



west midlands
police and crime
commissioner

ANNUAL REPORT

2023 - 2024



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Foreword by Police and Crime Commissioner Simon Foster

I was elected as the Police and Crime Commissioner in May 2021. Representing the people of the West Midlands is an honour and a privilege. I take the trust and responsibility placed in me very seriously. It drives me on to take the constant and unremitting action that is required, to ensure West Midlands Police is the best it can possibly be, in order to prevent and tackle crime, to keep people, families, businesses and local communities safe and secure.

My duties and responsibilities as Police and Crime Commissioner are extensive and wide ranging. As you read the report, you will gain an understanding of the breadth and scope of the role, which includes, amongst many other matters:

- Ensuring an effective and efficient police force;
- Holding the Chief Constable and police service to account;
- Responsibility for police main grant and other grants from central and local government;
- Setting the police budget and local policing precept;
- Funding the community safety partnerships;
- Ensuring an effective and efficient criminal justice system;
- Hosting my Violence Reduction Partnership
- Commissioning victim support services; and
- Issuing a Police and Crime Plan.

I launched my Police and Crime Plan ('the Plan') on 1 November 2021. The Plan sets out my key objectives for policing, crime, community safety, criminal justice and the rights and welfare of victims from 2021 to 2025.

It is a comprehensive agenda for change, development and progress in policing, rebuilding community policing, putting the prevention and tackling of crime at the heart of what we do and ultimately delivering justice, safety and security, for all of our people and communities of the West Midlands.

The harsh reality is that the past 14 years has been a challenging time for policing, our essential preventative public services and our criminal justice system. That has been as a consequence of ill-advised, misconceived and poor decision making on the part of central government. That decision making was a big mistake, it was counter-productive and a false economy. Our under-funded and overworked police service has all too often been left to pick up the pieces.

The people of the West Midlands have been paying the price, because this has had, still does have and will continue to have, a serious adverse impact on West Midlands Police presence and visibility, response times, the conduct of investigations and the ability to prevent, tackle and reduce crime, all to the serious detriment of the people of the West Midlands.



The Report outlines the action taken and what has been achieved over the course of 2023-24, towards meeting the key aims, objectives and outcomes set out in the Plan. This has been achieved by working with the police and through strong partnerships, across the West Midlands. That action taken and progress made is detailed within the Report. However, it includes amongst many other matters:

- Campaigned for the return of our 800 fewer officers and 500 fewer Police Community Support Officers and for fair funding for the West Midlands.
- Recruited nearly 1,400 additional police officers, to keep people, families, businesses and local communities safe and secure;
- Continued work on the Ending Male Violence Against Women and Girls agenda through the Alliance, driving the essential partnership work required;
- Commissioned over 50 support services for over 61,000 victims with my core victims grant, to ensure victims have access to the right support, at the right time and in the right place;
- Continued to fund specialist victim support services and IDVAs and ISVAs across the region;
- Transformed Force Contact emergency call performance on both 999 and 101 calls;
- Delivered faster emergency and priority response times;
- Secured Investment in our VRP to commission £3 million worth of activity across the region, reaching over 55,800 children and young people, to prevent and tackle youth violence and knife crime;
- Action to tackle violence continued with tailored education in schools, youth workers in A and E Departments, custody centres, outreach and rescue workers and on school routes;
- Continued to support a network of weapon surrender bins, to remove dangerous weapons from the streets of the West Midlands;
- Secured £1 million Safer Streets 5 funding;
- Invested in preventing Violence Against Women and Girls, including in the night time economy;
- Invested in increasing the number of mobile speed camera enforcement vans, third party reporting and speed enforcement devices to improve road safety;
- Invested in the 7 Community Safety Partnerships across the West Midlands to prevent crime and disorder;
- Continued action to eliminate any and all racism and unlawful discrimination from within policing and the wider criminal justice system, including via the Fairness and Belonging Strategy;
- Backed young people with my new cohort of Youth Commissioners, now in place for 10 years, and Police Cadets Schemes;
- Invested in prevention and intervention to prevent and tackle crime, promote community safety and rehabilitation;
- Supported local communities, through my Helping Communities Fund and Outstanding Citizens Awards.

I always said that I would be a People and Communities Police and Crime Commissioner, who engages with, listens to and works with the people of the West Midlands. It has been a pleasure continuing to meet with so many of you, listening to your views, understanding your concerns and hearing what further action is needed, to ensure that we all work together collaboratively to prevent, tackle and reduce crime and deliver justice, safety and security for all of our people and communities of the West Midlands.

I am firmly of the belief, that a democratically elected and directly accountable Police and Crime Commissioner, is the best way to ensure an effective and efficient police service. The laser-like focus it provides is crucial, to holding the police to account and driving the change needed. The only and top priority of a Police and Crime Commissioner is preventing, tackling and reducing crime, protecting people and helping the vulnerable.

In view of the breadth and scope of the role, the gravity of the issues involved and the significant level of public concern and interest in policing, crime, community safety and criminal justice, people should be entitled to vote, so that they can decide for themselves, who represents them as their Police and Crime Commissioner.

Thank you to my Assistant Police and Crime Commissioners, my Victims Commissioner, my Board members and the entire team within the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner and Violence Reduction Partnership, for all of the invaluable experience, knowledge, skills and hard work that they contribute. Thank you to all of the officers and staff of West Midlands Police, for their dedication and hard work, to keep the people and communities of the West Midlands safe and secure.

It truly is a collective and collaborative team effort. I am also grateful to the West Midlands Police and Crime Panel, for the support, oversight and scrutiny it has provided throughout 2023 to 2024.



Simon Foster
Police and Crime Commissioner for the West Midlands

January 2025



Section 1: West Midlands Police

Force Performance

One of the primary expectations placed on West Midlands Police, is the prevention, tackling and reduction of crime. The police play a pivotal role, working in collaboration with various stakeholders, to proactively address local issues, share critical information and work towards reducing repeat offences. The Performance Scorecard for the [Police and Crime Plan 2021-2025](#), provides an overview of progress, in achieving the specific measures outlined in the plan.

The assessment of progress towards the key performance indicators outlined in the Police and Crime Plan varies, depending on the specific measure and the availability of data. A number of key performance indicators have predefined targets, which have been established through a comprehensive analysis of historical and current performance and consultation with stakeholders, while others represent ambitious stretch targets.

It also tracks trend data, providing insights into recent patterns and periods of change. Whilst some key performance indicators may not currently align with expectations, the trend data in certain areas reveals a positive trajectory of improvement, providing optimism for continued progress.

Rebuilding Community Policing

People value seeing police officers and PCSOs walking the beat in their communities. The Chief Constable and I agree, that it is important to provide a local, accessible, visible and reassuring presence. However, West Midlands Police still has around 800 fewer police officers and 500 fewer PCSOs when compared to 2010, in addition to reduced numbers of police staff.

I continue to take every available opportunity, to campaign for and to call on government, to return our 800 police officers and 500 PCSOs and to ensure that our region receives a fair share of all funds allocated to policing. Unfortunately, despite extensive and wide-ranging efforts, our region continues to be structurally under-funded and under-resourced.

Recruitment

At 31 March 2024, the headcount across West Midlands Police was:

Police Officers	Police Staff	Police community support officers	Specials	Total
7,962	4,088	317	210	12,577



Fairness and Belonging

Equality, diversity and inclusion is embedded throughout my Police and Crime Plan. We are focused on delivering this work within my own office. I continue to scrutinise West Midlands Police on their progress. This includes monitoring the action taken to implement the national Police Race Action Plan locally, including recruitment and disproportionality.

This year I hosted a [Fairness and Belonging conference](#) in Birmingham, to mark Black History Month 2023 and shine a light on how communities in the West Midlands are treated by police. The conference covered recruiting under-represented groups and improving trust and confidence.

In addition, I have also worked with local criminal justice partners to promote race equality in the criminal justice system, including workforce diversity. My office is also a partner in the Mayor's [Race Equalities Taskforce](#), which publicly launched in September 2023, leading on the criminal justice strand.

My Deputy Chief Executive continues to attend WMP's quarterly Diversity and Inclusion Governance Board, to ensure oversight of progress being made in relation to this strand of work. In addition, I am represented on the Stop and Search and Use of Force Scrutiny Panels and Stop and Search and Use of Force Commission.

With the benefit of an overview of this area of business, we have been tracking improvements in practices. I regularly meet with and continue to support the force's staff networks. I have spoken at several of their events and highlighted the value of these networks, in striving to make West Midlands Police an inclusive employer.

All officers and staff continue to receive training to equip them with a better understanding of racism as part of the Fairness and Belonging work. The training explores Black history and the local landscape between the Black community in the West Midlands and the police, the lived experience and impact of systemic racism in modern UK society and identifies blockers to anti-racist practice.

In my own office, I continue to deliver anti-racist practice training. This includes an organisation-wide anti-racist training programme, that addresses how to deal with issues relating to racism and how to develop and promote anti-racist practice. In addition, all staff within the OPCC have continued to undergo training around trauma informed practice and becoming a trauma informed organisation and mandatory safeguarding training.

I am also pleased to say that we continue to implement the work needed to maintain the accreditation of the [Karl George Race Code](#). The Code evidences the work that we have been doing to create transformational, sustainable and lasting change, in order to achieve truly diverse governance structures and organisational senior leadership team.



A breakdown of my own team shows that in March 2024, the OPCC had 81 employees, of whom 81 disclosed their ethnicity. 57 were White/White British (70%) and 24 (30%) were from an Ethnic minority group.

Listening to the Public

The complaints team continues to provide valuable data that supports my oversight responsibilities. Their work helps me monitor complaint volumes, timeliness and trends to drive improvements. Police complaints have risen by 5% toward the end of my last term, with 4,175 received in 2024. This increase is due to changes in the complaint process, making it easier for the public to raise concerns. However, the increase in volume has also extended complaint resolution times from 89.8 to 145.8 working days, which will remain a focus for the coming year.

Our complaints review process is fully embedded, with live online dashboards. In the past year we have managed 104 reviews, with an average of 26 working days to conclude them. We have upheld 20 which is an increase of 8 on last year.

