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National Policing Priorities Statement

2024-25 Q2 Update

Introduction

In 2021, the Home Office established a set of National Policing Priorities, aiming for each police force to achieve significant reductions or improvements in these areas. These measures are designed to complement the local priorities set by Police and Crime Commissioners in their Police and Crime Plans.

National Policing Priorities

1. Reduce murder and other homicides.
2. Reduce serious violence.
3. Disrupt drug supply and county lines.
4. Reduce neighbourhood crime.
5. Improve victim satisfaction, with a focus on victims of domestic abuse.
6. Tackle fraud and cybercrime.

Reduce murder and other homicides

In 2024, the West Midlands recorded 34 homicides, with a third linked to domestic abuse. West Midlands Police (WMP) remain committed to tackling domestic abuse and Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) through proactive initiatives across the region. A key example is Operation Advance, a recurring initiative aimed at reducing neighbourhood crime and improving community safety. In its most recent iteration, the operation focused specifically on VAWG, mobilising specialist officers and resources to target perpetrators of domestic abuse, sexual offences, and other crimes disproportionately affecting women and girls.

As part of this effort, officers worked with local taxi drivers, public transport operators, and students to raise awareness of VAWG, equip communities with the knowledge to identify offences, and create safer environments for women and girls. This collaborative, hands-on approach highlights WMP's dedication to both immediate action and long-term prevention. Tackling VAWG remains a top priority for the Police and

Crime Commissioner (PCC), as emphasised in the Police and Crime Plan. The PCC also oversees a range of victim support services, ensuring comprehensive care for victims while advancing preventative measures.

In 2024, significant progress was made in combating domestic abuse, including the establishment of a domestic abuse desk staffed by specialist officers, the introduction of a stalking intervention and triage system, increased arrests of perpetrators, and greater use of civil protection orders. These measures demonstrate a comprehensive strategy to address the root causes of domestic abuse and protect vulnerable individuals across the West Midlands.

Reduce serious violence

Several initiatives and campaigns are actively addressing serious violence in the West Midlands. One prominent example is Operation Fearless, a new initiative launched by the PCC in partnership with WMP. This operation aims to reduce crime and enhance the quality of life for local communities. A dedicated police team focused on tackling knife crime has already made several arrests and confiscated numerous bladed weapons.

The PCC also chairs the board of the West Midlands Violence Reduction Partnership (VRP), which prioritises preventing youth violence and knife crime. The VRP works closely with schools, youth workers, the NHS, and other organisations to support young people in educational settings, hospitals, and police custody centres. The partnership funds a range of interventions across the Criminal Justice, Education, and Health sectors to address the root causes of violence.

In 2024, the region recorded a notable 13.73% decrease in serious youth violence, with incidents falling from 7,675 in 2023 to 6,621. A similar decline was seen in knife-related youth violence, which dropped by 11.35%, from 370 to 328 offences. These reductions reflect the benefit of collaborative efforts in tackling the issue. Additionally, there was a rise in positive outcomes related to serious youth violence, with 858 offenders either charged or held accountable. This resulted in an overall positive outcome rate of 12.96%, highlighting the value of policing efforts in delivering justice and improving safety across the West Midlands.

Disrupt drug supply and county lines

In 2024, 7,854 drug offences were recorded in the West Midlands, remaining consistent with the previous year. Reducing drug-related harm continues to be a key priority for the PCC. To support this objective, the commissioner expanded the use of Naloxone, a life-saving antidote that temporarily reverses the effects of opioid overdoses involving substances such as heroin, methadone, morphine, and fentanyl. This initiative was implemented across the force, with 280 officers trained in its use across all local policing areas.

Over the past year, Operation Elevate, a Home Office-backed initiative led by WMP. The operation increased the deployment of officers to target drug rings, county lines activity and organised crime networks. This led to multiple arrests for offences including possession with intent to supply Class A, B and C drugs, possession of bladed articles, violent crime, and county lines-related offences. In addition, over £100,000 worth of counterfeit or illegal vapes and tobacco was seized from businesses.

The PCC also continues to chair the West Midlands Combating Drugs and Alcohol Partnership, ensuring the effective implementation of the Government's national drug strategy in the region.

Reduce neighbourhood crime

The PCC remains committed to strengthening community policing across the West Midlands, focusing on improving safety for residents, businesses, and communities, while fostering closer ties between WMP and local neighbourhoods to tackle crime more effectively. In 2024, the commissioner made significant efforts to reopen, reassess and retain police stations and bases across the region. Substantial progress has been achieved in supporting neighbourhood officers and response teams through increased investment in technology, equipment, and facilities. These improvements are designed to ensure neighbourhood policing is well-prepared to meet current demands and maintain a visible and effective presence within local communities in the long term.

Burglary, a neighbourhood crime that directly affects the safety and security of residents, saw a significant reduction in 2024. Recorded residential burglary offences fell by 19%, highlighting the success of targeted policing strategies and community safety initiatives. This decline reflects the PCC's ongoing commitment to reducing crime and improving the well-being of local communities.

The commissioner also joined officers in Birmingham to witness the innovative use of drones in policing operations. The Drone Unit, equipped with advanced thermal imaging technology, has successfully located multiple burglary suspects attempting to evade capture. This demonstrates the important role modern technology plays in supporting policing efforts and enhancing public safety.

Improve victim satisfaction

Supporting victims remains one of the PCCs highest priorities. In 2024, the PCC secured £6.5 million from the Ministry of Justice to enhance victim support services across the West Midlands. Ensuring that victims can access the right help and support at the right time is central to the PCC's commitment to prioritising their rights and welfare.

In line with the new victims' strategy, WMP has been working to ensure that victim care aligns fully with the Victims' Code, delivering an efficient and effective service to those affected by crime. Significant improvements have also been made in emergency call handling, with 94.9% of 999 calls now being answered within 10 seconds and a 66-percentage point improvement in the response time for 101 non-emergency calls in 2024. These advancements demonstrate WMP's commitment to providing high-quality support and care for victims.

Tackle fraud and cybercrime

The PCC is committed to ensuring that WMP takes decisive action to prevent and address fraud and cybercrime across the region. In 2024, Action Fraud received 13,882 reports of fraud and cybercrime. That same year, the PCC introduced the region's first police force-wide public health approach to tackling fraud. With a strong focus on prevention, the commissioner emphasised the need to address fraud effectively and has brought together partners under a comprehensive strategic plan to combat and prevent fraud across the West Midlands. In partnership with WMP, the PCC also launched the Money Mules Campaign, an initiative aimed at educating young people about the risks of becoming money mules.