

**AVON AND SOMERSET POLICE AND CRIME PANEL  
COMMISSIONER'S UPDATE REPORT  
27 JUNE 2023**

The following briefing provides an update for Panel Members on key activities since the last Panel meeting on 29 March 2023. A summary of key highlights for consideration by Panel Members is set out below:

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

**Governance and Scrutiny:**

- **PCC Scrutiny Arrangements:** Members are encouraged to view the monthly Performance and Accountability Board and read minutes of the Governance and Scrutiny Board – see links.
- **Inspections Update:** the PCC response to the HMICFRS PEEL report has been circulated to Members. An update on plans to address areas for improvement and PCC oversight will be provided at the meeting.
- **PCC Election Preparation:** the PCC Election Board has been stood up in preparation for elections scheduled for May 2024. Standing updates will be provided to the Panel.
- **Local Plans Update:** plans operating in three areas, and at sign off stage in two.
- **Standing issues for Panel oversight:** a) Estates – updates on options for Bath, progress at Trinity Road, and South Somerset business case; b) Recruitment and Retention – Uplift target achieved and exceeded, focus on filling gaps in the south of the Force and on assurance regarding recruitment/retention/vetting processes.

**OPCC Business Update:**

- **Tackling Disproportionality in the CJS in A&S:** update following first Steering Committee meeting. Recruitment of Independent Scrutiny Board to act as a critical friend.
- **Consultation & Engagement:** Launch of new-format Performance & Accountability Board; Community Engagement and Stakeholder Manager appointment; evaluation of precept survey reach and PCC/Councillor Forum events.
- **Complaints & Contacts:** ICASE system (case management for complaints) delayed and is now anticipated in November 2023. Ongoing issues in retrieving management information. Current themes: unauthorised encampments and rape/serious sexual assault in hospitals – to be addressed at GSB in June.
- **Policy & Partnerships:**
  - **Serious Violence** - Crest Advisory reviewing A&S delivery model, branding agreed, refreshed Strategic Needs Assessment with 79 recommendations, update on hub delivery / reach, update on Serious Violence duty preparation – assessed by Crest Advisory as 'Ready and Engaged' to deliver;
  - **Reducing Reoffending** – update following first meeting of reinvigorated Reducing Reoffending Board, success in securing funding to support women in the criminal justice system and for perpetrator programmes, Members encouraged to nominate projects for the Community Payback scheme – see link below.
  - Updates on Combatting Drugs Partnership progress, Local Criminal Justice Board, Restorative Justice Action Plan.
  - **Victims Recommissioning Board** established ahead of contracts ending in March 2025.
- **Scrutiny Panels:** update on PCC scrutiny Panels and Independent Custody Visiting Scheme; update following successful volunteer recruitment campaign, shortlisted for an award; Volunteers event held to celebrate contribution of PCC volunteers.

### **National Updates:**

- **PCC National Economic & Cyber Portfolio:** PCC engagement with Security and Policing Minister; update on development of new Action Fraud systems; publication of Government Fraud Strategy; launch of new Fraud Communications Toolkit; translation of materials to protect international students at risk of fraud; update on partnership working initiatives including Multi Agency Fraud Forum bringing together police, Local Authority Trading Standards and victim services. This model has been recognised nationally as best practice.

## **1. GOVERNANCE AND SCRUTINY**

### **New Scrutiny Arrangements**

As planned, the revised oversight boards went live in March 2023.

<https://www.avonandsomerset-pcc.gov.uk/reports-publications/oversight-boards/>

**Performance and Accountability Board (PAB)** – this meeting is now 30 minutes in duration and is held on a monthly basis. It is broadcast live on Facebook and the recordings can be accessed through the above link. The next public broadcast will take place on 11 July 2023. Members are encouraged to watch live or view the recording.

**Governance and Scrutiny Board (GSB)** – this meeting is now 3 hours in duration and is held on a monthly basis. Although this is not a public meeting the agendas and minutes are published on the above link.