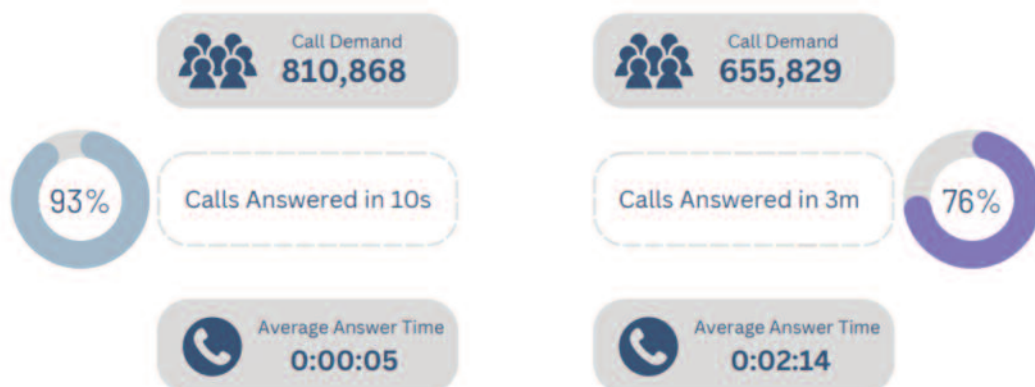
Dip sampling provides an opportunity to evaluate how effectively the police manage complaints. Last year, we introduced a fresh approach by involving 14 youth commissioners to review 30 complaints filed by young people. Among the participants, 68% felt that WMP had a clear understanding of the complaints and 81% believed the police acted reasonably and proportionately in their responses. However, only 50% of the replies were delivered with empathy, resulting in 56% of participants feeling that this failed to inspire trust and confidence in policing.

With the arrival of the new Chief Constable, there is a renewed focus on misconduct. In 2024, 39 officers were dismissed compared to 25 in 2023. While dismissals are challenging, we are determined to remove unsuitable officers. Police Appeal Tribunal cases have risen from 2 in 2023 to 6 in 2024.

Contact with the public

Following a considerable dip in WMP's performance regarding the response to 999 and 101 calls during 22/23, this year, I have worked with the Chief Constable to review Force Contact and their operating model to improve this.

From April 2023 to March 2024, West Midlands Police have considerably improved their emergency call performance on both 999 and 101 calls. This improvement has occurred as demands on both 999 and 101 services have increased compared to last year.



There was an increased demand for 999, totalling 810,868 calls received. Overall, 93% of these calls were answered within 10-seconds, as per the service level agreement (SLA). Demand had also increased for 101 with 655,829 calls received, with 76% being answered within 3-minutes in line with the SLA.

There still remains scope for improvement in 999 and particularly 101 services. In the coming year, I will continue to hold the Chief Constable to account, to drive continuous improvement in relation to the 999 and 101 service provided, to ensure the public receives the service it is entitled to.

Stop and Search and Use of Force

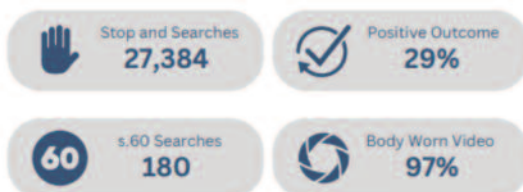
We have seen high rates of Body-Worn Video compliance during both Stop and Search and Use of Force. For stop and search, compliance has remained at 97% as it was in 22/23, having previously increased from 42% in 2018/19 to 95.1% in 2021/22. Compliance for Use of Force has continued to increase and is now at 87%, up from 83% in the previous year.

Positive outcome rates, which is the rate at which an illegal item is found during a stop and search, has dropped slightly to 29% during 2023/24, having previously been 30% in the previous year.

Performance

Fiscal Year 2023-2024

Stop and Search



Use of Force



As of March 2023, WMP began using the 2021 Census data to calculate disproportionality rates, which has improved its accuracy.

Search ratios show how many times more likely an ethnic group is to be stopped and searched, compared to the white population. Across the WMP force area, the Asian search ratio is 1.7 and the Black search ratio is 2.7. Disproportionality figures for use of force are 0.7 for Asian and 2.0 for Black.

There has been a force-wide roll out of officers using a unique QR code on their phone that people who have been stopped and searched can scan to give feedback on matters such as, how fairly they felt they were treated by the officer and whether or not they understood why they were stopped. So far, as of April 2024, 2% of all those stopped and searched who received a QR code gave feedback this way. We will continue to raise awareness of the QR code, to encourage members of the public to tell us about their experiences.

During this year, a new Stop and Search training package has been developed for all officers to embed learning and drive best practice. My office has been working alongside the force to deliver this. WMP is a pilot force for the roll out of Serious Violence Reductions Orders (SVRO). SVROs are a civil order, whereby someone who has an SVRO can be stopped in public spaces by the police and searched, without the need for there to be reasonable grounds, to find out if they are carrying a bladed item or offensive weapon. My office has developed a community led working group to hold WMP to account on its use of the SVRO power throughout the pilot, which will end in April 2025.



Section 2: Working in Partnership Locally

West Midlands Community Safety Partnership

Community Safety Partnerships have a statutory responsibility to respond to crime and anti-social behaviour (ASB) in their local authority areas. West Midlands Community Safety Partnership (WMCSP) is the place where I, statutory bodies and representatives from the seven Local Authority areas come together, to agree a coordinated approach to crime reduction, local policing and community safety for the West Midlands. I am Chair of the West Midlands Community Safety Partnership Board.

As part of my ongoing commitment to work with community safety partners to jointly tackle crime and disorder, I provide a Crime and Disorder Reduction Grant to each of the seven local authorities, as well as to third sector organisations. This vital funding is used to reduce crime, the risk of reoffending and for initiatives tackling the issues which have the biggest impact upon our communities, including anti-social behaviour.

The funding is also used to help victims of crime to cope and recover from their experience, such as domestic abuse and sexual violence and to support the diversion of children and young people away from crime, through positive initiatives and allows local CSP's to respond to emerging issues. In addition to the individual community safety grants, we commission services regionally across the force area to ensure that services are available across the seven local authority areas and work with the CSPs to respond to anti-social behaviour and violence reduction.

Our joint Community Safety priorities were agreed for 2021-2024 through consultation with partners and communities, informed by West Midlands Police's Strategic Assessment. They are: preventing crime and anti-social behaviour; serious and organised crime; supporting victims and witnesses; violence and intimidation against women and girls; cyber-crime and fraud; serious violence; offending and reoffending; and substance misuse.

Local Criminal Justice Board (LCJB)

I am chair of the West Midlands Local Criminal Justice Board. I am committed to working closely with key partners to provide a fair, efficient and effective criminal justice system, with a focus on preventing and reducing crime and reoffending; delivering justice for women and girls; and supporting victims and witnesses.

The LCJB has responded to a number of key emerging issues during the year. I continue to closely monitor and scrutinise the time taken for victims to have their case heard at court, particularly for people who have been subject to serious crimes and offences that continue to have a disproportionate impact on communities, such as violence against women and girls and domestic abuse and sexual violence. I have worked with partners to improve offender management to prevent and reduce crime and reoffending.



Victims

Throughout 2023-24, I have continued to deliver on the pledge in my Police and Crime Plan, to provide quality assured support services to victims, survivors and witnesses, whether or not they reported the crimes to the police; to ensure victims and survivors were able to access justice; and to ensure that perpetrators of crimes are held to account.

To achieve my priorities, I have worked closely and collaboratively with the specialist victims' sector and criminal justice agencies, whilst listening to the voices and experiences of victims and survivors, by having appointed the first Victims Commissioner.

Commissioned services

Between April 2023 to March 2024, I commissioned 50 support services that supported a total of 61,383 victims across different thematic areas through the Core Victim Services fund, provided by the MOJ, which was around £6m.

My office also received £2.78m from the Home Office Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Fund, to continue the Early Awareness Stalking Intervention, a psychological intervention for managing perpetrators of stalking and the introduction of an innovative pilot in custody which seeks to change the behaviours of perpetrators.

Following on from Safer Streets Fund 4 last year, I also secured £999,239 through the Safer Streets Fund 5 from October 2023. This funding was made up of three successful bids; two bids will be awarded to my office to continue our VAWG and anti-social behaviour work across the region; and one bid will be awarded to Birmingham City Council, to implement VAWG and anti-social behaviour work in the city.

My office has developed a [dashboard](#) which shows the VAIWG interventions and victim's services, commissioned through the PCC and VRP.

The Victims and Prisoners Act 2024

The Victims and Prisoners Act 2024 came into law, following a lengthy period of consultation. I responded to the consultation, which included a range of measures to better serve victims and the public, by improving victims' experiences of the criminal justice system.

The Act enshrines the 12 rights of the [Victims Code](#) into law and places a duty on PCCs to monitor compliance with and delivery of the Code and for criminal justice bodies to collect and share data on compliance and victims' feedback.

The Act also introduces a 'duty to collaborate' on PCCs and other commissioners, to co-deliver support services for victims of domestic abuse, sexual abuse, and serious violence. This includes a requirement to develop a joint-strategic need assessment (JSNA) and strategy that demonstrates how they will collaborate to deliver and improve relevant victim support services and to consult with key partners.



My office has been proactive in preparing for the implementation of this duty. The governance structure will sit with the WM Domestic Abuse (DA) and Sexual Assault and Abuse (SAA) Commissioning subgroup, which was established to support partners to collaboratively commission domestic and sexual abuse services and has multi-agency membership from criminal justice, health, local authority, specialist service and other agencies. This group is accountable to the West Midlands Community Safety Partnership.

Throughout 2024, the membership of this group has been reviewed to address gaps and members have been asked to share information about the duty with relevant stakeholders and partners in preparation for further Government announcements.

Violence Against Women and Girls

The Ending Male Violence Against Women and Girls (EMVAWG) Alliance provides a single point of ownership and strategic leadership and direction, across the West Midlands and leads a whole-system approach to preventing and reducing VAWG. The Alliance's priorities up until 2024 include, focusing on eliminating hidden forms of VAWG such as FGM, honour-based abuse, forced marriage, and stalking and creating a multi-agency data-set to enable rigorous monitoring of performance.

During 23-24, multi-agency partners in the Alliance have worked together to create the [Domestic Abuse and Sexual Assault and Abuse Standards](#), which will help organisations ensure victims get the most appropriate support. In addition, I commissioned [best practice guidelines](#) for designing EMVAWG campaigns with underrepresented communities. The intention is to increase the reporting levels of VAWG crimes.

I secured funding for several rounds of Safer Streets, in which VAWG has been a prioritised thematic and worked with my Violence Reduction Partnership (VRP) to develop several large regional campaigns, including the establishment of a stand-alone website for [#NoExcuseForAbuse](#), which is a hub for those impacted by VAWG.

Operation Soteria

The Government's End to End Rape Review in 2021, saw a commitment to roll out Operation Soteria – a Home Office funded, academically led change programme, for adult Rape and other Sexual Offences (RAOSO). I supported WMP in their piloting of the academic pathfinder by investing £200,000 in pilot programmes, following the findings of the academic deep dive in June 2022.

