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National Policing Priorities Statement

2024-25 Q4 Update

Introduction

In 2021, the Home Office developed a range of National Policing Priorities with the intent that each police force must achieve significant reductions or improvements in each priority area. The purpose of these measures is to complement existing local priorities set out by the Police and Crime Commissioners Police and Crime Plan.

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 2024/25, there were 31 homicides recorded by West Midlands Police (WMP), a reduction of 14 compared to the previous year. Of these, 9 were flagged as domestic-related, which remains unchanged from 2023/24.

WMP, in partnership with the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC), remains dedicated in its commitment to addressing domestic abuse and violence against women and girls (VAWG). Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) Simon Foster reinforced this commitment by launching the "Things We Can Do" campaign, which calls on small businesses in Birmingham to play a role in combating domestic and sexual abuse. The initiative equips businesses with the tools to recognise signs of abuse, support affected employees, and direct victims to appropriate services.

Significant strides have been made in improving support for domestic abuse victims. In 2023, WMP introduced a video reporting service, enabling victims to report abuse via video link, a vital option for those unable to make a phone call or visit a police station. This digital reporting method empowers victims and witnesses, while also allowing WMP to initiate prompt and thorough investigations.

This innovative service recently earned national recognition, receiving exemplary accreditation from the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC). WMP is now among a select group of forces across the country to achieve this distinction, setting a new benchmark in victim support and safeguarding practices.

Reduce serious violence

In 2024/25, violence with injury offences in the West Midlands fell by 9.6%, with 11,241 incidents recorded, a positive sign of progress in tackling serious violence. Serious youth violence also declined by 12.6% during the same period.

To further address youth and organised violence, WMP launched Operation Prosper in Walsall, a local area with high levels of serious youth violence. This initiative includes a newly formed targeted enforcement team focused on reducing crime in hotspot areas within the St Matthew's ward, aiming to enhance community safety. Operation Prosper is one of several taskforces deployed across the region to combat violent crime.

Despite these efforts, the West Midlands continues to record the second-highest rate of knife and sharp instrument offences in England and Wales, with 165 offences per 100,000 people (as of September 2024). However, there has been progress: knife crime fell by 13.1% in 2024, with 4,577 offences recorded, and gun crime dropped by 12.5%. While encouraging, knife crime remains a significant concern, underscoring the need for sustained, targeted interventions.

A range of initiatives are underway to address this issue. In April, hundreds of schoolchildren gathered at Wolverhampton football stadium for a large-scale anti-knife crime event. Organised by Wolverhampton City Council and the West Midlands Violence Reduction Partnership, the event brought together students from 13 schools for a day of activities and talks led by campaigners and community advocates. These collaborative efforts are vital in raising awareness and driving long-term change, demonstrating the power of community-led prevention.

Disrupt drug supply and county lines

Drug offences in the West Midlands saw a 9.5% decrease, driven largely by a 15.8% drop in drug possession offences. However, drug trafficking offences rose by 14.7%, which may indicate improved detection and enforcement efforts. Addressing drug-related harm remains a top priority for the PCC, who chairs the West Midlands Combatting Drugs and Alcohol Partnership.

Earlier this year, WMP launched Operation Fearless in Erdington, funded by the PCC through proceeds of crime. The operation has already resulted in eight warrants, over 60 stop and searches, and 15 positive outcomes. Focused on disrupting drug-related activity, the initiative is now expanding into Birmingham City Centre to build on its early success.

Reduce neighbourhood crime

Rebuilding neighbourhood policing has been a central focus for the PCC since taking office, forming a cornerstone of the Police and Crime Plan. In 2024/25, WMP recorded 48,938 neighbourhood crimes, a notable 17.3% reduction from the previous year. Key offences also saw significant declines: vehicle crime dropped by 13.9%, residential burglary by 20.6%, and personal robbery by 21.9%. These reductions reflect meaningful progress in tackling crimes that directly impact community safety.

Aligned with the government's Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee, WMP is implementing a refreshed neighbourhood policing model. This includes assigning dedicated officers to every ward across the region, with a focus on community engagement and local problem-solving. Additionally, 150 new neighbourhood police officers will be recruited to boost visible policing and strengthen ties with local communities.

These developments represent a major investment in local policing and reaffirm the PCC's long-term commitment to building safer, more connected neighbourhoods.

Improve victim satisfaction

Supporting victims remains a core priority for the PCC. In a significant step forward, the PCC has appointed the West Midlands' first dedicated Victims' Advocate. This newly established role will serve as a strong, independent voice for victims, survivors, and witnesses of crime, championing their rights, amplifying their experiences, and identifying ways to improve their journey through the criminal justice system. The Victims' Advocate will work to ensure that victims' voices are heard at the highest strategic levels, helping to shape and influence how services are delivered across the region. This appointment marks a meaningful advancement in strengthening victim support and ensuring that those affected by crime are placed at the heart of justice.

Tackle fraud and cybercrime

The PCC is committed to ensuring that WMP takes strong and proactive measures to prevent and tackle fraud and cybercrime across the region. According to the latest data from the Action Fraud dashboard, there were 15,065 reports in 2024/25, 83.0% related to fraud and 17.0% to cybercrime. This represents a 5.1% decrease in total reports compared to the previous year. In a further effort to combat financial exploitation, the PCC, in partnership with WMP, launched the Money Mules Campaign. Aimed at educating over 4,500 young people, the campaign raises awareness about the dangers of being recruited by criminals to move illicit funds through their bank accounts. By highlighting the risks and consequences, the initiative seeks to protect vulnerable individuals and reduce the prevalence of fraud-related exploitation.