

**AVON AND SOMERSET POLICE AND CRIME PANEL
COMMISSIONER'S UPDATE REPORT
28 JUNE 2022**

The following briefing provides an update for Panel Members on key activities since the last Panel meeting on 17 March 2022. A summary of key highlights for consideration by Panel Members is set out below:

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Governance and Scrutiny:

- **New Scrutiny Arrangements:** overview of new arrangements, to include quarterly public meeting, to increase transparency and public confidence.
- **DPCC Portfolio:** Serious Violence, VAWG and Disproportionality to be the key focus.
- **Local Police & Crime Plans:** progress in supporting Local Authority partners to develop local plans.
- **Standing issues for Panel oversight:**
 - a) **Recruitment and Retention:** continued trend of high leaver numbers, mitigations in place to be on track to exceed target by March 2023.
 - b) **Estates:** colocation feasibility discussions ongoing for Bathwick site, Lewis House project complete, delays to Trinity Road planning process, committee now anticipated in August.
 - c) **Fire Governance:** Fire Reform White Paper published in May. Proposed to have one 'democratic focus' for fire service, does not mandate who should take on role. Coterminosity issues can be resolved with two services under one Chief Officer.

OPCC Business Update:

- **Review of Disproportionality in the CJS in A&S:** presentation on the report and next steps from Independent Chair of the Review to be considered at this meeting.
- **Consultation & Engagement:** 2022/23 Engagement programme underway, to include a PCC/Councillors forum in each local authority area.
- **Complaints & Contacts:** Key themes for this period include police response to VAWG and issues relating to neighbourhood/ASB concerns (including illegal encampments).
- **Partnerships & Commissioning:** PCC Review Part 2 proposals, Violence Reduction Units, Reducing Reoffending, & Criminal Justice updates; Victims Bill publication.
- **Scrutiny Panels:** summary of recent scrutiny panel meetings and work of OPCC panel members and Independent Custody Visitors.

National Updates:

- **PCC Review Part 1:** Home Office consultation on Policing Protocol; PCC Succession Plan for approval at this meeting (within Panel Protocols).
- **PCC National Economic & Cyber Portfolio:** update on national and local activity including Select Committee appearance, Financial Times article, and fraud prevention awareness initiative.

1. GOVERNANCE AND SCRUTINY

New Scrutiny Arrangements

New scrutiny arrangements have been put in place. This approach is a real step change in how the PCC discharges his scrutiny functions and will see the PCC publicly holding the Chief Constable to

account to increase public confidence and transparency. There will be two meetings which will replace the current Police & Crime Board:

- **Performance and Accountability Board (PAB)** - a public meeting held quarterly via Teams.
- **Governance and Scrutiny Board (GSB)** - a closed session held 8 times a year.

The first public meeting was held on 5 May. Further information can be found at the following link: <https://www.avonandsomerset-pcc.gov.uk/reports-publications/oversight-boards/>

Key Decisions

Key decisions published since the last meeting are available at the following link:

<https://www.avonandsomerset-pcc.gov.uk/reports-publications/decisions-log/>

DPCC Portfolio

Following the appointment of Claire Hiscott as Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner, DPCC portfolio areas have been agreed as follows:

- **Violence Reduction Units (Serious Violence)**
- **Violence against Women and Girls**
- **Disproportionality in the Criminal Justice System**

In addition to supporting the PCC on these three business areas, Claire will be progressing cross-cutting aspects of her role including supporting community engagement on behalf of the PCC and adopting a strategic approach to mapping and understanding the concerns of the diverse communities across the area. Work is underway to draft a working plan for the next 6-12 months to focus on these key areas and how they support the Police and Crime Plan.

Local Police & Crime Plans

Progress in development of local plans is as follows:

- South Gloucestershire – final draft has been received – reflecting comments from the OPCC – and will be sent to their CSP meeting for approval on 17 June.
- BANES and Somerset – OPCC have shared comments on a draft and are awaiting a final version.
- North Somerset – draft ‘plan on a page’ not yet received.
- Bristol – draft plan not yet received and finalisation of this is not likely to happen until August.

