already identified some of the failings described in this report. These include some of the reasons why officers and staff fail to record reported crimes and some of the procedural problems that may affect crime recording accuracy.

The force reports the results of these audits to its CDI strategic and tactical working groups. And it shares them with department leads so that they can give feedback to officers and staff. This is good practice, but the force needs to do more to make sure these feedback processes are working effectively.

The force created a CDI delivery plan to address the recommendations and areas for improvement in our previous inspection report. This plan is comprehensive and the force has started to implement the vast majority of these actions. However, the pace of implementation needs to be accelerated as much remains to be done.

Domestic abuse and racism reports up in Oxford

<https://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/17820513.domestic-abuse-racism-reports-oxford/?ref=eb>

Home Office - Front Line Review - Recommendation report

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/815791/FLR_Recommendations_report_sent_V2.pdf

The Front Line Review gathered evidence on a wide range of issues impacting the working lives of officers and staff from forces across in England and Wales. The key themes included wellbeing, professional development, leadership and innovation. Issues and solutions were explored with an emphasis on individual and organisational resilience, removing unnecessary barriers and creating an environment to succeed.

The message from the front line is clear about the areas and need for changes as well as the complexity of the issues they face daily. The Review has evidenced a wide range of concerns and issues which are included in the report.

Policing Minister confirms £35 million for 18 Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) to set up Violence Reduction Units.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/funding-for-violence-reduction-units-announced>

18 PCCs have been awarded £35 million to set up specialist teams to tackle violent crime in their area, with Thames Valley PCC receiving £1,160,000.

The Violence Reduction Units will bring together different organisations, including the police, local government, health, community leaders and other key partners to tackle violent crime by understanding its root causes. The new units will be responsible for identifying what is driving violent crime in the area and coming up with a co-ordinated response.

The announcement follows a roundtable at Downing Street, hosted by Prime Minister Boris Johnson, bringing together the police, probation and prisons leaders to discuss how to cut crime

and improve the criminal justice system. The Prime Minister has vowed to give police the powers and resources they need to urgently tackle serious violence, cut crime and target county lines gangs.

The cash is being awarded after PCCs in the 18 areas worst affected by serious violence secured their provisional allocation through successful bids. Each unit will be tasked with delivering both short- and long-term strategies to tackle violent crime, involving police, healthcare workers, community leaders and others. The £35 million for violence reduction units comes from a £100 million serious violence fund announced in March.

The Crown Prosecution Service will receive an extra £85m over the next two years, to help deal with a rise in violent crime in England and Wales

www.bbc.co.uk/news/topics/c008ql151m5t/policing&link

Under the current system, criminals sentenced to 12 months or more generally serve the first half of their time in prison and the second half "on licence" in the community, where they may be subject to recall. Dangerous offenders can be given extended sentences, which mean they must serve two-thirds before being eligible for parole.

Justice secretary Robert Buckland said the review will focus on those violent, sexual and prolific offenders who are not currently given these extended sentences. He said that sentencing decisions should still be based on individual circumstances not "targets or numbers".

Police and Crime Commissioner launches Gang Awareness Training

The Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) for Thames Valley has officially launched a gang awareness training programme for professionals across Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire. The programme aims to raise awareness, upskill and increase confidence of front line professionals working with young people who are being, or are at risk of being, exploited into gangs.

The training is being delivered by Reach Every Generation, an organisation working to transform the lives of young people caught up in gang culture, and forms part of the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner's Early Intervention Youth Fund project.

The training sessions encourage front line workers to see beyond what they are presented with, to challenge their levels of professional curiosity to identify risk, manage trauma and safeguard young people. A key element of the training is personal testimony from ex-gang members who draw on their own experiences, sharing specialist knowledge and focussing on practical elements of supporting vulnerable young people.

26 training sessions will be delivered across the Thames Valley until November 2019. Attendees of the training include social workers, youth workers, teachers and police officers.

