



west midlands
police and crime
commissioner

ANNUAL 2024 REPORT 2025



Contents



Forward

After a long, hard fought and successful campaign, to retain the role of a democratically elected and directly accountable Police and Crime Commissioner, I was pleased to be re-elected in May 2024, whilst at the same time doubling my majority.

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, I believe that the people should have the right to vote and decide for themselves, who represents them, as their Police and Crime Commissioner.

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 and 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
- Preparing and issuing a Police and Crime Plan.

I launched my new Police and Crime Plan ('the Plan') on 26th March 2025. The Plan sets out my key objectives for policing, crime, community safety and criminal justice for 2025 to 2029. My Plan is important, because I have a statutory duty to prepare and issue the Plan, it sets out the strategic direction for policing, the Chief Constable has to have regard to the Plan and I use the Plan to hold West Midlands Police to account, on behalf of the people of the West Midlands.

Building on my first Plan, issued during my initial term in office in November 2021, it is a comprehensive agenda for change, development and progress in policing, rebuilding community policing, putting prevention and the 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 15 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 2024-25. This has been as a consequence of, 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 700 fewer officers and 500 fewer Police Community Support Officers and for fair funding for the West Midlands.
- Continued work on the Ending Male Violence Against Women and Girls agenda through the Alliance, driving the essential partnership work required;
- Commissioned over 56 support services for over 62,224 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;
- Continued to drive improvements in emergency call performance on both 999 and 101 calls and faster emergency and priority response times;
- Secured Investment in our VRP to commission around £3 million worth of activity across the region, reaching just under 41,000 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;
- A reduction in knife crime classified under ADR160 of 17.3%
- Ran an awareness campaign around Op Snap enabling more people to submit dashcam evidence of dangerous driving resulting in 70% more reports and 6,000 motorists being fined.
- 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, working with my cohort of Youth Commissioners, 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

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 one and only top priority of a Police and Crime Commissioner is preventing, tackling and reducing crime and keeping the people and communities of the West Midlands safe and secure.

Thank you to my Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner, Wasim Ali, my Victims Advocate, Natalie Queiroz, appointed in April 2025, members of my boards, committees, panels, partners, volunteers 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, to all of the action taken that is set out in this Report.

Thank you to all of the officers and staff of West Midlands Police, for their commitment, 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 2024 to 2025.



Simon Foster

Police and Crime Commissioner for the West Midlands
January 2026

Section 1

West Midlands Police

Force Performance

The primary expectations I place 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 my plan.

The assessment of progress towards the key performance indicators outlined in my 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, reassuring and visible presence. However, West Midlands Police still has around 700 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 700 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

As of 31st March 2025, WMP reported a total workforce headcount of 12,316, according to Office for National Statistics data. This comprised 7,991 Police Officers, 3,842 Police Staff, 298 PCSOs, and 185 Special Constables. These figures reflect the organisation's continued commitment to maintaining a strong workforce across operational and support roles to deliver effective policing to the community.

Table 1 – WMP Workforce headcount, March 2025

Police Officers	Police Staff	PCSO	Specials	Total
7,991	3,842	298	185	12,316

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 their new Police Race Action Plan, which is based on the national Plan, but tailored to local challenges. The Plan commits to better recruitment practices, improved community engagement, and challenging disproportionality in key police practices. My office attends the force's newly established Board, that oversees and scrutinises delivery.

All officers and staff continue to receive training to equip them with a better understanding of racism as part of this 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.

This year, I signed a pledge to make Birmingham and the wider West Midlands anti-racist, to show my commitment to anti-racism and to working with West Midlands Police, the National Police Chiefs Council and other partners to ensure an anti-racist police force.

In addition, I have also worked with local criminal justice partners to promote race equality in the criminal justice system, including tackling racial disparities in the youth justice system, and in charging and prosecution decisions. My office is also a partner in the Mayor's Race Equalities Taskforce, which publicly launched in September 2023, and we continue to lead 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.

I continue to regularly meet with and 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.

In my own office, I continue to ensure the delivery of 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.

The OPCC hold the Karl George Race Code accreditation. We continue to implement the transformational work needed to maintain this, in order to achieve truly diverse governance structures and organisational senior leadership team.

A breakdown of my own team shows that in March 2025, the OPCC had 80 employees, of whom 78 disclosed their ethnicity. 55 were White/White British (70%) and 23 (30%) were from an Ethnic minority group.

Reviews Function and Oversight of Police Complaints

This year, our oversight work has continued to grow. The Complaints Team remains at the heart of this effort, providing the insight I rely on to understand what the public are telling us and how the Force is responding. Their oversight has allowed us not only to track volumes and timeliness, but to recognise where improvements are required and the learning behind the statistics.