Inspections Update

HMICFRS

Since last reported two new responses have been published:

- [*A joint thematic inspection of the police and Crown Prosecution Service’s response to rape - Phase two: Post-charge*](#)
- [*State of policing: the annual assessment of policing in England and Wales 2021*](#)

There is one new publication requiring a response:

- [*The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the Criminal Justice System – a progress report*](#)

Inspections involving Avon and Somerset Police:

- As part of the Victim Services Assessment (under PEEL), ASP were inspected week commencing 13th June 2022.

Police Super-Complaints

Since last reported no new response have been submitted.

There are currently three [super-complaints that have been assessed as eligible for investigation](#):

- *Force response to police perpetrated domestic abuse*

- *Police response to BAME victims of sexual abuse*
- *Police use of stop and search powers*

Standing issues for Panel oversight:

a) Recruitment and Retention:

The trend of higher leavers previously seen, has stabilised but expected to increase, predicted to peak around March 2023. On the advice of the Home Office Uplift Team, the Force is currently working on the assumption of an average of 25 leavers per month. Benefits of this buffer have been seen, as there were only 10 leavers in May. Leaver numbers continue to be monitored closely and work is being done on retention strategies, for example the release of a Police Officer Career Aspiration Survey designed to proactively gain further insight.

Target PCDA course numbers for June 2022 were not achieved due to prior annual leave commitments of successful applicants. Due to concerns that this may be replicated with the August 2022 candidate pipeline, a decision has been made to increase October 2022, January, and March 2023 to 60, to ensure that the final uplift target of 3291 is achieved. As a result, the Force is currently predicting to be 68 officers over that target by March 2023.

b) Estates:

Colocation with Avon Fire & Rescue and SWAST in Bathwick continues to be explored, based on commissioned feasibility work which indicates that there are potential practical options for this.

Lewis House opened on time and on budget. The project closure report was accepted with some detail to complete on security mitigations from the colocation with partners once they have fully moved in.

Trinity Road planning submission was due to go to committee on 8th June. However, Bristol City Council notified us that they had delayed the application whilst discussions were ongoing with the Trinity Centre. This has been further delayed by the case officer going on leave. The updated position is the next committee date is likely to be 3rd August. Estates Project leads are discussing next steps and implications on timeline and cost with Guinness Partnership.

c) Fire Governance:

The Fire Reform White Paper was published in May, setting out proposals that include future governance arrangements. It is proposed for the fire service to have one 'democratic focus', however does not mandate as to where that role should sit. In relation to coterminosity challenges highlighted over the potential for PCCs to take this role, proposals suggest that this issue could be resolved by having two fire services under a single Chief Officer. Consultation closes on 26 July. The document can be found at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/reforming-our-fire-and-rescue-service>

2. OPCC BUSINESS UPDATE

Review into Identifying Disproportionality in the Criminal Justice System in A&S

Please see full update report provided in addition to the presentation by Desmond Brown, Independent Chair of the Avon and Somerset Review.

Consultation and Engagement

The Communications and Engagement Team continues to use the PCC's programme of engagement and events to support the objectives of the Police and Crime Plan.

One key deliverable for 2022/23, as part of the PCC's programme of engagement, will be a PCC/Councillors forum in each local authority area. The aim will be to help the PCC and ASP to better understand the crime and anti-social behaviour issues that are being reported to local councillors and to promote closer partnership working to problem solve some of the ASB and crime issues faced by residents and businesses in Avon and Somerset.

The PCC continues to conduct engagement visits over two days a week - Thursdays to police teams and Fridays to public and partners as well as local political leaders in a geographical rotation of each of the Local Authority areas. This has enabled greater understanding of localised issues and, with the lifting of COVID restrictions, the team will be working with the PCC to capitalise on the hybrid engagement opportunities available through a mix of virtual and in person engagement activity.

The team will also be working on an engagement programme for the new Deputy PCC that relates specifically to their portfolio areas of Male Violence Against Women and Girls (MVAWG), Violence Reduction Units (VRUs) and Disproportionality and partner engagement. We hope this will support and enhance the engagement of the PCC.