I made an application for a Home Office Special Grant for £9.053m, to request much sought after resources and an uplift in capacity for WMP to continue utilising the improvement tools and plans available through Soteria and to continue the work that has led to a current 6% positive outcome rate for charging offenders of RAOSO.

In the Criminal Justice Scorecards, adult rape, published quarterly, WMP are performing well in the areas of Early Investigative Advice (EIA) and the CPS are making significant progress towards having a sexual offence only specialist team.

This work, alongside my commissioned Independent Sexual Violence Advisors (ISVA) and specialist sexual assault and abuse services, has seen an increase in engagement with victims and witnesses, particularly through the employment of Victim Engagement Officers within the force.

I have continued work with local MPs, the Chief Constable and others to clearly highlight to central Government the discrepancies between funding and embedding a sustainable specialism within both West Midlands and wider police forces that are in jeopardy, due to the existing funding formula and previous policing cuts.

Domestic Abuse - Cost of Living Survey

During the year, my Victims Commissioner carried out a cost-of-living survey to assess the impact the economic crisis is having on both victims of domestic abuse and on service providers. Findings from the survey showed that the biggest concern for providers was around victims not being able to leave violent or abusive situations, or returning to abusers, due to the cost-of-living crisis and not wanting to face the prospects of having to struggle with increasing food, bills or rent costs, especially when children were involved.

Following these survey results, I made around £150,000 available to victim's services, via a Cost-of-Living Victims Fund to support and alleviate these pressures. Through this, I supported victims' services with increasing running costs due to additional demand, as well as providing funds or care packages for women and children accessing their services.

Domestic Abuse

Perpetrator interventions

After securing nearly £3m of funding during the year, two interventions aimed at changing the behaviour of domestic abuse and stalking perpetrators are now being delivered in the West Midlands. I have continued to work with West Midlands Police to ensure they are prioritising work to tackle stalking and my office has supported work to set up Stalking Triage Clinics and Scrutiny Panels.

Domestic Abuse Relate Reviews (DARDRs) and Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC)

Formerly known as Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs), Domestic Abuse Related Death Reviews (DARDRs) are multi-agency reviews, commissioned by community safety partnerships, into the deaths of adults which may have resulted from violence, abuse, or neglect by a person to whom they were related; or with whom they had an intimate relationship; or where they were a member of the same household.



I have commissioned the Birmingham Community Safety Partnership, to deliver a region-wide DARDs project to upskill frontline workers on their knowledge and understanding of DARDs, as well as to create opportunities to share themes and learning in a consistent way across the West Midlands. Birmingham has been working to create a centrally located repository for all published DARDs to be placed into, that can be easily accessed by all agencies.

I also commissioned Birmingham Community Safety Partnership to create a Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) which will provide a consistent and streamlined process for CSPs to commission DARD authors across the West Midlands Region. I am currently working in partnership with CSPs, to sign up to the DPS and will be launching a recruitment drive for DARD chair to join the DPS pool.

During this year, MARAC has been subject to significant change as a result of WMP's rapid response to HMIC inspection findings. A new governance structure also implemented this year – a regional Operational Governance Group and a regional Strategic Governance Group – should improve MARAC governance, provide a clear escalation route for concerns and bring together partners for regional consistency.

Public health approaches

During 2023, the West Midlands Domestic Abuse Board adopted a new five-pillared public health approach and introduced an updated action plan focused on building foundations, prevention and intervention, care and support, enforcement, and intersectionality.

In November 2023, my office and the VRP held an Anti-Slavery Day Conference, which showcased our public health approach in combatting modern slavery and exploitation across the region and built on partnerships. It included key national stakeholders, such as the Modern Slavery Policy Unit and ministers with relevant portfolios. The public health approach is based on academic research from the University of Sheffield, regarding emerging practices to refine a public health framework to address modern slavery in the UK.

In addition, regarding modern slavery, my office also worked with a local authority area in the region who were concerned that the National Referral Mechanism processes were failing and co-ordinated several meetings with the Exploitation and Missing and Modern Slavery Human Trafficking Boards and local authority areas to make sure statutory processes were working effectively. My office won a Marsh Charitable Award 2023 for our work on modern slavery cases.

I also responded to a [parliamentary inquiry](#) regarding Modern Slavery and the need to protect vulnerable victims who may be seeking asylum.

Restorative Justice

During 2023-24, I worked with the University of Gloucestershire to carry out and finalise an independent evaluation which explored the range and impact of Restorative Justice in the region, with a particular focus on the agencies I fund. The report found that there is strong data from providers that shows good levels of user satisfaction with the Restorative Justice services they receive. For example, three-year data from one provider shows:

- 91.7% of victims and 99.3% of offenders were satisfied with the service they received.
- 90.9% of victims would recommend the service to other.
- 99.3% of offenders would recommend Restorative Justice to others.

I have also continued to lobby for the importance of Restorative Justice. I have fed into the development of the NPCC guidance on Restorative Justice which is currently in draft form and advocated for the strengthening of restorative justice within the Victims and Prisoners Act 2024.

West Midlands Violence Reduction Partnership (WMVRP)

I am the joint Serious Violence lead for the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners, alongside the PCC for Cleveland. On behalf of all PCCs, we are the advocates to the Home Office for this significant area of responsibility.

I am also Chairperson of the West Midlands Violence Reduction Strategic Board, which is one of 21 Violence Reduction Partnerships (VRPs) across the country. Established in 2019, they are funded by the Home Office to build capacity in local places and systems to prevent, tackle and reduce violence, by addressing the root causes of violence.

The WMVRP partnership and delivery model

The WMVRP is made up of a range of specialists, who work locally and regionally, to facilitate and encourage the development of system wide responses to preventing and reducing violence, directly delivering and commissioning a wide range of services and interventions.

They adopt a public health approach to preventing violence. This means focusing on understanding the root causes of the problem and testing, evaluating and upscaling interventions. Developing stronger data, analysis and evaluation is key to working in this way.

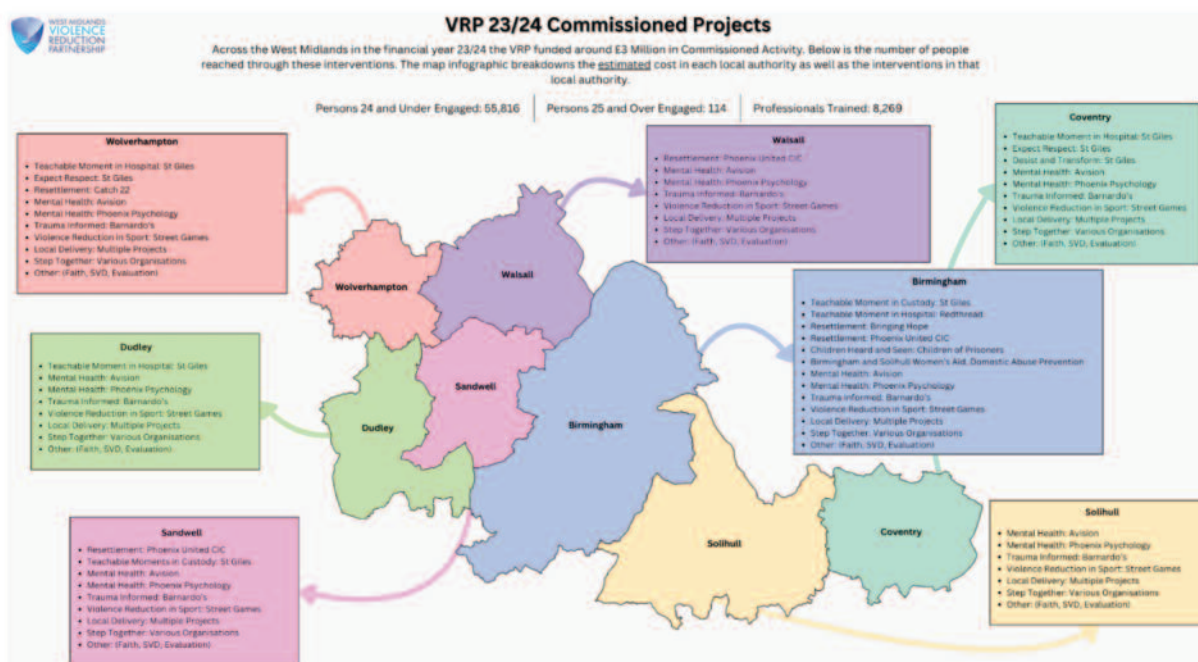
West Midlands Police plays an integral role in the WMVRP, providing support and bringing policing knowledge and expertise into the different thematic areas. They ensure that the whole force play an active role in the WMVRP, working in partnership locally and regionally, to prevent and reduce violence.

The WMVRP delivery model aims to:

- Deliver primary prevention, entire population approaches to violence prevention and reduction, including training, capacity building and awareness raising.
- Fund targeted work, in areas we know are impacted more by violence.
- Respond effectively as a partnership to incidents when they occur to limit the onward transmission of violence and address the trauma that serious incidents cause to individuals and communities.

Working in Local Places

During 2023-24, the VRP funded around £3 million in commissioned activity across the West Midlands. These interventions reached 55,816 children and young people aged 24 and under, and 114 over 24. The training and awareness raising provision the WMVRP delivered benefitted 8,269 professionals including teachers, social workers, youth workers and others – an increase of over 1,000 professionals from the previous year.



The [VRP Annual Report 2023-24](#) sets out more highlights of delivery in 2023-24.

Serious Violence Duty

During 2023/24, the Serious Violence Duty (SVD) was introduced, which requires a range of 'authorities' to work in partnership to formulate an evidence-based analysis of serious violence in a local area, and to use this to develop a partnership delivery plan. The VRP developed the [West Midlands Violence Reduction Strategy 2023-2026](#), which sets out the ambition for the West Midlands and clearly demonstrates how we will work together in our efforts to improve outcomes for our young people.



The VRP has supported each of the seven local partnerships across the region to meet the requirements of the Duty, by raising awareness and providing regular briefings on the Duty, sharing best practice across the region, providing data to develop needs assessments, contributing to or delivering on key areas of their plan to tackle violence and providing key information and resources into local partnerships.

Children and Young People

A new cohort of 16 Youth Commissioners were elected in November 2023 to serve two-year-terms. The election took place over a two-week period, with more than 1,000 votes cast by under 18s across the region. The new cohort embarked on new engagement, to provide an overview and gain experience around operational policing.