### **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/>

### **Inspections Update**

#### **HMICFRS**

Since last reported [four new PCC responses have been published:](#)

- [An inspection of how well the police tackle serious youth violence](#)
- [Peel 2021/22 police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy – an inspection of Avon and Somerset Constabulary](#)
- [Values and culture in fire and rescue services](#)
- [An inspection of how well the police and national crime agency tackle the online sexual abuse and exploitation of children](#)

Since last reported one new report has been published which requires a response

- [State of Policing: The Annual Assessment of Policing in England and Wales 2022](#)

#### **PEEL**

The PCC's statutory response to the PEEL report can be seen on the link above. This includes all 17 areas for improvement (AFIs) and the initial responses to these.

The Constabulary have assigned relevant business leads to take responsibility for each of the AFIs and this is led centrally by the Superintendent for Performance and Assurance, reporting to ACC Will White.

PEEL has been added as a standing agenda item to both the GSB and PAB. This will allow the PCC to have close oversight of progress and demonstrate to the public how he is holding the Chief Constable to account for this.

### **Police Super-Complaints**

Since last reported there have been no PCC responses required nor have any new reports been published.

### **PCC Election Board**

The Chief of Staff has now stood up the PCC Election Board (the Board) in advance of the PCC elections scheduled for May 2024. The Board aims to ensure effective working arrangements from the current term through the election process, to ensure fairness, transparency and integrity and provide a robust governance structure as well as acting as a primary source of information both internally, for Avon and Somerset Police and partners. Key governance documents have been drafted and are in the process of being agreed. The Board will convene monthly from now until after the Election. The Chief of Staff is supported in this work by the Director of Performance & Accountability who will act as a SPOC and work with project leads from the OPCC team.

### **Local Plans Update**

Local Police and Crime Plans have been in place for some time, and are actively being referenced in community safety activity in Somerset, South Gloucestershire and North Somerset. In Bristol, the Local Plan has been signed off by the council, while in Bath and North East Somerset, sign off is at its final stages.

### **Public Confidence Update**

Public trust and confidence in policing is a national issue. Understanding and addressing the drivers for this decline is complex and broad in scope, as set out in the introduction to the recent HMICFRS Annual State of Policing Report. Many of these are addressed in the PEEL inspection report, as they apply to A&S, and the PCC is scrutinising these as outlined above.

Communications and engagement with communities has an important role to play in tackling public confidence, and both ASP and the OPCC have recently expanded their teams. A new ASP Strategic Communications Director has taken up post; and the OPCC has a new Community Engagement and Stakeholder Manager, Forward Maisokwadzo, as of 5 June. Recruitment is also under way for an OPCC Communications and Youth Engagement Assistant (Apprentice). This expansion will enable the OPCC's ability to support, challenge and complement ASP engagement with communities. Further detail can be found in the engagement section below.

### **Standing Items:**

#### **Estates**

Updates on current projects material to the Estates Strategy:

- Bath: Options for development of the Bath estate, particularly in respect of Response continue to be actively pursued. There are currently two properties under consideration for which we anticipate pursuing offers.
- Trinity Road: The Guinness Partnership have appointed their preferred contractor with an anticipated start on site of this summer. The decant of the service to Bridewell and Fishponds is now complete.
- Yeovil & South Somerset: The outline business case for the South Somerset review, covering Yeovil, Chard, Somerton, Crewkerne and Ilminster, was approved by GSB in April with a final business case anticipated in Q3/Q4 of 23/24, and move into the new site in Q1/Q2 2025/26.

### **Recruitment and Retention:**

ASP have confirmed that in line with planning and expectations, after three years of collaborative working with UWE and close liaison with the national Uplift programme, the agreed uplift target of 456 officers was met by end March 2023. An additional 80 officers have also been recruited, as agreed on a temporary basis supported with partial funding from the Home Office. At the end of March 2023, the Force had achieved a total head count of 3,393 officers exceeding the target of 3291 by 102 and overachieving the additional 80 officers. Many of the additional officers have already completed their training, with the first cohort graduating last summer. Graduations are now taking place on a regular basis, with nine celebration events happening in 2023 alone. Graduation of the first Detective Degree Holder Entry Programme cohorts has also taken place, bringing enhanced detective resilience into the investigation teams.