Another focus for the team is on the PCC's national portfolio work of Economic and Cyber Crime. The PCC was recently invited to give evidence at a Special Inquiry Committee in Parliament as a result of his insights into fraud investigation and resourcing in policing, published in a Financial Times Interview.

Engagement plans are aligned to our overall strategy of improving reach within particularly under-represented and vulnerable communities e.g. Black, Asian and minoritised communities, socio-economically deprived communities, women, young people, people with protected characteristics and those living in isolated rural areas.

Contacts/Complaints Oversight

The OPCC Contacts Team receive a varied amount of email and telephone calls per week internally and externally. These contacts range from members of the public seeking to invite the PCC to events, enquiries about funding and more complex matters such as complaints or community issues raised by MPs.

No. of cases created and managed per month:

Month	2022	2021	-/+
March	151	195	-44
April	116	131	-15
May	172	227	-55

The year on year figures reflect the 2021 demand connected to the PCC election period and the start of a new PCC term.

439 contacts were graded, recorded and actioned between 01/03/22 and 31/05/22. The OPCC average contact handling time for this period was 6.4 days. 68% of contacts were closed within 5 days or less. Cases assessed as having higher complexity, risk, public impact or organisational reputation continue to be high with 75% of cases graded as high or medium over this period.

Month	High 2022	High 2021	Med 2022	Med 2021
March	19	25	87	116
April	27	18	62	64
May	31	40	102	120

Email is still the primary means of contacting the PCC with 71% of contact received via this medium.

Contact regarding the police response to VAWG and issues relating to neighbourhood/ASB concerns (including illegal encampments) are notable themes for this period. We continue to see a large amount of contact that raises dissatisfaction with ASP and many matters will result in a complaint being made to PSD.

The above data also includes monitoring of complaints which is a statutory function for the PCC. Since Sept 2019 (when records started), the PCC has monitored the handling of 393 police complaints. The team continue to check complaints handling regularly to support timely resolution and are currently overseeing 37 live complaint cases sat with PSD on behalf of the PCC.

Commissioning & Partnerships

PCC Review Part 2

The government has announced plans to strengthen the PCC role in partnership working and reinvigorate the local partnership landscape, following the PCC Review Part 2. Commitments include:

- Undertake a **review of CSPs** and assess their position with the wider partnership landscape
- Update guidance to **provide greater clarity on the role of the PCC within the VRU** and consider multi-year funding cycles
- Consider introducing a **new duty for CSPs to report on local ASB strategy and delivery** to PCCs and legislating to set out the PCC role in the Community Trigger process.
- Amend the core PCC guidance and share good practice to help PCCs understand how they can **leverage local partnerships to tackle drugs misuse and supply**.
- Putting **Local Criminal Justice Boards onto a statutory footing**, defining the role of PCC as Chair and setting out the expected membership.
- A new **reciprocal duty for PCCs and Regional Probation Directors** to consult each other when developing priorities. A further duty to allow and encourage collaboration.
- Support PCCs to work with HMICFRS and wider CJS partners to **improve the quality of, and access to, performance information**.
- Work with the MoJ and Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) to **develop national guidance on data sharing** between CJS partners, including PCCs.
- Set out how PCCs should reach out and **engage diverse communities** across their local area in order to help close the confidence gap.
- Clarify legislation on **PCC representation on local government committees**.

The OPCC looks forward to working closely with the Panel and key partners to take this forward.

Serious Violence

Coming to the end of the financial year has seen the completion of the VRU Annual report (available at <https://www.avonandsomerset-pcc.gov.uk/working-for-you/partnerships/violence-reduction-units/>) This reflects on key activity for the year and highlights for looking forward.

21/22 VRU reach snapshot:

Working in partnership to tackle serious violence

- **923** Young people at risk of serious violence discussed at multi-agency VRU meetings
- **851** Young people at-risk or involved in violence have received targeted interventions
- **3469** Young people receiving universal intervention through schools programmes
- **3269** contacts made with young people through detached outreach
- **727** professionals have received training on trauma-informed practice, as well as 78 attending further training for managers/supervisors.

In entering a new year we have also been required to submit a bid to the Home Office in collaboration with the VRU Board and VRU spokes. A set of clarification questions were responded to on 6/06/22, we await the subsequent grant agreement in due course.