Other activity being delivered as part of the Early Intervention Youth Fund project includes; a 'County Lines' play touring secondary schools, workshops for young people on gangs and knife crime, youth work to tackle school exclusions, detached youth work in the community and intensive interventions with those already involved in criminality or exploitation.

Knife possession offences involving women in England have increased steeply since 2014 - rising by at least 10% every year, police figures show.

Rise in Women carrying knives (BBC)

Some 1,509 offences were recorded in 2018 - an increase of 73% over the last five years - data obtained following freedom of information requests shows. Youth workers say some women carry weapons for gangs as they are less likely to be stopped by police.

The Home Office said it funds schemes to help gang-affected women and girls.

Figures for England show that between 2014 and 2018 there were more than 5,800 recorded knife possession crimes involving women.

Data from 38 forces out of 39 in England shows almost a quarter of recorded offences involved girls under the age of 18 - with the youngest aged seven.

While London's Metropolitan Police saw the highest number of possession cases involving women, parts of northern England have seen female knife possession crimes increase at a faster rate.

London's Metropolitan Police recorded a 52% increase over five years, with a total of 916 recorded offences from 2014 to 2018.

During the same time, Merseyside Police saw a 54% rise, to 499 offences, while the number of offences in Greater Manchester doubled, with 95 recorded offences last year.

For Thames Valley, there were 310 recorded offences from 2014-18.

The Home Office said it was investing £220m into steering both young men and young women away from violent crime. For female offenders specifically, it supports and funds young people's advocates who work with gang-affected young women and girls in London, Manchester and the West Midlands.

An extra 10,000 new prison places will be created and stop-and-search powers expanded, Prime Minister has promised

PM to create extra prison places and increase "stop and search" BBC

The first new prison in the £2.5bn programme will be at HMP Full Sutton in Yorkshire.

The 10,000 new prison places are expected to be created by building new jails and expanding existing ones, at a cost of up to £2.5bn.

The first new prison will be built alongside the maximum security jail at HMP Full Sutton, the Ministry of Justice said. But plans already announced there have drawn objections from police, who said it would increase violent crime in the jail.

Previously decommissioned prison venues will also be refurbished and brought back into use, the government said. The Prime Minister has said that the investment was "long overdue". He also

argued that too many serious violent or sexual offenders are coming out of prison long before they should, and tougher sentences were needed.

In 2016, former justice secretary Liz Truss unveiled a white paper promising a £1.3bn investment in prisons, adding an extra 10,000 places by 2020 - later pushed back to 2022. The Ministry of Justice said it was on course to create 3,360 places at two new prisons by 2023.

Government sources said the £2.5bn funding would allow it to deliver 10,000 places on top of that, including projects already at a planning stage such as HMP Full Sutton.

But a spokesman for the Prison Reform Trust said the suggestion that all 10,000 places were new was "misleading" given earlier announcements.

The trust said prisons needed 12,000 more places just to eliminate overcrowding and accommodate new prisoners who have already been sentenced.

Last month, the government also pledged to recruit 20,000 extra police officers, nearly replacing the number of officers lost since the Conservatives returned to power.

How is stop-and-search changing?

A pilot scheme making it easier for police to search people without reasonable suspicion, in places where serious violence may occur, is being extended to all 43 forces across England and Wales.

In March, when he was home secretary, Sajid Javid first introduced the scheme in seven police force areas: London, the West Midlands, Merseyside, South Yorkshire, West Yorkshire, South Wales and Greater Manchester. The latest move will see restrictions over using section 60 stop-and-search lifted more widely, giving officers across England and Wales a limited time period to search anyone in a designated area in order to prevent violent crime.

Inspectors will now be able to use section 60 without seeking the authorisation of a senior officer and there will be a lower threshold for its use, with police only needing to reasonably believe that violence "may" occur, not that it will.

The Home Office and Number 10 said their decision to extend stop-and-search was based on "initial feedback" from the three-month trial in seven areas.

Stop-and-search powers have been controversial for many years, with evidence that they are sometimes misused and that they disproportionately target black people. In 2017-18, black people were 9.5 times more likely to be searched than white people, a gap which has grown in recent years.