On top of meeting the overall growth target, the Force has also succeeded in increasing its diversity, taking it closer to being representative of the communities it serves. There are now 40 per cent more female officers and 55 per cent more officers with Black, Asian and minority ethnic heritage. There is still much more to do on this and reflecting the wealth of different backgrounds and experiences across local communities remains a core commitment in recruitment.

Numbers of police officer leavers per month has been reducing and remains under the 25 per month that was modelled in the trajectory (approx. 20 leavers per month). The Force is focussing even more on retention and wellbeing of officers and participating in best practice learning nationally, to continuously improve workforce planning practice. There continues to be a resourcing and tutoring challenge in the south of the Force area, and this will remain a focus of attention, which includes continuing to run local campaigns in the south.

### **Fire Governance:**

There are no developments to report regarding fire governance in A&S. As reported previously there was consultation on the White Paper *Reforming our fire and rescue service* but this closed on 26 July 2022 and the outcomes have not been published.

## **2. OPCC BUSINESS UPDATE**

### **Tackling Disproportionality in the Criminal Justice System in A&S**

The Steering Committee (SteerCo) has now been established and will meet every 6 weeks moving forward. Councillor Asher Craig has been appointed as co-chair with Chief Constable Crew to lead the Steering Committee moving forward. At the most recent meeting, the vision and ambition of the group were agreed. Consent was also given to the recruitment plan for an Independent Scrutiny Board led by Interim Chair Desmond Brown. This Board will act as a critical friend to the SteerCo, holding them to account in delivery of the recommendations and representing the communities of Avon & Somerset.

Now the governance structures have been identified and agreed, work is underway to identify pillar leads to lead the multi agency working groups and deliver key outcomes. The next meeting is scheduled for 20 June 2023.

### **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.

The new Community Engagement and Stakeholder Manager, Forward Maisokwadzo is in post as of 5 June. The new post-holder will continue to coordinate 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.

The new Community Engagement and Stakeholder Manager will focus on supporting ASP to engage and communicate with local communities on key legitimacy, public confidence and trust issues including what the police service is doing to tackle institutional misogyny, racism and promote culture change within the police service. Community engagement will also focus on reassuring communities that the OPCC is effectively holding ASP to account for responding to, and investigating, crime efficiently and effectively.

Rotations around the area during the next six months will prioritise engaging internally and externally on the Police and Crime Plan. At the end of July, the OPCC will launch a six-month external communications campaign focused on the Police and Crime Plan, followed by an internal roadshow presentation to police officers and staff to engage the wider workforce on the role of a PCC and the scope of their responsibilities in scrutinising and ensuring the police service is efficient and effective.

The evaluation of the winter series of Councillor Forum events 22-23 showed that 146 councillors attended over the nine events in eight local authority areas. The average attendance was 18% of total councillors in each area with the greatest number at the South Somerset event in February and the lowest at the Mendip event in December. Out of the 30 respondents to the post event survey, which was sent to all attendees:

- 56% were very satisfied
- 16% were satisfied
- 16% were neutral
- 6% were dissatisfied
- 3% were very dissatisfied

There were some helpful feedback comments which will inform learning for the second round of councillor forums, which are scheduled to take place between September and November this year. Planning is under way with hold dates in the diary and invites to councillors due to go out in July.

A follow up series is a key deliverable for the PCC's programme of engagement. The aim is to help the PCC ensure local neighbourhood teams continue to engage local councillors to better understand the crime and anti-social behaviour issues that are affecting their constituents and to feed back on steps taken to address issues raised last time. The PCC also wants to forge stronger relationships, and promote closer partnership working, to address some of the anti-social behaviour and crime issues faced by residents and businesses in Avon and Somerset.