The DPCC has started in her role and will be leading on the VRU portfolio, we have identified two priority areas for her to initially support; 1) the VRU Board and its direction setting – developing a work plan for its priorities 2) understanding what the SV Statutory Duty means for us as a VRU area and ensure our partners are engaged and complying. The duty was due to be out for consultation on 06/06/22 but this has not landed. The DPCC will chair her first VRU Board on 28/06/22.

Some of the key areas we will be looking to develop under the central VRU in the next year are:

- Data sharing across all agencies will be driven by a nominated strategic lead from the VRU partnership.
- Evaluation and continuing to be able to evidence VRU impact will be led and shaped by a specialist role which is being recruited.
- Improve awareness of the VRU work and accessibility of its offerings to the public.
- Continue to develop on approaches around Education Inclusion and engage local education leads to support on this agenda, so to create sustainable solutions to reducing exclusions.
- Youth and Community Voice must continue to be a priority for meaningful engagement and consultation, building on approaches delivered this year but ensuring we also reach seldom heard voices.
- Continue to work closely with Police colleagues; developing the dedicated Police VRU roles, as well as building on the learning from the GRIP hotspots and bringing in a partner problem solving approach to some of the revised hotspots.

Reducing Reoffending

Many of the OPCC Reducing Reoffending commissioned services have now been in operation for 12 months and we have been working with these services to both monitor performance and explore early outcome data with a view to supporting them to secure future funding avenues when the OPCC pilot funding comes to an end. Regular partnership meetings are held with statutory agencies such as the Probation Service to better understand and align with their commissioning intentions specifically around accommodation, 16-25 year old transitions and 'through the gate services'. The domestic abuse perpetrator programme Drive is having a one year celebration event to share early data finds with potential funders in July which the PCC is supporting.

Government 10 Year Drugs Strategy

The Government have now launched their 'From Harm to Hope' 10 years drugs strategy which outlines their commitment to cut crime and save lives by reducing the supply and demand for drugs and delivering a high-quality treatment and recovery system. As part of this the OPCC have been working in partnership with OHID (Office of Health Improvement and Disparities) to develop leadership plans in this area. As well as attending respective Drug and Alcohol Partnerships within

each Local Authority area the OPCC are also planning to convene a summit over the summer to bring together our respective Local Authorities in Avon and Somerset to learn from each other and share best practice.

Criminal Justice

ASCJB

The A&S LCJB (Local Criminal Justice Board), chaired by the PCC, met on the 7th June. The Board had an overview of the newly released Criminal Justice Performance Scorecards, which included local and national comparison data from the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) as well as an update on the Police & Crime Commissioner Part II review, Victims Bill and Victims Code of Practice Compliance. The LCJB Business Plan was presented for sign off. Updates were given on the Priority areas VAWG, Performance, Victims and Witnesses, and Reducing Reoffending. The Chief Constable, Sarah Crew gave a detailed brief on the work achieved so far and direction of the priority area of Tackling Disproportionality within the Criminal Justice System. Economic and Cyber Crime (including Fraud) was also discussed.

Victims Code of Practice (VCOP) Compliance

The Victims Governance Group met on 27 April to review VCOP compliance dip sampling. The focus of the session was on rights and entitlements relating to the offer of restorative justice, to provide baseline information for the Restorative Justice Action Plan. There is an identified gap in guidance for police and criminal justice professionals on the offer of restorative justice, and evidence of a lack of awareness regarding roles and responsibilities in relation to restorative justice. This is the focus of national work led by the NPCC, phase two of the APPG inquiry into Restorative Justice, and local work through the A&S RJ Action Plan (see below). Observations and actions identified from the dip sample include:

- Police to confirm process for written confirmation of crime and consider use of technology e.g. text to confirm receipt;
- Future case selection to focus on Not Guilty Anticipated Plea (NGAP) cases and include more 'cases stopped' to enable CPS review of quality of correspondence;
- HMCTS to develop mechanism to check Victim Personal Statement (VPS) on file and bring to the attention of the Judge to read out.

The theme of the next meeting (6 July) is domestic abuse and serious sexual offences. The Victims Bill includes proposals for an enhanced role for the PCC in relation to VCOP compliance (see below).