Since their election in 2023, Youth Commissioners have completed their first year in their roles. They have been developing their knowledge around operational policing and holding WMP to account on behalf of the PCC. At the beginning of the year, Youth Commissioners joined WMP patrols around Birmingham city centre and the Christmas markets to observe how the police protect these areas during a busy time period.

Throughout the year, youth commissioners met with various elements of operational policing. They interviewed their local police commanders, response and patrol teams and addressed issues of local crime prevalent in each local policing area and how they affect young people. They visited and met with the WMP Dog units and the policing units, who oversee policing Birmingham Airport and how they work in conjunction with Border Force to keep the West Midlands safe.

In April, the Youth Commissioners hosted the 2024 Annual Youth Summit, which was held with approximately 150 people in attendance and centred on advocating for more safe spaces for young people. The summit highlighted the many different forms of safe spaces from working and educational environments; youth spaces for young people to develop themselves and chosen safe spaces of sports and faith communities supporting young people. The Summit also celebrated the 10th year anniversary of the Youth Commissioners and gave opportunities to former Youth Commissioners to be celebrated for the work by them over the last 10 years.

The Youth Commissioners supported regional and local events, like launch of the 'My Tomorrow' campaign, the Walsall Youth Summit and facilitating the Criminal Justice Workshops at the West Midlands Young Combined Authority Race Equalities Youth Summit, to further support young people and ensure that their views are represented in spaces across the West Midlands.

Drugs and alcohol

The Drugs Strategy

It has been estimated that half of all homicides and acquisitive crimes are drug related. Accordingly, preventing and reducing substance misuse might be the single most important action that we can take to tackle crime and make our communities safer. Policing alone cannot resolve the issue of drugs in our community. I am committed to the innovative work being done by my office, to work with a wide range of partners and to deliver a whole-system approach and to cut drug-related crime and harm.

Ensuring a joined-up local system is vital and the publication of the Government's 10-year Drug Strategy '[From Harm to Hope](#)' in 2021, has resulted in the development of partnerships across the country to steer how progress against the aims of the strategy are delivered. I continue to chair the West Midlands Combatting Drugs and Alcohol Partnership (CDAP), which was established in August 2022, as Senior Responsible Owner. In this role, I have been able to represent the partnership at a national level and support progress against the national outcomes that are being sought.

The partnership has undertaken a range of activity to support an improved response by all partners across enforcement, treatment and prevention, to the harms caused by drugs. For example, the partnership has worked to increase numbers in treatment in all West Midlands local authority areas during 2023-2024 compared to the previous year, including reaching and engaging those whose needs had not previously been met by treatment services.

Figure 1: Total individuals in treatment (including opiate, non-opiate, non-opiate and alcohol, alcohol) by local authority area during 23-24

	Birmingham	Coventry	Dudley	Sandwell	Solihull	Walsall	Wolverhampton
22/23	8,177	1,824	1,750	1,983	1,075	1,742	1,697
23/24	8,490	2,025	1,777	2,095	1,177	1,785	1,899

Figure 2: Number of new presentations to treatment (opiate, non-opiate, non-opiate and alcohol, and alcohol total) by local authority area during 23-24

	Birmingham	Coventry	Dudley	Sandwell	Solihull	Walsall	Wolverhampton
22/23	3,319	869	904	773	582	775	835
23/24	3,542	1,049	942	1,093	688	873	1,045

Examples of some of the work of the CDAP this year are:

- Setting up a lived experience group to influence and feed into the partnership
- Organising a deep dive into nitrous oxide to understand levels of use and best interventions to tackle this
- Working towards increasing the number of community sentence treatment requirements made in sentencing
- Beginning to map and improve referral pathways and joint working between criminal justice drug and alcohol services and the wider treatment system and other services.

Arrest Referral Service

My Arrest Referral Service provided by Cranstoun, allows those in custody who have either committed prescribed trigger offences, such as acquisitive crime, or who otherwise voluntarily engage, to have a drugs and alcohol assessment undertaken by a trained specialist. They are then able to both provide initial advice and to refer onto specialist treatment providers, commissioned by local authorities, or where possible, receive a court order requiring the individual's engagement with such services, by way of an Alcohol Treatment Requirement or Drug Rehabilitation Order.

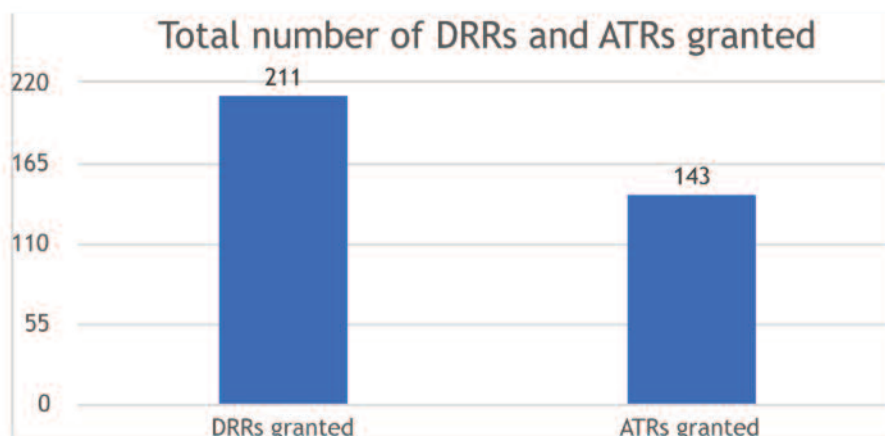
In 2023-24, there were 15,522 contacts, assessments and interventions delivered by the Arrest Referral Service. Figures 3-5 show what my Arrest Referral service has achieved over the course of the year.

Figure 3: Total number of assessments undertaken during 23-24 per quarter

Assessments Completed	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	Total
Required Assessments following a positive drug test on arrest	605	562	636	697	2500
Voluntary Custody Assessments	255	214	172	122	763
Court Assessments (DRR/ATR)	76	34	30	45	185
Court Assessments (Conditional/ Pre-Sentence)	74	110	114	79	377

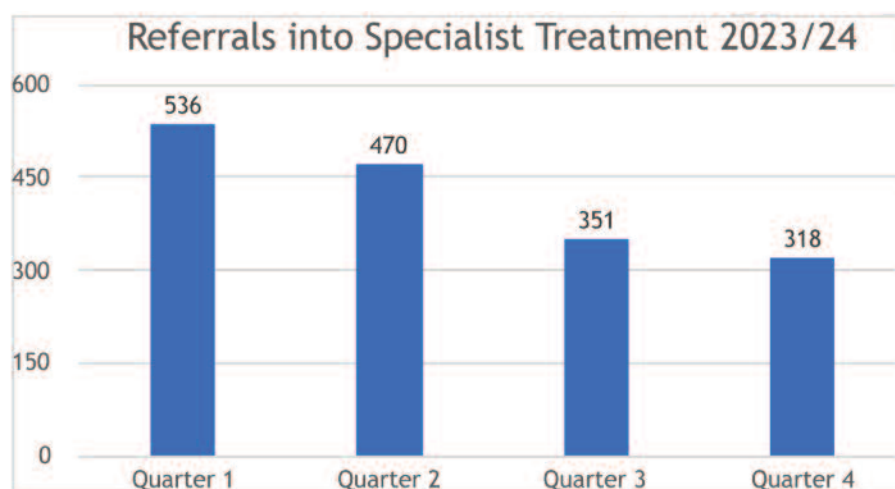
During 2023/24, 211 DRRs were granted and 143 ATRs were granted by the courts as shown below.

Figure 4: Total number of DRRs and ATRs granted during 23-24



In total, 1,675 people were referred to local drug treatment during 2023/24.

Figure 5: Total number of people referred to local drug treatment during 23-24 per quarter



Divert

My Divert service aims to contribute to a culture change in policing. WMP strategy is to work with partners and divert emerging offenders from court, into the most appropriate intervention, to reduce reoffending. Divert is an education programme, that aims to divert drug users from longer term drug use and is available to anyone found in possession of any illicit substance including, but not limited to:

- Cannabis
- Cocaine
- Heroin
- Nitrous Oxide
- MDMA
- Ketamine
- Amphetamines.

The content of the programme includes:

- Drug specific harm reduction advice
- Naloxone advice
- Economic and lifestyle impact of drug use
- Tailored individual advice and support
- Onward referrals to specialist treatment.

Between July 2023 and March 2024, there were 2,403 referrals made through the Divert Programme. 1,888 initial interventions/assessments were carried out and 1,136 individuals attended group sessions. Cannabis was the most common drug individuals were found in possession of when referred onto the Divert Programme (1,233 adults and 171 young people). In regards to adult referrals, there were 139 for cocaine, 30 for illicit heroin and 23 for nitrous oxide. The most common age of those referred was 18 to 24.



Figures 6-9 below, show the work undertaken by the service during this period in 23-24.

Figure 6: Divert programme activity (referrals, assessments and groups) by month during 23-24

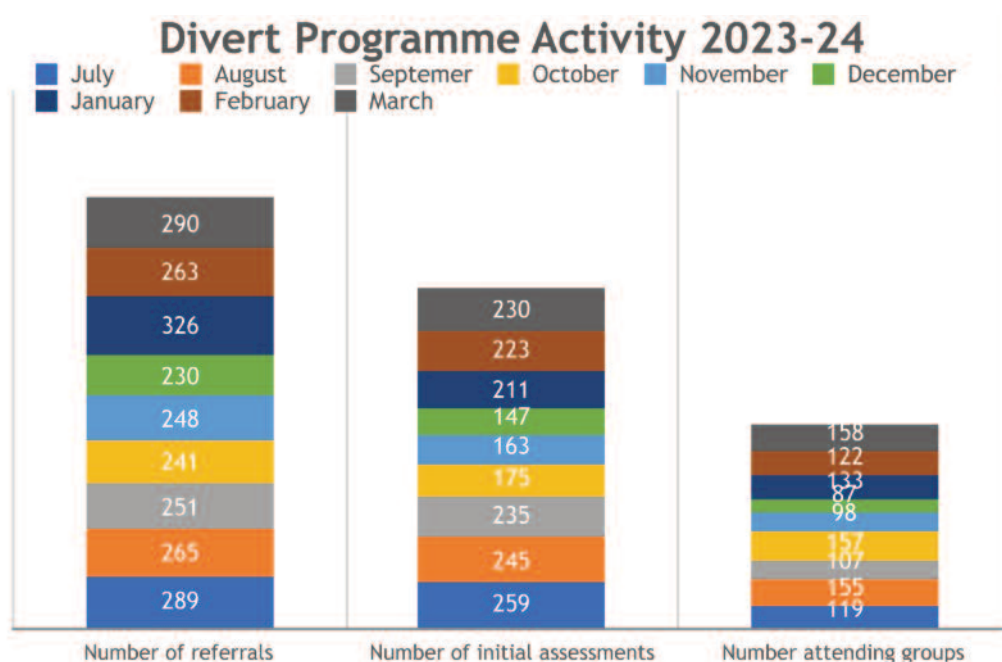


Figure 7: Engagement from those referred between July 23 to March 24

Level of engagement	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	YTD
% of all referrals who attended an initial intervention	89.6%	92.5%	93.6%	72.6%	65.7%	63.9%	64.7%	84.8%	79.3%	78.6%
% of all initial interventions who go on to attend a group session	45.9%	63.3%	45.5%	89.7%	60.1%	59.2%	63.0%	54.7%	68.7%	60.2%