The evaluation of the Volunteers Recruitment Campaign, entitled Empower Your Community, showed a positive response. The aim of the campaign was to find direct and targeted channels to recruit from a more diverse range of communities particularly looking to recruit people from ethnically minoritised communities and women.

In response to engagement and communications activity we received:

- Application webpage views: 2,344
- Total social media click-throughs: 2,192
- Total social media engagements: 11,095
- 3 pieces of online coverage in BBC Online, Bristol Live and Somerset County Gazette
- Two radio interviews with BBC Radio Bristol following the Bedminster Bus Incident report
- Total media reach: 8,407,500

As a result there were:

- 19 applications in total (9 for ISOPP, 5 for ISOPCP, 5 for ICV)
- 3 applications are Black heritage
- 3 applications are any other white background. This is defined as any other white background, mixed/ multiple ethnic groups

The objectives of the campaign were to create a stand out/high visibility communications campaign to drive the recruitment of new volunteer panel members and improve the diversity of applicants and members in the panels. We also wanted to use the campaign to raise awareness of the work of the PCC throughout Avon and Somerset.

The success of the objectives achieved through the recruitment campaign has resulted in it being nominated for the PRCA Dare Awards South West Public Sector category with winners expected to be announced on 21 June.

Finally, the Communications and Engagement Team is currently advertising the final vacancy within the team for a Communications and Youth Engagement Apprentice. The role is a two-year fixed term post that will afford the post holder an entry level job that gives on the job experience in communications and engagement with a PRCA qualification at the end of the term. The role will be used to manage our social media and digital channels more effectively and grow and develop our youth voice/channels and engagement. We are working with local third sector community organisations such as Babassa and Grass Routes to advertise and recruit into the role to give a local young person an opportunity.

### **Contacts/Complaints Oversight**

The IT issue in relation to obtaining management information from Iken is still being resolved and we await an update from Iken as to how we may be able to retrieve this data before conversion to the new case management system i-Case. The i-Case project has been delayed and launch is now anticipated in November 2023. This has caused issues for the Scrutiny and Assurance team who are still not able to use the management data function in the system.

The team are however still monitoring the contacts coming through the system as well as linking in with the new Staff Officer and the Comms and Engagement team to identify trends and themes in public contacts and engagement to assist the PCC in holding the Chief Constable to account through the Performance and Accountability Board.

The PCC has seen increased contact from the communities of Avon and Somerset in relation to Unauthorised Encampments. As a result, the PCC has been working with the Police and local communities to increase dialogue, review options and agree activity that balances the rights of all and seeks to prevent any negative impact. The PCC has also received contact in relation to the national media coverage about rape and sexual assaults in hospital which he addressed through the Performance and Accountability Board on 14 June 2023.

### **Commissioning, Policy & Partnerships**

#### **Serious Violence – Violence Reduction Partnership and the Serious Violence Duty**

The Home Office funded 20 forces this year to deliver approaches to tackle youth violence under their Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) funding. A&S is one of these forces. With this funding a model has been implemented over the last few years which created a hub and five spoke Violence Reduction Partnership (VRP) model, based on a public health approach. The OPCC is the hub,

offering a central coordination function, in overseeing all five local authority spokes (VRPs) delivery, coordinating the Home Office grant allocation and ensuring that Avon and Somerset is meeting the objectives of the public health approach to tackling serious violence.

Whilst A&S does suffer issues relating to youth serious violence, its geography and other significant demands around violence mean that to tackle Serious Violence across the force area, a wider remit of violence is necessary if we are to get to the root causes. As such we adopt a broader scope to the issues of serious violence and consider these crime types in our efforts and plans: Homicide, Violence Against the Person (further categorised by 'violence with injury'), Robbery, Aggravated Burglary and Serious Sexual Offences – *with a focus on youths*.