Restorative Justice Action Plan

Work is underway to deliver the RJ Action Plan. Progress includes:

- Analysis of comparative information on cost, referral rates and service models in Most Similar Force group;
- Engagement in national events hosted by Why Me and the NPCC to contribute to development of national policy and guidance;
- Submission of response to APPG on Restorative Justice to inform phase two of their inquiry;
- Improvement work including pilot focusing on youth Community Resolution cases for letters of apology to be managed by the RJ service provider (Restorative Approaches Avon & Somerset).

A workshop will be held in late June to complete scoping work and identify next steps.

Victim Services

Victims Bill

There are three overarching strands to the recently published draft Bill: amplifying victims' voice, increasing support to victims and strengthening oversight and accountability. Of particular note for the OPCC:

- It lays out a new joint statutory duty requiring PCCs, Local Authorities and health commissioning bodies to work together in commissioning services around Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence;
- It will introduce a statutory definition for IDVAs and ISVAs;
- The Bill enshrines Victims' Code in law and places duty on CJ agencies to review their compliance against Victims Code of Practice (VCOP) – PCCs will have greater convening role in monitoring CJ agency compliance against victims code, and further provision will be made for PCCs to monitor data on Victims' Code compliance and victim feedback.

Alongside this, the government has published its Victims Funding Strategy which includes commitments to multi-year funding, commissioning standards, core metrics and outcomes and a national oversight board.

Additional Independent Sexual Violence Advisors/Independent Domestic Violence Advisors

The OPCC has been successful in securing additional MOJ funding for ISVAs and IDVAs across the force area working with providers and Local Authorities. There will be 3 new Children & Young People (CYP) specialist ISVAs and 3 new CYP IDVAs. This brings the total number of new IDVAs and ISVAs secured by the OPCC since last year to 38 on top of those already commissioned, the funding for which is secure until 24/25.

Scrutiny Panels

Independent Scrutiny of Police Complaints Panel (ISPCP)

The decision has been made to rename the Independent Residents' Panel to the Independent Scrutiny of Police Complaints Panel, in order to reflect more accurately, the work that the Panel undertake: scrutinising completed cases of complaints made by members of the public against Avon and Somerset Police.

A new Chair, Kim Smith has now been appointed to preside over the panel for a 3 year term. The vice chair remains. The March quarterly ISPCP report has been published on the OPCC website, the theme focused on complaint cases which have been reviewed by either the IOPC or the PCC as the Appropriate Authority. The Panel welcomed very informative presentations from two colleagues from the IOPC. In June the Panel will scrutinise complaints relating to Discreditable Conduct.

Due to current staff resource levels, the anticipated launch of a media campaign to advertise for new Panel members has been delayed, with a future date to be confirmed.

The IRP's reports are published on the PCC's website at the following link:

<https://www.avonandsomerset-pcc.gov.uk/reports-publications/independent-residents-panel-reports/>

Independent Scrutiny of Police Powers Panel

The April Panel reviewed 60 selected cases (from Q3 Oct-Dec 2021) within the categories:

1. Stop & Search: Smell of cannabis ([Identifying Disproportionality Report 2022](#): (Recommendation No. 2)); Finding an object other than that searched for in Asian, Black and Mixed Groups (Recommendation No. 6); Complaints (No. 9); Stop & Search by Operation Remedy; and Stop & Search of women and girls (VAWG topic related).

2. Use of Force: In custody; Complaints; Taser in Somerset West against Black or Asian subjects; Handcuffing, PAVA and Taser against women and girls; and Use of Force by Op. Remedy at a Stop & Search.

3. Community requested incident: Stop and Search 30/8/2021.

The Panel identified 8 Themes for Constabulary response: Smell of cannabis does not provide grounds alone for a stop search; Inadequate Body Worn Video (BWV) footage; Handcuffing of compliant people; Seizure and opening of mobile phones; Disclosure of personal details should be optional during a Stop Search; Strip searching after a Stop Search; Data quality issues; and inadequate grounds for a Stop Search.