Figure 8: Referrals of adults and young people (under 18) by place of residence for each West Midlands Local Authority Area

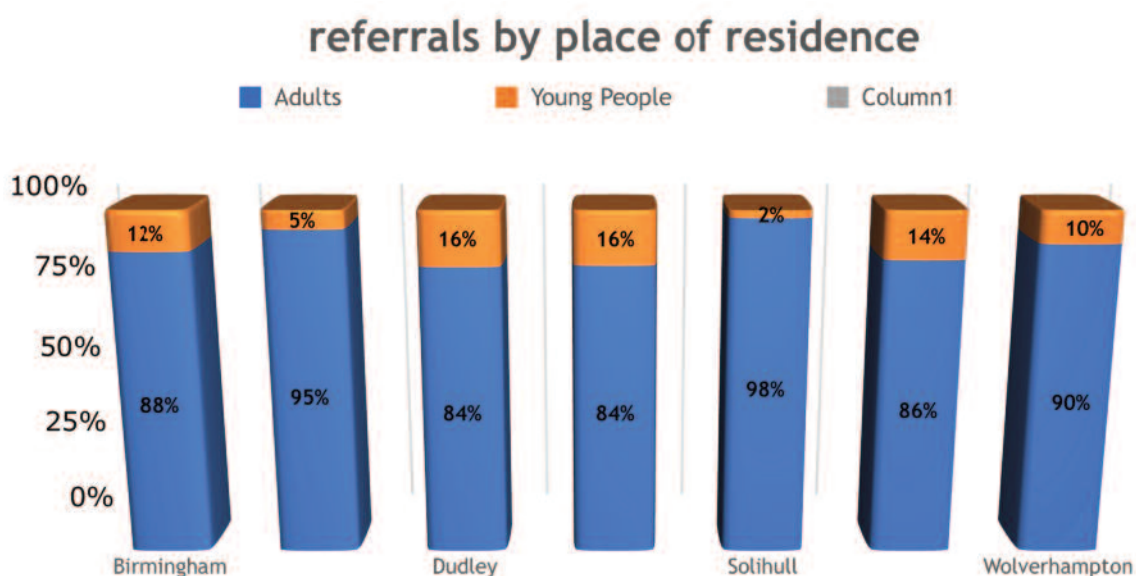
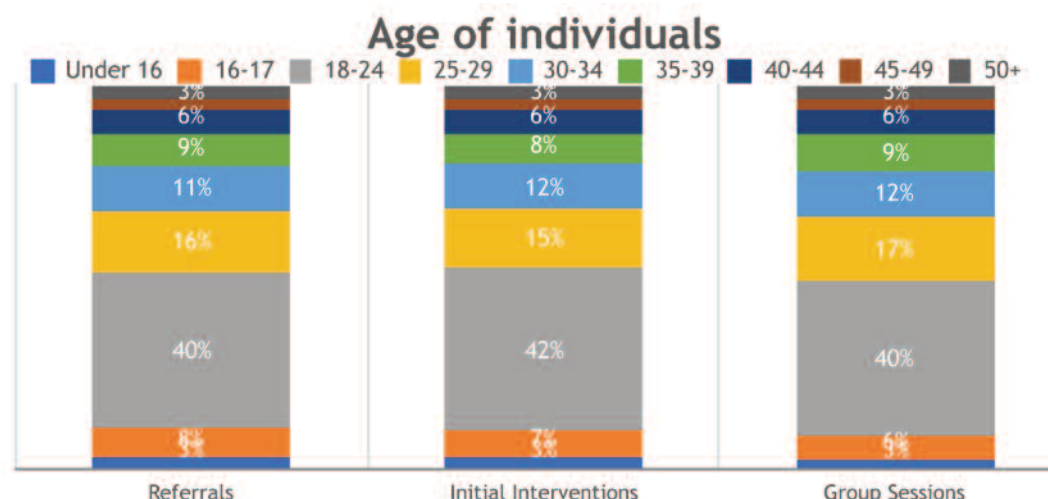


Figure 9: Age of individuals who were referred, attended initial interventions and group sessions



Offending to Recovery

My Offending to Recovery (O2R) programme has been in existence since 2018, initially implemented locally within the Erdington neighbourhood policing team. During this time, it proved effective in successfully rehabilitating people with severe drug addictions who prolifically offend to fund their prolonged and very high levels of drug use. The effectiveness of the programme has resulted in the reduction of retail crime.

The programme has been shown to be effective in reducing crime and positively impacting the lives of offenders. I therefore widened its reach to ensure sustainability and resilience, by bringing more facilitators on board and widening the scope to cover Birmingham East and Birmingham West Neighbourhood Policing Units (NPU's).

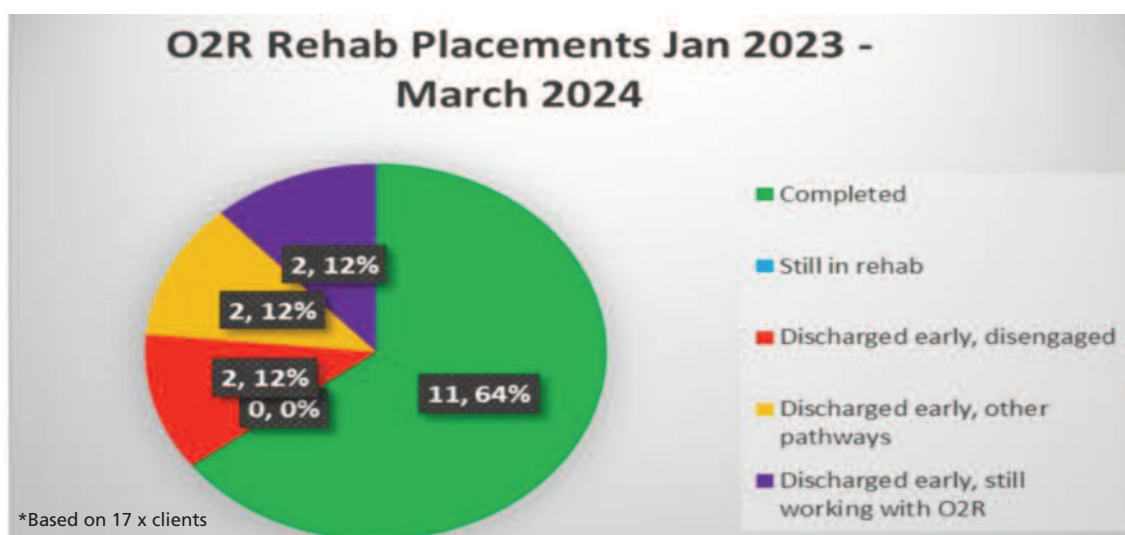
The intention is to use Offending to Recovery as part of a wider violence to business staff solution, and to address the specific issue of drug addiction in prolific business crime offenders. The pilot was independently evaluated from July 2021 to July 2022, which proved the effectiveness of the concept.

The nature of the programme also allows for management and re-engagement of offenders who may relapse, giving a better chance for long term change. Due to the nature of addiction and a complicated background and lifestyle, relapse can occur. However, if a person does relapse then it is more likely that, having begun the programme, they will re-engage with support, ensuring that the work and time already invested is not meaningless. The programme provides the option to get people back into drug treatment.

Of the 96 referrals that took place in 2023, 74 were in open cases with O2R with only 5 being unwilling to engage. There has also been an increase in the number of referrals from retailers. In Quarter 4 of 2023-2024, there were 23 referrals into the Birmingham O2R Programme. When added to the 96 referrals already received throughout 2023 this brings the total to 119 referrals in to the programme for 2023-24.

Of the 17 clients admitted to residential rehab over the year, nearly 90% either completed the rehabilitation; were discharged early but were still working with O2R; or were discharged early but moved on to other treatment pathways. Additionally, there has been an increase in other treatment pathways.

Figure 10: Completion rates for individuals placed in rehab between January 2023 and March 2024





Questionnaires of clients in rehab indicated the 2023-24 cohort were spending a minimum of £500 a week on drugs, with one reporting spending £2,000. From their time spent in rehab alone in 2023, approximately £290,000 was saved by retailers in estimated losses.

During the pilot, 30% of residential rehab clients remained abstinent from drugs and crime post rehab. Furthermore, for every 20 offenders that the project supports, it is estimated that it could prevent between £760,000 to £1,140,000 worth of goods from being stolen.

Road Safety

The Regional Road Safety Partnership

I have continued to chair the Regional Road Safety Strategic Group, where all strategic partners convene to direct road safety across the region. I have been holding the Partnership to account for publishing the Refreshed Regional Road Safety Strategy 2023-2030, launched in September 2023. The Strategy sets out the target to reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured on West Midlands roads by 50% by 2030. I continue to hold the Partnership to account, regarding the creation and publication of the action plan, which will put the strategy into practice.

Retaining Fixed Penalty Fines

I have lobbied the government, writing to the Department for Transport, to request that the West Midlands be allowed to ringfence money made from fixed penalty fines in the West Midlands to invest in local road safety schemes, rather than being sent to the Treasury. This proposal was supported by the West Midlands Police and Crime Panel. In summer 2023, my office organised a public consultation and 94% of people who responded, also agreed with and supported my campaign.

Safer Streets Five

In the Autumn of 2023, I secured investment of £1 million from Safer Streets 5. Part of that money was used to address the criminal and anti-social use of roads. Sixteen new speed devices have been purchased for enforcement and Community Speedwatch groups across the seven local policing areas in the West Midlands, to help expand Community Speedwatch operations. Three new mobile police speed vans will also be purchased to address speeding, which is one of the main causes of serious collisions. This will improve safety and feelings of safety on our roads and trust and confidence in the police.

Part of the funding has also gone towards investing in the Third-Party Reporting Team in West Midlands Police, to process dashcam and mobile phone footage of criminal and anti-social behaviour on roads, uploaded by the public.