One of the most encouraging developments has been the publication of our first Learning Report - a real milestone. It reflects a shift from simply resolving complaints to making sure that what we learn from them shapes future practice. Learning is, after all, the golden thread running through complaints legislation, and it's imperative that we continue to hold the Force to account for acting on it.

We also broadened our oversight this year by looking more closely at the Vetting Team. Our first dip-sampling session showed that WMP is making positive progress, and we came away reassured by the improvements we saw. Alongside this, our quarterly meetings with the IOPC continue to be constructive and candid, allowing us to compare notes, challenge where needed, and support meaningful change. We have already seen encouraging shifts in several areas as a result.

The complaints dashboard has been updated to make information clearer and more accessible, and further work is underway to refine it. Complaint volumes into WMP have remained steady - 4,032 in 2024 and 4,153 in 2025. This small rise suggests that the public continue to feel able to raise concerns, which is essential in any healthy policing system. It also reminds us, that we must stay focused on capacity and responsiveness as demand remains stable.

Reflecting this, the number of reviews coming into my office has also increased, from 80 in 2024 to 114 in 2025. This growth is not unexpected. National changes have made the process clearer and more accessible, and the public are making use of it. Not only are numbers up, but the pattern of outcomes has changed, with approximately 23% of cases upheld in 2025 compared with 15% in 2024. This increase highlights areas where first-stage complaint handling can be strengthened and reinforces the value of the review process, in identifying learning and ensuring fairness. It remains an essential safeguard, supporting the Force continue to improve.

This year the Government introduced new Police Misconduct Regulations, which saw chief constables take over responsibility for chairing police misconduct hearings, and a greater emphasis on accelerated hearings. Independent legally qualified chairs are no longer chairing dismissal hearings. We have seen an increase in the number of hearings from 35 in 2023/4, to 41 in 2024/5. I have supplied Independent Legally Qualified Advisers and Independent Panel members to sit on 10 hearings for West Midlands Police between 1st April 2024 and 31st March 2025.

We have also seen an increase in the number of appeals against dismissal. Six Notices of Appeal were received by the OPCC between 1st April 2024 and 31st March 2025. This is an increase from three Notices of Appeal received between 1st April 2023 and 31st March 2024.

Contact with the public

Figure 1. Force Contact 999 and 101 Performance Metrics



In 2024/25, the total number of 999 calls received by WMP fell by 10 percent, decreasing from 810,868 to 732,440 calls in comparison to 2023/24. Call handling performance has remained consistently strong. The proportion of 999 calls answered remained static at 99.9 percent, demonstrating sustained reliability in emergency call response.

Performance against the national 10-second call service level agreement has improved. Compliance increased from 93 percent in the previous year to 96 percent in 2024/25, representing a 3-percentage point improvement. This indicates a continued focus on meeting service level expectations and ensuring the public receives a timely emergency response.

The average answer time for 999 calls has improved, reducing from 5 seconds to 3 seconds in 2024/25. This represents a 40 percent improvement and demonstrates faster connection times, which are particularly critical in emergency situations where every second counts.

There has also been a notable reduction in the number of calls abandoned after waiting more than 10 seconds. This figure dropped from 651 to 179, a decrease of 73 percent. The improvement reflects increased efficiency in call handling and fewer instances of callers disconnecting due to delays or other reasons.

Turning to 101, there has been a 15 percent increase in demand, with 755,332 calls received in 2024/25 compared to 655,832 the year before. Despite this rise in call volume, the service has responded well. The proportion of calls answered, rose from 87 percent to 95 percent, an increase of 8 percentage points.