As raised in the last update, with our partners it was decided that a review of the OPCC hub should take place of the resourcing behind the delivery model in its entirety. This is now underway; Crest Advisory have been appointed to deliver this by the end of June. Local partners and key leaders are being consulted on for this review. Options will be presented to the partnership for a decision to be taken forward collaboratively.

A decision was also recently made to define our branding and mission statement, this saw a shift from the term Violence Reduction Unit to Violence Reduction Partnership. A series of partner consultation opportunities took place to agree the partnerships branding, which has resulted in the below agreed logo;



Each local authority VRP spoke is represented by a colour, this uniforms our identity and represents the collaborative response. A website is currently also being developed to hold information and updates across the hub and spokes.

Our Purpose, Mission and Vision as an A&S Partnership have been agreed as the following;

**Our purpose is to create safer and more resilient communities for now and the generations to come, by reducing serious violent incidents across Avon and Somerset.**

**Our mission is to work collaboratively with partners, to understand and address the root causes of violence in Avon and Somerset, with a focus on education and prevention.**

**Our Vision is to eliminate serious violence, protect the vulnerable and create safer communities through the opportunities provided by the evolving Violence Reduction Partnership.**

The OPCC hub has also recently produced a refreshed strategic needs assessment which provides a renewed look at police, local authority and some health data, to support in understanding need and priorities. A set of 79 recommendations have been identified across 4 themes of focus to inform the strategic partnership, with a response plan supporting each theme.

#### **Local VRP delivery and reach**

The 5 VRP spokes have embedded risk identification processes where they review intel, data and partnership information on a weekly basis. Through these meetings and processes, in 22-23 861 young people were identified as at risk or a risk in terms of serious violence. Many of these will have been supported by statutory services but some will have also benefited from the interventions and pathways delivered by the VRP's. The predominant intervention types funded by VRP's are

mentoring, detached youth work, Education inclusion approaches and Social Skills development. Other significant work delivered by the VRP's is upstream awareness-raising.

For 22-23 just over 20,000 under 24's were reached by the VRP's, 16,000 of these were through education based awareness-raising. Around 3,000 were reached by detached youth work and the remainder through mentoring, sports based interventions and targeted group work.

### **Serious Violence Duty**

The long-awaited Serious Violence Duty guidance was launched on 31 January. Guidance leaves much of the shaping and development to local discretion, however Duty governance and grant allocation is to sit with PCCs. In A&S, some early scoping was undertaken with key partners (inclusive of the Duty Holders) around the potential model for delivery of the Duty; the consensus was that proposed outputs of the Duty are close to being met with the Hub and Spoke model in place for the VRU grant and therefore aligning the work of the VRP with the Duty is the most appropriate way forward. The Duty will provide a means to create a more comprehensive assessment of the problem and provide leverage for stronger collaboration between Duty Holders; collaboration is extremely good in places but there are new relationships to be built, for example with the Fire service. A task and finish group has been set up to action and ensure the duty is implemented to its mandates; the group has now met twice and agreed a TOR, its delivery approach and next steps as to the review of the SV definition.

Nationally Avon and Somerset has been assessed as 'Ready and Engaged' to deliver on the Duty, following a national readiness assessment delivered by Crest Advisory. Recommendations and a current assessment have been provided in a report to help us drive this collaborative approach to the next level; in the main this is developing partnership data sharing at a strategic assessment level, as well as continuing to drive systems change action across specified authorities.

### **Reducing Reoffending**

The reinvigorated Avon & Somerset Reducing Reoffending Board sat on 18 May with the new chair, Steve Kendall. The Board discussed 3 priorities: Integrated Offender Management, 16-25 year olds and Women in the Criminal Justice System. The terms of reference will be finalised at the next meeting of the Local Criminal Justice Board on 20 June. The next meeting of the RR Board is scheduled for 14 September.