The team has seen an increase in reports being submitted by the public and in positive outcomes. Between July 2023 and March 2024 reports to the Third-Party Reporting team have increased from 325 to 1,325. During the same period, positive outcomes, a warning letter, penalty notice or prosecution, increased from 4% to 86%.

Figure 11: Total number of reports and outcomes during 2023-24 by month

	Total Number	Positive Outcome Rate	NFA
July 2023	325	4%	96%
August 2023	557	53%	47%
September 2023	640	65%	35%
October 2023	734	81%	19%
November 2023	854	92%	8%
December 2023	828	94%	6%
January 2024	931	90%	5%
February 2024	1,139	89%	10%
March 2024	1,325	86%	11%

Operation Hercules

Operation Hercules is a West Midlands Police led initiative, working with West Midlands Fire Service and local councils to address street racing. West Midlands Police are able to gather intelligence, which identifies people who take part in these activities. They are required to take part in a diversionary course to better understand the risks involved.

West Midlands Fire Service work with partners to educate people involved and tackle this issue through the diversionary course they have developed. Dedicated Officers from the Fire department open and deliver the course with Police Officers from Operation Hercules and the Road Peace charity speak with the delegates about their personal stories in relation to bereavement due to road traffic collisions. I initially contributed £42,000 to this operation.

In February 2024, a new three-year injunction was granted by the High Court, banning street racing across Birmingham and the Black Country. The order, an extension of a series of interim injunctions put in place across the West Midlands, prohibits drivers, riders or passengers from participating in street racing anywhere in Birmingham, Wolverhampton, Dudley, Sandwell and Walsall, as well as now including organisers, promoters and spectators.

As of February 2024, 160 individuals had been highlighted and referred onto the diversionary/educational course and 18 drivers had been arrested for breach of the High Court injunction, all of which either pleaded or were found guilty. These individuals received fines and suspended sentences.

Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims

Every year in November, people come together to remember victims who have lost their lives or have been seriously injured on our roads. On the 19 November 2023, I attended the Road Peace Service in Birmingham to mark World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims. This day of remembrance is an important and poignant reminder of all the people who are tragically and avoidably, killed and seriously injured on our roads.

My thoughts are with the victims, their families and friends. Preventing and tackling crime and anti-social behaviour and reducing the number of people, tragically and avoidably killed and seriously injured on our roads is a top priority and will continue to be so during my new term.





Section 3: Police Collaboration

Strategic Policing Requirement

The Strategic Policing Requirement (SPR) sets out those threats which, in the Home Secretary's view, are the biggest threats to public safety and must be given due regard by PCCs when issuing or varying Police and Crime Plans. The SPR supports PCCs as well as Chief Constables, to plan, prepare and respond to these threats, by clearly linking the local, regional and national responses and highlighting the capabilities and partnerships that policing needs, to ensure it can fulfil its national responsibilities.

A revised version of the SPR was published in February 2023, which set out seven identified national threats: Serious and Organised Crime (SOC); Terrorism; Cyber; Child Sexual Abuse; Public Disorder; Civil Emergencies and Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG). This revised version provided significant detail around the local and regional action required from policing, in order to respond to these critical national threats.

This requires me to ensure that West Midlands Police has the capacity and capability to respond to national policing threats. This means joint working with other Forces and agencies, as part of a national response, requiring standardisation and co-ordination of equipment and processes. As well as receiving regular updates from the Chief Officers, I have also taken annual reports to SPCB, as part of this 'have regard' duty. Whilst the reports have highlighted how reductions in police numbers have stretched the capacity and capability to respond to a major public order incident, I am satisfied that West Midlands Police remains ready to meet the SPR.

Collaboration between police forces and PCCs requires investment in the mechanisms for joint working. My Office continues to host two Regional Policy Officers, who work across the four OPCCs in the region on areas of formal collaboration and joint cooperation. As a result, we have increased scrutiny of areas such as counter-terrorism policing, serious and organised crime, the National Police Air Service (NPAS) and Regional Operations.

A key mechanism of maintaining scrutiny in our region is through a Regional Governance Group, where all four Police and Crime Commissioners meet quarterly with the four Chief Constables and Chief Executives to scrutinise regional and national collaborations, upholding the 'holding to account function' outlined in the SPR. Key performance updates are provided by: the West Midlands Counter-Terrorism Unit (WMCTU); West Midlands Regional Organised Crime Unit (WMROCU), Emergency Services Mobile Communication Programme (ESMCP); National Police Air Service (NPAS) and other collaborations concerning public order training.



Alongside this, all four PCCs in the region have local briefings with the Counter-Terrorism and ROCU leads, to ensure effectiveness. The structure of these briefings has been developed collaboratively with the other three PCCs, to ensure proportionate local scrutiny arrangements. This is crucial because it informs the joint scrutiny by PCCs at a regional level. Additionally, the Regional Policy Officers attend quarterly Regional Ops meetings, to ensure PCC representation and engagement across specialist areas of policing.

I have also ensured engagement and appropriate oversight of national projects. The role that NPAS brings to police is changing, as advancing drone technology gives police forces different options. However, it remains imperative and continues to be mandated by the Home Secretary that forces should collaborate on the provision of a national police air capability. I therefore support the ongoing exploration of transformation work that NPAS will undertake, as it develops alongside the new technologies that are available. I also remain informed of the Emergency Services Mobile Communication Programme, a national programme tasked to introduce a replacement for the Airwave system. The delays in this national programme and the uncertain local implementation costs, are a significant future risk to West Midlands Police and other Forces. However, I am aware that progress is starting to be made to advance this project which is welcome.

West Midlands Counter-Terrorism Unit (WMCTU)

The threat of terrorism to the UK remains and continues to change at pace. This year has seen significant developments within CT legislation and policy including: The Independent Review of Prevent: One Year on Report and, the Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Bill, formerly known as Martyn's Law.

Both regionally and nationally, I am the counter-terrorism lead for PCCs, holding the APCC portfolio, as well as, Chair of the National Counter-Terrorism Collaboration Agreement Strategic Board. In this position, I have ensured that PCCs have a strategic understanding of national threat and risk, whilst ensuring that the views of all members are reflected. The importance of this Board is considerable, allowing PCCs to support and scrutinise the implementation of national policy, to ensure the safety and security of the people and communities we serve.

Regionally, PCCs scrutinise the performance of the West Midlands Counter-Terrorism Unit (WMCTU) and oversee strategic trends, budget planning and management information. The Head of WMCTU provides a quarterly report for Regional Governance Group, consisting of a detailed account of threat, risk and activity across the 4Ps as well as other business updates.

In addition to this, in February 2024, myself and my regional colleagues convened a Deep Dive Session, which covered detailed updates from MI5 and CT Policing on the threat picture developing globally, nationally and regionally. It also consisted of updates from all 4 Ps regional leads, a detailed session on inclusion and diversity, as well as other topics of interest, including drones and election safety.



Through national and regional mechanisms, I have ensured PCCs receive assurance that improvements are consistently being made to the counter-terrorism network and agencies are working effectively to stop terrorist attacks from happening, protect the public, prepare for the impact of an attack and prevent people from being drawn into or supporting terrorism.

Major Incidents

PCCs have a key responsibility in the event of a major incident, such as a terrorist attack. We provide community reassurance, consider our response to victims and their families and hold the force to account for their response and recovery. Following a regional exercise in March 2022, I developed our OPCC critical incident plan, which sets out the responsibilities and actions required by myself and my office, in the event of an incident.

This plan was tested and the post-incident report includes recommendations and next steps for consideration and implementation. Although everything cannot be prepared for, the document outlines roles, responsibilities and considerations needed at every stage of an incident, activation process, pre-incident, incident in progress and post-incident.

West Midlands Regional Organised Crime Unit (WM ROCU)

Strategic oversight of the West Midlands Regional Organised Crime Unit (WMROCU) continues to be a shared responsibility, with PCC colleagues from across the region. At our quarterly Regional Governance Group meeting, the regional PCCs and Chief Constables receive a detailed report in respect of the WMROCU. The report covers all aspects relating to the operation of the WMROCU, a performance summary, details of the range of capabilities deployed and staffing levels. Along with my PCC colleagues, we scrutinise the operation of the ROCU closely, to ensure that they are effectively tackling those serious criminals who pose the most harm to communities across the region.

At a local level, I receive regular briefings on the work of the WMROCU and its impact for the West Midlands Force Area, to ensure I have oversight of the local issues and priorities. Following the HMICFRS inspection of West Midlands Police Serious Organised Crime response and the ROCU, I have improved my local briefings to include progress and performance updates in these key areas. I remain assured that West Midlands Police are working effectively to tackle serious and organised crime.

The ROCU is the bridge between the West Midlands Force and the National Crime Agency. It is imperative that the work of these three agencies is coordinated and synchronised, in order for the public to be kept safe and secure and the most dangerous criminals operating within our area to be brought to justice.

Section 4: Civic Leadership and Campaigning for Change

When I was elected in May 2021, I pledged to keep the views of local residents at the heart of my plans for policing. Equally important, is ensuring that I can engage effectively with communities of all kinds across the West Midlands.

I have prioritised community engagement through attendance at meetings with community groups, residents, Ward Forums, stakeholder networks, civic events, projects, faith groups and the voluntary sector. This is all in an effort to engage with, listen to and work with the people and communities of the West Midlands, to enable them to participate and have a say in how their region is policed.

Traditional Media

I adopt a proactive and transparent approach to communications and use a wide range of channels. Broadcast, digital and print organisations are vital to help communicate with residents and taxpayers. It allows me to raise awareness of current issues, provide a platform for campaigns and deliver updates on progress and challenges within policing and crime.

Amongst many significant issues covered during this period was my announcement to restructure the estates portfolio within West Midlands Police. I also updated constituents on reductions in violent crime and my successful Judicial Review challenge, to prevent the Mayoral takeover of the role of Police and Crime Commissioner.

My Communications team began a new monitoring programme in the autumn. Between October 2023 and March 2024, the Express and Star, Birmingham Mail and regional BBC online platforms all covered PCC stories the most.

Of the 128 stories covered by the media, the Mayoral takeover was, by far, the story that garnered the most media attention amounting to 42 stories, whilst the changes to the police estates portfolio garnered 11 stories and knife crime attracting 9. Seventy-seven of the stories covered by the media were instigated or generated by my Communications team, whilst 51 were initiated by journalists.

Social Media

In 2023-24 we saw an increase in reach and follower numbers consistently across the board as we increased both my profile and that of the office.