Drug crime is increasing in many small towns and villages even as it falls significantly in city centres, the BBC has found

https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-48343369?intlink_from_url=https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/topics/c008ql151m5t/policing&link_location=live-reporting-story

Police data shows drug crimes in England and Wales have fallen by more than 50,000 in the past five years. But national averages hide a major shift in where drug crimes are being committed.

It comes as the government pledged an extra £85m to prosecutors to help deal with a rise in violent crime. In the area around Westhumble in Surrey, which has a population of 649, drug crime has more than quadrupled in the past five years, from nine cases to 42. Surrey Police said the crimes involved cannabis possession and were not gang-related. But just 20 miles away in Westminster, central London, drug crime more than halved over the same period, from 4,041 to 1,832. The pattern is repeated in many other areas around the capital, a BBC analysis of police-recorded crime showed.

Schools in areas with a higher risk of youth violence should be given dedicated police officers, say MPs

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-49162515>

The Home Affairs Committee has called on the new Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, to take "personal responsibility" for tackling knife and gun crime among young people. In its report, the committee called for more investment into neighbourhood policing - including a commitment to get a dedicated police officer into "all schools in areas with an above-average risk of serious youth violence" by April 2020. It said by committing the money for the officers in the government's autumn spending review, it would become part of a drive to "rebuild vital links" with the communities affected.

The report has been published as part of the committee's inquiry into youth violence for which MPs have heard evidence from campaigners, victims' families, doctors, senior police officers, children's charities and criminologists.

It also recommended that:

- Named individuals in English and Welsh regions report directly to Downing Street on action to bring down violence
- The government increases funding for youth outreach workers and community youth projects
- Action is taken to reduce the number of pupils excluded from school, and to offer more support to those in alternative schools

The government's Serious Violence Strategy, launched last April, committed £11m for an "early intervention youth fund" to help young people at risk of getting involved in violence. The plan also committed funds for a national coordination centre to tackle "county-lines" drug routes to target links between the illegal drugs market and violent crime.

The Home Affairs Committee has compiled arguably the most comprehensive study into the causes of and possible solutions to youth violence since the problems began to escalate in 2015. The committee identifies resources as a key factor, while emphasising that other issues, such as county lines drug gangs, have also played a part.

The report suggests violence will only come down through sustained hard work over many years by government, agencies and communities together.

New Female Genital Mutilation figures for Oxfordshire are the 'tip of the iceberg'

<https://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/17807382.oxford-cutting-head-says-fgm-figures-39-tip-iceberg-39/?ref=ebIn>

The Head of an Oxford group dedicated to raising awareness and supporting survivors of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) has said new figures for Oxfordshire are the 'tip of the iceberg'. Data released by NHS Digital has shown that there were up to seven newly reported cases in the county between April 2018 and March this year. Rounded to the nearest five to protect privacy, it is the same amount as the previous 12 months and slightly down on 2016-17.

Children's charity the NSPCC revealed across the UK it was contacted 645 times about FGM last year, a 36 per cent rise on the one before.

FGM has been a criminal offence in the UK for 34 years, and in 2003 it also became a criminal offence for UK nationals or permanent UK residents to take their child abroad to have female genital mutilation. Victims can suffer from constant pain, infertility, mental health problems, life-threatening problems during pregnancy, and even death from loss of blood.

All the Oxfordshire cases were submitted by doctors at Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust and reveal the FGM was carried out when the women were between the ages of five and nine and took place in north or eastern Africa. The data shows the abuse was picked up during treatment while the women were pregnant.

Hate Crime in the Thames Valley has increased in the past year

<https://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/17748201.thames-valley-hate-crime-rises-racist-homophobic-crime/?ref=ebIn>

A report claims that racist, homophobic and disability-related offences rose by between 46 and 77 per cent, with transphobic crime also rocketing between April 2018 and March 2019. However, experts have cautioned that the statistics – published by South Oxfordshire District Council – are partly fuelled by an increasing number of people coming forward and changes to the way incidents are recorded.