The OPCC was successful with its bid to the Ministry of Justice to fund The Nelson Trust to recruit a dedicated post to establish a whole systems approach in line with the Concordat on women in or at risk of contact with the Criminal Justice System. Recruitment has been successful for the strategic post although they have not yet taken up post. This post will restore the gender responsive board and create a strategy for this work. This funding is available until March 2025.

The OPCC was successful with its bid to the Home Office for funding for perpetrator programmes. The incumbent provider in South Gloucestershire was successful in the procurement process and is currently mobilising to expand delivery across Bristol and North Somerset as well as continuing in South Glos until March 2025.

Part Two of the Police and Crime Commissioner Review provided an opportunity to ensure that PCCs can work across the Criminal Justice System to cut crime, drugs misuse and antisocial behaviour, whilst continuing to strengthen their accountability to the public. It examined how PCCs could become more involved in offender management in their local area, including through being more involved with community payback schemes. As a result government guidance has been published encouraging the PCC to:

1. Champion Community Payback and canvass views on Community Payback opportunities.



2. Convene partners to leverage greater Community Payback opportunities.

Community engagement is strongly encouraged with Community Payback, anyone can propose a project in their area via the nominations process on the [Gov.uk website](#). We would encourage members of the panel do this when appropriate and share amongst their own networks.

### **Combating Drugs Partnerships**

All five local Combating Drugs Partnerships are progressing at different rates but have now completed all milestones set by the Joint Combating Drugs Unit. All 5 partnerships presented updates to the PCC in May which was deemed useful by all and so will be repeated in 6-12 months' time. Partnerships are now in the delivery phase and so our office will review our involvement as attending 5 meetings per quarter is a challenge.

### **Criminal Justice**

#### **ASCJB**

The A&S Local Criminal Justice Board (ASCJB), chaired by the PCC, has not met since the last Panel meeting; the next LCJB is scheduled to take place on 20 June. National guidance has come out for all LCJBs and A&S are confident that they are already adhering to the expected ways of working. As part of a refresh of the A&S LCJB business plan, the performance measures are being scrutinised alongside national and local data to formulate Key performance indicators for each of the sub groups that report into the board. A recent area of focus for the LCJB has been timeliness of youth justice proceedings as it had been identified that A&S were an outlier against the national average, work is being done to identify where performance requires improving to ensure swift justice for young people.

MOJ has suspended the requirement for reporting on VCOP compliance pending implementation of the Victims Bill. Work is being done at a local level to stand up the scrutiny of cases and to adhere to the requirements set out in the code as referenced in the Victims and Prisoners Bill. MOJ have informed us that we will receive funding locally to provide for an analyst to support delivering scrutiny in this area.

#### **The Restorative Justice (RJ) Joint Working Group**

Work continues on progress between both Resolve West and the police in line with the action plan. At the Q4 contract meeting performance was reviewed, referrals have increased from 65 to 98, this is heading in the right direction for improvement but work still needs to be done to improve further. Referrals are heavily reliant on partner agencies and those from Lighthouse are still very low, this is being reported back to the LCJB to increase engagement and support from CJ stakeholders in encouraging referrals from their organisation.

Prisons engagement in RJ is an area for improvement. An HM Restorative Hub is used for all referrals relating to offenders in prison or probation; these need to be approved via the hub, which can hold up the process for more than six months. This is a consistent barrier and causes disengagement from parties and loss of cases due to them not being approved (RJ experts have no input). This is a nationwide theme, and has been escalated to the LCJB for the June board.

Work is also being done to improve the feedback mechanism RW use to collect feedback on their service and the wider victim journey through the criminal justice system. RW will be linking in with other OPCC support services to learn best practice.