Some key stats include:

- Our messages were seen more than 1.9 million times across all platforms
- Our follower numbers increased by 8% across all platforms
- Our most popular YouTube video was viewed more than 100,000 times, with a watch time of more than 2,300 hours



Campaigns

I launched a public consultation into my plan to retain money raised from fixed penalty notices issued to drivers in the West Midlands, with the money being invested in road safety improvement schemes. A four-week campaign was supported with paid for social media, a press release and appearances on local radio. We also targeted community groups on Facebook organically. The consultation was completed by a then-office record of 1,300 people, with 93 per cent supporting my plan. I subsequently wrote to government on the issue and opened a dialogue with the Department for Transport.

Focussing on the issue of women's safety while exercising, '[I'm Tired of This](#)' was an online advert paid for through the Safer Streets Fund. Scripted, casted and co-produced by the OPCC and an external VAWG comms specialist, the video was filmed and directed by a local advertising agency in Birmingham. Highlighting the reality women face when out exercising in public, the video had more than 150,000 views across social media platforms, with almost 101,000 of those coming on YouTube.

Engagement

Our annual precept public engagement ran from mid-December to mid-January, with more than 1,500 people having their say. Using organic and paid for posts on Twitter, as it was called, Facebook and Instagram, as well as traditional media and business engagement, the PCC urged the public to have their say.

The engagement gave us some rich data, including showing that 89 per cent of people did not feel there are enough police on the streets and the top three crimes they were worried about were burglary, knife crime and anti-social behaviour. 52% voted in favour of a council tax rise to support policing in the region.

My policy team and I have launched major communications campaigns that aim to make the West Midlands safer, including focusing on some of my priorities, such as fair funding for West Midlands Police, ending violence against women and girls, road safety, serious youth violence and knife crime, and fraud. My last year of campaigns included:

Fair funding formula: I have campaigned for the government to face up to the acute financial challenges faced by West Midlands Police and called for fair funding and the return of our 800 fewer police officers and 500 fewer Police Community Support Officers. I have opened various funds throughout the year allocated to key areas, such as tackling domestic abuse, dangerous drivers and violent crime.

Car safety: A major on-going campaign throughout my term in office, I have continued my call for car [manufacturers to sort out failures in their vehicles](#), including retrofitting security fixes, and to give away/encourage the use of steering wheel locks and Faraday pouches for free.

Promoting the victims code: I have supported West Midlands Police in launching their [new victims strategy](#), which aims to increase compliance with the victims code and the MoJ [awareness campaign](#), so victims across the region are aware of their rights.

Tackling youth violence: A major on-going campaign, throughout my term in office, has been to raise awareness of the work being carried out to prevent, tackle and reduce serious youth violence, such as virtual reality headsets deployed in schools.

Knife crime: I have continued my campaign against knife crime, including the installation of a network of 400 additional [bleed kits](#) and more [weapons surrender bins](#), now totalling 36 across the region.

Fraud and financial crime: A social media and leaflet [campaign](#) in Birmingham, warning people of the dangers of borrowing from illegal money lenders, as well as publicly [supporting businesses](#) across the West Midlands hit by fraud and business and retail crime.

Targeting anti-social behaviour: I backed the [#Safer6 campaign](#) in Sandwell as it targets and clamps down on anti-social behaviour, as part of a Home Office-funded pilot project. The West Midlands is one of 10 force areas, piloting extra patrols in ASB hot spots and other partnership activities.

Fraud

In February 2024, I launched the first ever [public health approach to combat fraud](#), by bringing together a new strategic partnership from across the region, including police, academics and key stakeholders from the local fraud prevention landscape – ranging from Trading Standards, West Midlands Police and the Credit Industry Fraud Avoidance System. The new partnership will aim to empower the public, challenge fraudsters and help transform the West Midlands into one of the most difficult places to commit fraud.

This public health approach to fraud is based on innovative research carried out by Cardiff University, funded by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, Midlands Fraud Forum and the West Midlands Regional Organised Crime Unit. Partners have now been tasked on delivering the eight key recommendations published by Cardiff University, to ensure the key components of the public health approach are in place – such as being data driven, focused on prevention, centred on collaboration and providing different levels of intervention.

In addition, I have continued my calls for the government to have a better national approach to prevent, tackle and reduce fraud by recognising it as a priority and increasing resource.

I have also continued my focus on specific types of fraud harming vulnerable people in the West Midlands, such as romance scammers and loan sharks. I have issued [advice](#) on signs of romance fraud and how online daters can protect themselves and commissioned a social media and leaflet [campaign](#) in Birmingham warning people of the dangers of borrowing from illegal money lenders.

Meeting, engaging, listening and working with you

Building safe, secure and strong communities has always been at the forefront of my work, with a wealth of initiatives taking place across our region that are focused on achieving that. This section provides a snapshot of the extensive work that is taking place.

I have attended 207 community events and meetings and engaged with hundreds of members of the public and community safety partners at formal meetings, community and stakeholder meetings and forums, local resident events, civic events, conferences, workshops and business meetings. This is an immensely important and much valued part of my role.

Highlights from the meetings have been working with my fantastic Youth Commissioners who represent young people from across the force area. My inspiring Police Cadets and I have been out and about, participating at events. It has been a pleasure to meet recipients of my Helping Communities Fund as they showcase the best of the work that people in our communities are doing every day.

I am regularly out at community and residents' meetings, engaging with, listening to, talking to and working with people and businesses from across the West Midlands, discussing local issues and solutions, encouraging people to report any concerns and crucially, providing reassurance on the action being taken to prevent, tackle and reduce crime and anti-social behaviour, to keep people, families, businesses and local communities safe and secure. My office links in closely with our local policing teams and partners, to identify issues of concern and the wide-ranging action that is necessary, to help and support our communities.

My office has received 257 pieces of casework, alongside numerous letters and correspondence from people and organisations from across the West Midlands, that raise a variety of different concerns, issues and matters.

Outstanding Citizens Awards

The 11th annual [Outstanding Citizens Awards](#) took place in June 2023. This event shines a light on people who go above and beyond to make a difference within their communities. A volunteer who has dedicated his life to tackling knife crime won my Outstanding Citizen Award.



For the last 17 years, Syed Muhammad Faisal Sami has volunteered with Dawat-E-Islami UK and spearheaded campaigns to tackle knife crime, as well as a range of other issues including drugs, speeding, gang culture, county lines, fly-tipping, theft and nitrous oxide. He is recognised as a true community champion and has inspired and supported thousands of people to bring a positive change in their lives, not just in the West Midlands, but nationally and globally.

My Outstanding Young Citizen Award went to Mohammed Al-Hassan, an 18-year-old who chairs the SHAPE Youth Forum (Sandwell) and has campaigned to reduce harassment and violence towards young women and girls.

Two community projects were awarded for their support for young people. The Bright Future Association, which uses football to support around 150 children every year and engage them in positive activities, won the Outstanding Young Community Project. Founder Nassim Saif and his team of coaches deliver FA affiliated, high quality, minimal cost, football training to the children of Sparkbrook and Balsall Heath.

Meriden Adventure Playground was also recognised with the Outstanding Community Project, for its positive engagement with young people. Their highly-skilled team have a wealth of experience and knowledge to support families and create community resilience.



Section 5: Good governance, transparency, equality and public engagement

Responding to Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC)

HMIC evaluate areas of force performance against its PEEL inspection framework, which scores each area as inadequate, requires improvement, adequate, good, or outstanding.

Outstanding	Good	Adequate	Requires improvement	Inadequate
		Preventing crime	Responding to the public	Investigating crime
		Police powers and public treatment	Developing a positive workplace	Protecting vulnerable people
			Leadership and force management	Managing offenders

In September 2023, HMIC inspected WMP and graded the force's performance across 8 areas of policing, and found the force was 'adequate' in two areas, 'requires improvement' in three areas, and 'inadequate' in three areas. HMIC highlighted the inadequate areas as:

- how the force investigates crime
- how it manages the risk posed by registered sex offenders and by online child abuse offenders
- how it manages multi-agency risk assessment conferences (MARAC) to work effectively to keep vulnerable people safe.

As a result of these areas of concern, HMIC moved West Midlands Police into an enhanced level of monitoring in November 2023, known as the 'Engage' process. Following this decision, I worked with the Chief Constable to ensure immediate and swift action was taken to implement necessary improvements, with the aim of being removed from special measures as soon as possible.

Regular re-inspections took place and inspectors found significant improvements. HMIC closed three of the four causes of concern by July 2024. The only remaining cause of concern relates to investigations. After less than 10 months, West Midlands Police were [removed from the Engage process](#) in September 2024, and were recognised as the fastest improving force in the country.

As part of my PCC obligations, I [publish my responses to HMIC PEEL inspections of WMP](#). Following my appointment to office in May 2021, I have provided formal responses to 40 WMP inspections, 17 of which were published in 23-24.



The Strategic Police and Crime Board

The Strategic Police and Crime Board continued to support me in holding WMP to account and setting the strategic direction for the force. During 2023-24, it met in public on a monthly basis, and provided an opportunity for the public to submit questions and petitions, relating to my duties and responsibilities. All papers remain publicly available [on my website](#). The role of the Board is to help me to deliver the aims, objectives and priorities that the people of the West Midlands elected me to deliver.

Internal Audit

I am responsible for ensuring that my role as the PCC is conducted in accordance with the law and high standards and that public money is safeguarded, properly accounted for and used economically, efficiently and effectively. This includes the maintenance of a sound system of internal control and that arrangements are in place for the management of risk.

Accountability and Governance

The Joint Annual Governance Statement, reflects the established governance framework and it is published alongside the annual accounts of the PCC. A joint [corporate governance framework](#) also sets out how governance operates for both the Chief Constable and the PCC.

In addition, I continued with the established arrangements for holding the force to account, adhering to the principles set out in the Policing Protocol 2011. I met face-to-face with the Chief Constable and senior officers and staff on a weekly basis for the duration of the year. The meetings covered wide ranging topics relating to current strategic and operational matters. For example, I have scrutinised force performance data, including 101/999 responses and contact with the public, progress against HMIC recommendations as part of the Engage process, as well as ongoing police recruitment and the national police officer uplift programme.

The Joint Audit Committee provides independent assurance on the governance, risk management and internal control frameworks through its oversight and scrutiny of the work of Internal Audit, External Audit, inspectorate reports and risk registers. It provides this service to both the Chief Constable and myself.

Further assurances are obtained via the Annual Governance Statement, the Statement of Accounts and review of the Scheme of Governance. The Joint Audit Committee meets [in public](#) and the Chair of the Joint Audit Committee also attended my Strategic Policing and Crime Board annually.