The Panel's identified 'Police Organisational Learning' is being tracked in Scrutiny Panel Reports which are published at this link:

<https://www.avonandsomerset-pcc.gov.uk/reports-publications/scrutiny-police-powers-panel-reports/>

Independent Custody Visiting Scheme

Independent Custody Visitors (ICVs) weekly, unannounced paired visits at each of the 3 Custody Units continue to check on Detainees' Rights, Entitlements and wellbeing. Jan-Mar 2022 (Quarter 4) visits highlight concerns about:

1. SERCO transport delays resulting in more Police Officer time taking on this role;
2. Low food stock due to national Supplier problems;
3. Ongoing lack of Local Authority (statutory) accommodation for post-charge child detainees, resulting in extended detention times overnight;
4. The continued shortage of places of safety for Detainees with mental health issues.

An example where ICVs have effected change: Cell corridor phone direct call opportunity for Detainees to the Samaritans. This is one of the de-escalation/distraction tools.

New volunteers are being welcomed, with a tour of custody, observational/shadowing a Custody Visit and one day's induction training which includes equality and diversity.

Additional information about the Scheme is here:

[The Independent Custody Visiting Scheme | OPCC for Avon and Somerset \(avonandsomerset-pcc.gov.uk\)](https://www.avonandsomerset-pcc.gov.uk/reports-publications/independent-custody-visiting-scheme/)

Out of Court Disposals Panel

The June meeting scrutinised cases on the following themes:

- Disproportionality (youth cases) – in response to recommendations of the Identifying Disproportionality report. The Panel examined pairs of cases, each involving the same crime in the same Local Authority area, to look for any indication of disproportionality. None were observed;
- Hate Crime Conditional Caution cases – to meet conditions of dispensation granted by the Director of Public Prosecutions for A&S to be one of three Forces piloting disposals of this type. Panel findings will feed into evaluation which is due for completion in September.

The Panel reviewed 29 cases: 10 were found to be appropriate, 14 appropriate with observations, 4 were inappropriate and in one case the Panel could not reach a consensus. Feedback to individual officers will be provided in relation to the inappropriate cases to inform future decision making. The report will be published at the following link: <https://www.avonandsomerset-pcc.gov.uk/reports-publications/out-court-disposals-reports/>

The September meeting will focus on cases involving assault on emergency workers.

3. National Updates

PCC Review Part 1 – Progress in Responding to Recommendations

The proposed PCC Succession Plan for Avon and Somerset has been brought to this meeting for approval, contained within Panel Protocols.

The Home Office has consulted on changes to the Policing Protocol Order 2011, taking forward recommendations of the PCC Review Part 1. Changes consulted on sought to clarify the respective roles, responsibilities and relationships between PCCs, Chief Officers, Police and Crime Panels, and the Home Secretary, with the aim to support effective and constructive working relationships. This is the first time that the Protocol has been updated since it came into force in 2012. Consultation closed in May and the government response is awaited.

Economic & Cyber Crime

As APCC National Portfolio lead for ECC, the PCC has been invited to attend a House of Lords Select Committee on 16th June for the Oral evidence session on the Fraud Act 2006. The purpose of this inquiry is to ascertain what more needs to be done across both the public and private sector to stop fraud committed through digital services. This follows on from a well-received article published in the Financial Times (01/06/22) where the PCC highlights he wants a more unified national structure to help turn the tide in response to the surge in fraud.

The Fraud prevention awareness postcard has been finalised and will be circulated to population areas where there is a higher proportion of residents over 55. Working with partners across A&S the postcard will also be circulated via newsletters and other media platforms.

Locally, Cyber and Economic Crime (including Fraud) has been discussed for inclusion as a priority of the Local Criminal Justice Board (LCJB).

In the months ahead the PCC will be speaking at Webinars and Conferences. At the South West Cyber Resilience Centre Webinar (SWCRC) the PCC will be highlighting the importance of cybercrime to the business community (two in five businesses spotting an attempt every year) as well as PCCs wanting to maintain and improve existing support levels, preventing others from falling victim. The PCC will be giving the opening address at the National Fraud Safeguarding Conference, which is being held in Bristol as the local Fraud Protect Team were able to secure this.

Contact Officer – Alice Ripley, Chief of Staff