### **Victim Services**

The OPCC has stood up a Victim Services Recommissioning Board ahead of the following contracts coming to an end in March 2025:

- A. A Practical and Emotional Support Service for adult victims of any crime or Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) [currently provided by Victim Support]
- B. An Enhanced Adult Support Service for victims of any crime or ASB [currently provided by VOCAS]
- C. A Children and Young People Support Service for victims of any crime or ASB up to the age of 18 (or 25 where there are additional needs) [currently provided by Young Victim Service]
- D. An Independent Sexual Violence Advisor (ISVA) Service [currently provided by Safelink]
- E. A Restorative Justice Service for victims of any crime or ASB [currently provided by Resolve West]
- F. Modern Slavery Support Grant [currently provided by Unseen UK]
- G. Funding towards Prevention Work

This Board, chaired by the OPCC Director of Policy and Partnerships will coordinate and oversee the team's commissioning work culminating in new contracts that would start in April 2025. As a result, the Board has written to incumbent providers to let them know that the process is beginning.

The Government published a draft Victims Bill in 2022 and when it later entered parliament in 2023 it was expanded to be known as the [Victims and Prisoners Bill](#). The Bill includes numerous important provisions. Of note for the OPCC are the new duty on Local Authorities (LAs), Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) and Integrated Care Boards (ICBs) to collaborate when commissioning support services for victims of domestic abuse, sexual abuse and serious violence for a police area. The Bill will also require that statutory guidance is published about the roles of Independent Sexual Violence Advisors (ISVA) and Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVAs), to increase awareness and consistency of these roles.

The [Impact Assessment](#) (p.8) describes modest resources commissioning bodies may receive to deliver the duty. Government officials are currently engaging with relevant bodies before finalising the resourcing and issuing draft guidance for consultation.

### [Scrutiny Panels](#)

#### **Independent Scrutiny of Police Complaints Panel (ISPCP) & Independent Scrutiny of Police Powers Panel**

The June meetings of the ISOPP and ISPCP were cancelled in March due to unprecedented staffing issues within the Performance and Accountability Directorate. These included the death in service of a long-standing member of the OPCC team. The decision to cancel the meetings was made in collaboration with the respective chairs, and all agreed it was an appropriate response to the circumstances.

Staff are currently focussed on the onboarding of a new Scrutiny and Assurance Manager who joined us on 12 June, and the recruitment of a Contacts and Scrutiny Officer with interviews scheduled for end June; alongside the priority of ensuring the OPCC continues to respond effectively to contacts from the public. The induction and training of 19 new volunteers is also under way.

The next meetings are scheduled for September 2023.

### [Independent Custody Visiting Scheme](#)

Independent Custody Visitors (ICVs) have continued to conduct weekly, unannounced paired visits at each of the 3 Custody Units to check on detainees' rights, entitlements and wellbeing. The ICVs have been a credit to the PCC's office over recent months, maintaining weekly visits despite being faced with ICV shortages due to several leavers. The recent Volunteer Recruitment Campaign yielded (subject to satisfactory vetting) 5 ICVs: 2 ICVs in Bridgwater, 2 in Patchway and 1 in Keynsham. This will take the total ICV numbers from 19 to 24. Further ICVs are still required so their recruitment campaign will remain ongoing.

ICV Panel Meetings were held in person at the end of April and during early May for each of the 3 Custody Suites. Meetings were well attended including by respective Inspectors/Sergeants for each area as well as representatives from Advice and Support in Courts & Custody (ASCC) who provided an overview of the mental health services they offer to detainees.

Additional information about the Scheme can be found at the following link:

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

### **Out of Court Disposals Scrutiny Panel**

The Panel will meet on 14 June to scrutinise cases on the theme of disproportionality. The Panel will be piloting scrutiny of cases that *did* go to court, but may have been eligible for an out of court disposal, and looking at the circumstances and decision making that led to this outcome. This is in response to recommendation 30 of the Avon and Somerset Identifying Disproportionality report – *For the A&S OPCC to set up a scrutiny framework that scrutinises cases that have been charged, but may have been eligible for an OOC, rather than reviewing only cases that have resulted in an OOC*. The report found that black defendants were twice as likely to have been charged (where the case could have been eligible for an out of court disposal) than white defendants. The primary reason for this was that black defendants were more likely to give a 'not guilty' plea, making them ineligible for an out of court disposal, and leading to harsher outcomes overall. The purpose of the June session is to examine potential disproportionality and inform development of future scrutiny arrangements. Further information can be found at: <https://www.avonandsomerset-pcc.gov.uk/reports-publications/out-court-disposals-reports/>