Ethics Committee

My [Ethics Committee](#) has continued, at a national level, to place attention on the emerging ethical considerations that come with new technologies in policing and to be recognised as a good practice model. During 23-24, the Committee has considered the implications of various AI technologies and predictive tools that are being introduced into operational policing. For example, the Committee considered one tool that sought to predict which offenders under police management were more likely to commit further serious offences, based on historic data trends.

While the potential advantages of this model were recognised, for example, focusing police resources on people at highest risk of committing harm, the Committee raised major ethical issues which subsequently helped to shape and improve the design of the project. For example, any coercive type of intervention such as surveillance based on a 'prediction', could result in serious injustices.

Concerns were also raised over whether stop and search data was being factored in and whether this might present racial bias. Redesigns subsequently made much clearer references to public health and supportive interventions that might follow, to mitigate the risk of inaccurate predictions and any measures that could be used as a proxy for ethnicity were assessed and discounted.

The Committee's approach to tackling and focusing on live projects, rather than theoretical discussions, was praised in a recent report led by the University of Northampton, the University of Glasgow and Northumbria University, published in September 2024. This report highlighted how the Committee have supported operational policing and provided a model for the responsible use of AI in policing nationwide.

The Committee was previously singled-out by the House of Lords Justice and Home Affairs Committee in a report on [new technologies in the justice system](#) on a similar basis and highlighted how the Committee's independence, commitment to transparency and remit has influenced the development of a national model.

The Committee has also previously received high praise in other UK leading publications – including from the Centre for Data Ethics and Innovation (CDEI), the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC), the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI), The Law Society, the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO), Ada Lovelace Institute, Liberty, The Police Foundation, The Alan Turing Institute, and The Committee on Standards in Public Life (CSPL).

The work of our voluntary Independent Custody Visitors (ICVs)

During 2023/24, our dedicated ICVs conducted 221 visits to police custody suites across the West Midlands offering to check on the welfare of 1,034 detainees. The scheme has 40 dedicated volunteers, who conduct one face-to-face visit per week. Over the course of the year, the scheme has seen many measures to improve detainee dignity. The scheme operates an effective scrutiny mechanism, including panel meetings to ensure any issues can be raised directly with us and the force.

Appropriate Adults

The provision of Appropriate Adults (AA) for vulnerable adults remains extremely important to me. Our 11 AA volunteers supported 911 vulnerable adult detainees and I continue to support the National Appropriate Adult Network's campaign to lobby the Government to change the law, so as to introduce a statutory provision for vulnerable adult detainees, levelling up the statutory requirements for adults and children. In the absence of dedicated Government funding, I have continued to lead on the delivery of this service.



Section 6: Financial Planning, Resources and Grant Giving

Financial Planning

I review and agree a medium-term financial plan with WMP each year. The plan builds in the cost of refreshing the fleet, the estates strategy, known investments and the cost of increments for officers and staff. This assumes that the policing strategic assessment does not change and does not take account any unknown features of change in the nature of crime or policing.

The Medium-Term Financial Plan beginning in 2023/24 showed that over the lifetime of that plan, a further £122.6M of savings would be required to balance the budgets of both the OPCC and WMP, even after raising council tax by £10 per annum, per Band D property, across that period.

The previous government promised a review of the funding formula from 2015 and despite reports from the Public Accounts Committee, National Audit Office, Institute for Fiscal Studies, the National Police Chiefs Council and HMICFRS, 10 years on, the promised review has still not taken place. HM Chief Inspector of Policing noted the following in his [Annual Assessment of Policing in England and Wales for 2023](#):

‘The system of police funding is outdated and unfair. Funding should be distributed so it goes to where it is needed most. But currently, this isn’t the case... More grant-dependent, deprived and urban parts of England and Wales are more likely to be underfunded compared to their needs... The way that the PUP [Police Uplift Programme] funding was distributed means that new officers haven’t been appointed where they are needed most... In the absence of increasing the overall spend on the police, [this] will mean taking money away from some to give it to others. This may be politically unpopular, but it is the right thing to do to make poorer communities safer.’

HMIC recent PEEL assessment of the force published 22 December 2023 also noted:

‘West Midlands Police’s funding reduced by 13 percent per capita between the year ending 31 March 2014 and year ending 31 March 2020. This means that it has been affected disproportionately compared to some other forces, and has little opportunity to obtain additional funds from increasing the police precept. West Midlands Police needs to have enough resources to prevent crime and protect the public effectively.’

The Inspectorate’s acknowledgment of the Force’s predicament is long overdue, but it is still a welcome development.

Financial Resources

I am responsible for setting the budget of WMP and the OPCC. The majority of the funding for this expenditure comes from central government grant, be that the main Policing grant, or smaller and more specific grants such as the VRP funding.

The total grant settlement for the West Midlands in 2023-24 is £569.7 million, which was an increase of £10.3 million on the previous year. This grant enabled WMP to continue to maintain police officer numbers during 2023-24 and support the national uplift programme and also to fund the 2023-24 police officer and staff pay awards.

About 20% of the funding comes through council tax. I set the level of council tax for policing. The settlement for 2023/24 allowed PCCs to raise council tax by up to £15 per year per Band D property. This generated an additional income of £11.07 million. The West Midlands Police budget will still remain under significant financial pressure and the force is still projected to have about 800 fewer police officers by 2023 than we did in 2010.

PCCs are expected to pay for the Police Staff pay awards and meet rising costs and inflation on all other costs, such as energy prices and fuel, from the funding settlement and council tax. A breakdown of the police precept cost, per council tax property band, is set out below.

Band	Statutory Proportion	2022/23 Precept £: p	2023/24 Precept £: p	Change Annual £: p	Change Weekly £: p
Band A	6/9	125.03	135.03	10.00	0.19
Band B	7/9	145.87	157.54	11.67	0.22
Band C	8/9	166.71	180.04	13.33	0.26
Band D	9/9	187.55	202.55	15.00	0.29
Band E	11/9	229.23	247.56	18.33	0.35
Band F	13/9	270.91	292.57	21.66	0.42
Band G	15/9	312.58	337.58	25.00	0.48
Band H	18/9	375.10	405.10	30.00	0.58

The full budget report for 2023-2024 is available [here](#). It sets out expenditure for capital and revenue expenditure across all areas of policing and the OPCC.

Grants

Grants, both large and small, are one of the key ways that I make a direct contribution to making the West Midlands a safer place. Projects, groups and initiatives prevent and tackle a range of issues such as domestic abuse; sexual violence; victims of crime; cybercrime; county lines; serious youth violence; mental health; sports diversion; youth justice; rehabilitation; offending; and out of court disposals. The information below sets out how grant funding has been spent across a number of different funding streams.

Helping Communities Fund 2023-24

The Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 (POCA), enables money which has been seized from criminals to be used and re-purposed. In 2023-24, this provided the opportunity to fund up to £400,000 of community projects, which aligned closely to my Police and Crime Plan and the priorities of West Midlands Police. The funding is shared out between the NPUs, with the aim of supporting communities to invest in their neighbourhoods, helping them get actively involved in projects, which would make a positive difference and contribute to crime prevention and reduction and community safety in the local area.

Local Policing Area	Allocation	Number of Projects
Birmingham	£139,408	32
Coventry	£44,029	10
Dudley	£41,565	13
Sandwell	£43,645	13
Solihull	£29,437	6
Walsall	£37,112	9
Wolverhampton	£34,806	9
Street Watch	£30,000	
Helping Communities Fund Total	£400,002	92

Prevention and Intervention Fund 2023-24

The Prevention and Intervention budgets are allocated in line with the priorities within my Police and Crime Plan. The projects that we funded during the financial year are set out below.

Project / Area	2023/24
Enterprise for employment (Birmingham)	£100,000
Arrest Referral (Drug Interventions Programme)	£503,000
Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Programme	£300,000
Joint Working with WMCA on Road Safety	£100,000
18 Projects Under £100K, including Stop and Search Education, Family Drug & Alcohol Courts, Cautions & Relationship Abuse	£802,538
Prevention and Intervention Total	£1,805,538

Community Safety Fund Budget 2023-24

These funds allow community safety partners to invest in meeting their responsibilities and support multi-agency responses to delivering community safety initiatives.

Activity	2023/24
Force Wide Commissioning Allocations	
Youth Offending	£652,108
Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC)	£454,000
Community Safety Partnership - Analysts	£230,000
Arrest Referral (Drug Interventions Programme)	£500,000
New Chance	£270,000
Restorative Justice West Midlands – ASB	£63,785
Op Hercules – Forcewide Injunctions	£42,000
DA related Alcohol Violence - Early Intervention (CSP)	£120,000
Local Commissioning Allocations	
Sub-Total	£2,331,893
Allocation to 7 Local Community Safety Partnerships	
Birmingham	£660,000
Coventry	£165,000
Dudley	£135,000
Sandwell	£165,000
Solihull	£90,000
Walsall	£135,000
Wolverhampton	£150,000
7 Local CSP's	£1,500,000
Total Community Safety Funding	£3,831,893

Victims Fund Budget 2023-24

Grants from the Ministry of Justice, which support this expenditure, have not increased in line with inflation. £150,412 of community safety funding was therefore used in 2023-24 to top up the Victims Support expenditure.

Priority	2023/24
Domestic Abuse	£745,271
Hate Crime	£150,000
Modern Slavery	£170,788
Victim Support - Other Services	£1,012,732
Restorative Justice	£225,000
Road Crime	£76,517
Sexual Violence	£95,455
Sexual Violence CSA	£505,484
Stalking and Harassment	£147,980
Victims Fund 9	£150,000
Associated Costs	£326,588
Total Victims Fund Budget	£3,605,815

Independent Domestic Violence Advocate (IDVA) and Independent Sexual Violence Advocate (ISVA) Funding 2023-24

This funding is spent on advisors who can support victims of domestic abuse and sexual violence, as well as on specialist providers who develop expertise in supporting different groups with shared protected characteristics: the spend is on male victims as well as female victims and across a wide age range.

Priority	2023/24
ISVA's	£2,146,185
IDVA's	£643,632
Total Victims Fund Budget	£2,789,817



west midlands police and crime commissioner

Simon Foster
West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner

Keep in touch

This report is important as it gives you the opportunity to review my progress and I welcome your feedback.

There are lots of ways to keep in touch.

You can:

Write to us: Police & Crime Commissioner's Office, Lloyd House,
Colmore Circus Queensway, Birmingham, B4 6NQ

Tel: 0121 626 6060 Fax: 0121 626 5003

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