



**Chief Officer Team
Briefing for COM**

Title: Violence Against Women and Girls
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Summary

This report will provide an update on how West Yorkshire Police are responding to Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG). Good progress has been made since the launch of the National NPCC Framework for Delivery and the launch of West Yorkshire Police's Strategic Delivery Plan on the 15th December 2021. West Yorkshire Police's approach mirrors that of the NPCC, with an acknowledgment that this plan will evolve as we further engage our victim's, communities, and partners.

Significantly, the launch of the West Yorkshire Police and Crime Plan has made it clear that the Safety of Women and Girls is a 'golden thread' running through the four priorities of:

- Supporting victims and witnesses and improving criminal justice outcomes
- Keeping people safe and building resilience
- Safer spaces and thriving communities
- Responding to multiple and complex needs

In addition to this, the West Yorkshire Violence Reduction Unit has identified Violence Against Women and Girls as a key priority in their response strategy that covers 2022 – 2025. Also, this approach will be further enhanced with the West Yorkshire countywide Safety of Women Strategy which is in development by the West Yorkshire Combined Authority. The collaboration in these strategic plans puts West Yorkshire in a perfect position to start making tangible change through the unequivocal prioritisation of VAWG.

The thirty-four actions that sit under the NPCC pillars of; Improving Trust and Confidence, Relentless Pursuit of Perpetrators and Creating Safer Spaces are now embedded across the following Force Strategic Plans:

- Protecting Vulnerable People
- People Plan
- Reassuring the Public Plan
- Professional Standards & Workplace Behaviours
- Policing Strategy & Police and Crime Plan Delivery (Corporate Services)

To support this further, Violence Against Women and Girls is also the current focus of the Victim's Journey and Investigations Improvement Team. Key crime types such as Rape, Serious Sexual Offences and Domestic Abuse are being scrutinised to help understand strengths and areas for improvement. Furthermore, the Investigations National Working Group (NWG) that was established and is chaired by West Yorkshire Police to help improve victim service and investigative quality, is now using the 3 NPCC VAWG pillars as areas of focus to help share best practice. The NWG, supported by the National Taskforce, HMICFRS and College of Policing has over 20 Forces actively involved in these meetings.

West Yorkshire Police are actively involved in the National Operation Soteria meets where best practice and progress of this work is shared. Of note, albeit recently identified as one of fourteen potential Forces to be involved in the second phase of this work, West Yorkshire Police is on the reserve list. The National Soteria Team aim to identify a preferred evidenced based operating model for Rape by the summer of 2023.

Data and Research

The increased focus and scrutiny on offences where women and girls are disproportionately affected has led to West Yorkshire Police now tracking our attendance times against key crime types and the production of a monthly performance report which specifically focuses on these offences. The critical review and analysis of this data will ensure any trends in disproportionately are understood and plans are adopted to address these, and any other themes identified. In addition to this a bespoke 'Wanted Person App' is being developed to help prioritise our focus on the most dangerous and prolific offenders in the community.

The Force is well ahead of the timeframe for the production of a VAWG Problem Profile that needs to be produced by September 2022. A first iteration should only be weeks away that will be subject to review and testing. The identification of 'hot spots' for public space VAWG and vulnerability offences is also in development. Lessons learned from our effective and efficient deployments against Serious Violence Crime through evidence-based deployments is the intention of the 'hot spot' analysis to help local and force assets to proactively patrol these areas. In a bid to enhance this approach an application has been made to the Home Office to access funding to help create a dedicated resource to target these areas. Feedback on this application should be known by July 2022.

West Yorkshire Police and the Violence Reduction Unit are working together to maximise the opportunity of securing additional funding to support research into Violence Against Women and Girls offences. The Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) have recently released funding bids for Academics and the Police to work together on research focussed on VAWG. The bids allow up to £50k in funding. Several proposals have been supported in hope that some funding will be received in the county.

Exemplar Force Status

West Yorkshire, with Kent and North Wales Police are identified as the three National Exemplar Forces for VAWG. This status brings close engagement with the National Taskforce through supporting task and finish groups and prioritising the VAWG work. To assist with this, West Yorkshire Police, Kent and North Wales Police were granted additional funding to help build momentum against the NPCC Framework for Delivery. Strong links with VAWG leads at Kent and North Wales Police has secured collaboration in training. Specifically for West Yorkshire this additional funding has assisted with:

- Training on misogyny, victim blaming, trauma and compassion fatigue
- Training on Stalking, victims and investigations
- Training on so called Honour Based Abuse and Forced Marriage
- Training on Domestic Abuse
- Training on the Spiral of Sexual Abuse
- Media and communications

Pillar 1 Building Trust and Confidence:

Notable West Yorkshire Police Practice, Pillar 1 Building Trust and Confidence

A new mandatory 'ilearn' product is being delivered to the whole force for all officers and staff. This 'ilearn' will cover workforce culture, behaviour and cover the topic areas of; Abuse of Position for Sexual Purpose, Sexual Harassment, Use of Social Media, and the Code of Ethics. The Professional Standards Department scrutiny panel, which is held on a quarterly basis, also now focuses on VAWG related matters. The objective of the scrutiny panel is to provide transparency in investigations and PSD decision-making process in relation to police complaints, misconduct allegations and in the vetting of Police officers and staff, and to engender trust and confidence in those processes.

In addition to this, a Terms of Reference and stakeholder panel has been agreed for a Police Scrutiny Panel to review Police investigations. Amongst other key partners, the Police and Crime Team and the Crown Prosecution Service are part of the Scrutiny Panel. An advert for an independent Chair will be published in the coming weeks. In addition to ongoing engagement with local and Force Independent Advisory Groups, a bespoke VAWG Independent Advisory Group is also to be established. A request for members and an independent chair is being drafted and will follow the establishment of the VAWG Investigations Scrutiny Panel.

Pillar 2 Relentless Pursuit of Perpetrators

Notable West Yorkshire Police Practice, Pillar 2 Relentless Pursuit of Perpetrators

Recent changes to Force Policy, Performance Reports and scrutiny via Local and Force Accountability meetings is bringing the Relentless Pursuit of Perpetrators to the forefront of the organisation's approach to VAWG perpetrator management. A perpetrator 'Most Wanted' Dashboard is being created to allow focus against those who are causing most harm.

Pillar 3 Creating Safer Spaces

Notable West Yorkshire Police Practice, Pillar 3 Creating Safer Spaces

The adoption of the Home Office Street Safe Tool has seen nearly 500 reports generated since September 2021. Nationally West Yorkshire have recorded the 9th highest use to date. The volume now allows an analytical product to be produced that is shared with the five Neighbourhood Teams to allow Police and Partner led problem solving events should the need be identified.

The College of Policing Toolkit to address VAWG, is also being embedded into daily business, an example being the effective use of an established Public Spaces Protection Order in Bradford. Using the conditions of the order, Officers were able to target street-based harassment of women and girls resulting in numerous breaches and enforcement.