### **Celebrating PCC Volunteers**

National Volunteers Week was held between 1-7 June 2023 and in celebration of all our volunteer panels, the PCC and DPCC invited all 49 volunteers to HQ for a special event that recognised both long standing members but also welcomed 19 new volunteers from our recent recruitment. Volunteers were presented with certificates of recognition for their service to the PCC and their communities. It was a very successful event and further information is available here:

<https://www.avonandsomerset-pcc.gov.uk/news/2023/06/avon-and-somerset-police-crime-commissioner-celebrates-volunteers-week-with-appointment-of-19-new-members-to-its-scrutiny-panels/>

The recent volunteer recruitment campaign which was delivered in collaboration with Purple Fish has been shortlisted for a Public Relations and Communications Association Public Sector regional award. The DARE award for Public Sector recognises work by or on behalf of central government, local authorities, NHS trusts, fire authorities, police forces, executive agencies, non-departmental bodies.

Further information is available here: [www.prcadareawards.com](http://www.prcadareawards.com)

## **3. National Updates**

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## **Economic & Cyber Crime**

Following the APCC General Meeting, APCC ECC Leads, Mark Shelford, James Thompson and Andy Dunbobbin issued a letter to the Security and Policing Minister to update them on the outcomes of conversations with PCC and Deputy Mayor colleagues. The letter outlined: the significance of fraud as a priority harm and support for its inclusion in the Strategic Policing Requirement; increasing the breadth of a 'duty to prevent' fraud to encourage good corporate behaviour; issues around sentencing of fraudsters; the need for closer collaborative working with PCC colleagues. The Minister for Security has recognised the importance of the role of PCCs in pushing the fraud agenda and has welcomed a meeting with APCC leads.

FCCRAS, overseeing development and launch of new systems at Action Fraud, has now entered the discovery phase. This is a three-month period where information will be collected by CoLP and suppliers to inform the new system, including user interface and technical solutions to intelligence sharing. The OPCC are awaiting a detailed breakdown of engagement days/ events to feed into this process.

The Government Fraud Strategy was published on 3 May 2023. It is a much welcome step that seeks to bring together different organisations and sectors in the fight against fraud, with the aim of reducing fraud and cybercrime by 10% by 2025. The strategy has three core elements that attempt to tackle fraud through a multi-faceted approach. The team will work to ensure the new strategy tallies with OPCC and APCC portfolio objectives. The PCC is due to meet new national Fraud Champion, Anthony Browne.

A new NCA Fraud Communications Toolkit has been published and provides key information in structuring fraud prevention advice. The toolkit has been long anticipated and provides a national standard that all agencies can follow. The OPCC has shared the toolkit with a range of local stakeholders to harmonise messaging across the force area. The OPCC continues to promote national campaigns via communication channels and through its partners. The OPCC is utilising the national Action Fraud comms campaign calendar to steer comms activity, as well as liaising with local fraud protect team and corporate communications. A yearlong communications strategy is being developed.

With OPCC support, A&S Police are working to develop fraud protect materials translated into Chinese languages for international students, who have been identified as being at a heightened risk of becoming money mules.

The OPCC ECC portfolio team continue to work with legal services and data protection teams to identify ways of sharing data between law enforcement agencies. Fraud partners have become increasingly consistent in their communications strategy since development of the multi-agency approach. The OPCC has met with other force areas to understand the composition and structure of different multi-agency approaches that we can learn from. Multi Agency Fraud Forums, as established in Avon and Somerset this year, were recognised as a form of best practice within the recently published Government Fraud Strategy, encouraging local areas to adopt them.

**Contact Officer** – Alice Ripley, Chief of Staff