The data suggests that homophobic crimes rose 77 per cent – from 202 to 358 – in the 12 month period. Both racist and ableist (anti-disability) crime rose by 46 per cent, from 1,917 to 2,800 and 227 to 331 respectively.

However, reported hate related incidents described as 'non-crime' by police have dropped dramatically in all three categories, suggesting such reports are now more likely to be treated as criminal than a year ago.

Thames Valley Police and the Thames Valley Police and Crime Commissioner's office have suggested the increased reporting is positive because it shows people are becoming increasingly

aware of the issue. Thames Valley's deputy PCC Matthew Barber commented "It is worth noting that the way the police are recording the incidents has changed.

"Whether an incident is a crime or a non-crime incident is often subjective and many incidents are reported by third parties who may not have been involved themselves.

"In the last year, the force has deliberately taken a much more cautious approach to this distinction and as a result are recording more incidents as crime incidents."

During the 2018/19 year, nearly 900 more racist crimes were reported in the Thames Valley than the year before, equating to an average of more than seven in the region each day.

Home Office funds innovative policing technology to prevent crime

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/home-office-funds-innovative-policing-technology-to-prevent-crime>

The £5 million Police Transformation Fund money will help police test a programme that helps assess the risk of someone committing a crime or becoming a victim.

Lincolnshire Police seeks judicial review over police degree plan

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-lincolnshire-48947504>

Thames Valley Police launch Home Security Guide

[Guide Here](#)

Thames Valley PCC has always made burglary a priority for the police and in recent months there have been further reductions in the numbers of burglaries. Thames Valley Police have also produced a Home Security Guide to help residents with a range of physical and digital security measures. There is also advice on how to avoid invalidating your home insurance through poor security and a handy checklist when going away.

Award for volunteer custody visiting service

The Independent Custody Visiting Association (ICVA) presented Thames Valley OPCC with a Code Compliant Award at its Quality Assurance awards ceremony at the House of Lords on 15 May.

The Independent Visitor Scheme is delivered by volunteers who make unannounced visits to police custody to check on the rights, entitlements, well-being and dignity of detainees held in police custody. They report their findings to the Police and Crime Commissioner who in turn holds the Chief Constable to account.

Volunteer rural crime spotters launched

Thames Valley Police has launched a new team of volunteer rural crime spotters in Chiltern and South Buckinghamshire. The volunteers are all horse riders who will engage with the rural community whilst out on their normal hacking route and assist in rural and equine crime

prevention. The role is voluntary and has no police powers attached. The role builds on the work of the Thames Valley Horse Watch network which brings local horse owners, riders and equestrian workers together with their local police team.

The volunteers will report any suspicious activity, including fly tipping, unauthorised off road biking and hare coursing to the rural crime reporting line, run by the National Farmers Union in conjunction with Crimestoppers. This national, anonymous reporting system allows offences and activity to be directed to the correct agency. For example, fly-tipping is dealt with by the local authority. Where a crime is in progress, spotters will report this directly to the police.

Scale of exploitation and lack of help for victims of 'county lines' dealers shown in report

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2019/jul/05/children-as-young-as-seven-being-enslaved-by-uk-drug-gangs>

Fewer criminals being caught after 28% drop in detective numbers

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2019/jun/24/police-lose-28-of-serious-crime-detectives-under-austerity>

People have an increasing chance of getting away with murder as figures show the number of detectives investigating the most serious offences in England and Wales has fallen by more than a quarter since austerity began. Data obtained under freedom of information requests showed the number of detectives serving in major crime and murder squads had fallen by at least 610, or 28%, between 2010-11 and 2017-18.

During the same period the detection rates for homicide, which includes the suspected offences of murder and manslaughter, fell by more than 10%. The detection rate relates to the number of cases in which police believe they have identified the offenders.

In 2010-11, 83% of homicides were solved. That figure had fallen to 74% by 2015-16 and 67% by 2017-18, according to official data.