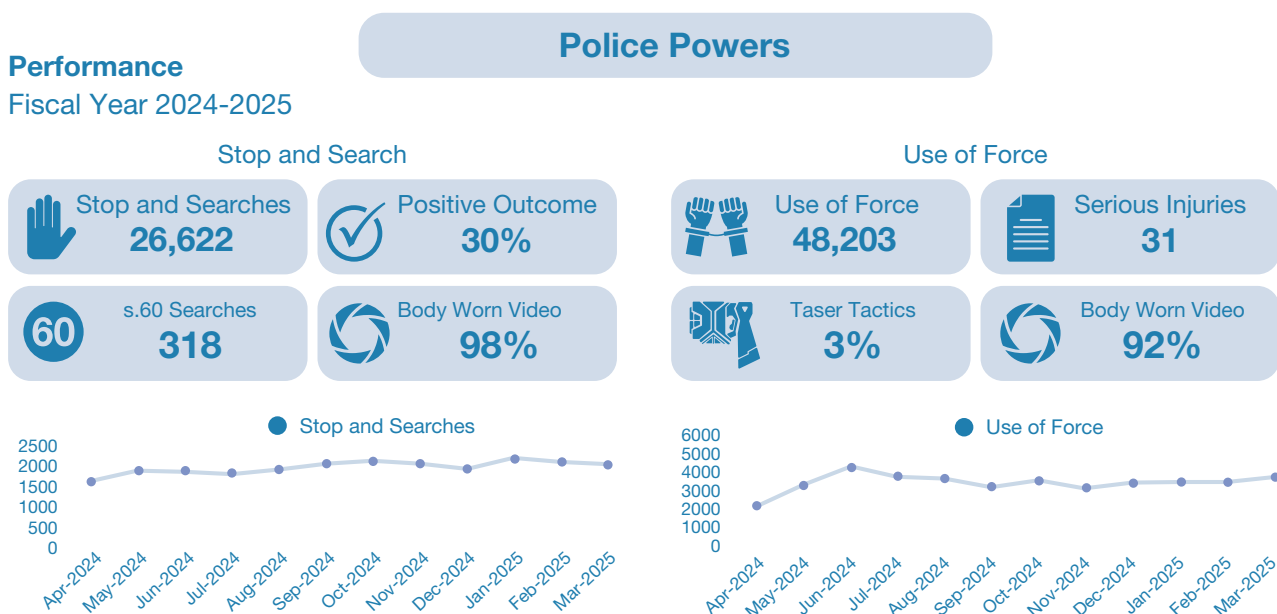
There has also been considerable progress in meeting the 3-minute answer time target. Compliance rose from 76 percent to 93 percent, a 17-percentage point improvement. This reflects ongoing efforts to improve access to police services and deliver a more responsive experience for the public.

The average answer time for 101 calls has seen a substantial improvement, falling from 2 minutes and 13 seconds to just 36 seconds in 2024/25. This 72 percent reduction demonstrates a significant increase in responsiveness, ensuring that callers are connected to the support they need far more quickly.

The number of calls abandoned after waiting more than 3 minutes has also dropped sharply. A total of 8,665 calls were abandoned in 2024/25, compared to 36,091 the previous year. This 76 percent reduction highlights improvements in both speed and overall service quality, as fewer callers are disengaging.

Stop and Search and Use of Force

Figure 2. Police Powers Performance Metrics



We continue to see high rates of Body-Worn Video compliance, during both Stop and Search and Use of Force. For stop and search, compliance has increased slightly to 98 percent in 2024/25, having previously increased from 42 percent in 2018/19 to 95 percent in 2021/22. Compliance for Use of Force has continued to increase and is now at 92 percent, up from 87 percent in the previous year.

In December 2024, WMP changed its policy to save all Stop and Search and Use of Force BWVs for 12 months as standard, up from 12 weeks as standard previously, with the intention of improving transparency and governance. Positive outcome rates, which is the rate at which an illegal item is found during a stop and search, has remained static at 30 percent during 2024/25, having previously been 29 percent in the previous year.

Disproportionality ratios show how many times more likely it is, that a member of an ethnic group is to be stopped and searched, compared to the white population. Stop and search data shows that Asian individuals are 1.8 times more likely, and Black individuals 3.0 times more likely, to be searched than White individuals. For use of force incidents, the pattern of disproportionality differs. Asian individuals are 0.8 times less likely to be subjected to force compared to White individuals, whereas Black individuals are 1.9 times more likely.

There is a continued focus to offer a feedback mechanism on stop and search interactions, with 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 they understood why they were stopped. We continue to see around 2% of all those stopped and searched give feedback this way. This is now WMP policy for the QR Code to be offered where applicable. We will continue to raise awareness of the QR code, to encourage members of the public to tell us about their experiences.

Throughout 2024-25, WMP continued as a pilot force for the Serious Violence Reduction Orders (SVRO). SVROs are a civil order, whereby someone who has a SVRO can be stopped in public spaces by the police and searched, without the need for there to be reasonable grounds. My office continued to hold WMP accountable on its use of the SVRO power, throughout the pilot through a community led working group. This working group has provided feedback to Home Office as part of the evaluation for the future of SVRO'S, with the pilot ending April 2025.

During this year, there has been a focus on internal governance and oversight of Stop and Search and Use of Force, bringing better governance, improved performance, increased accountability and a continued focus on and investment in training. There have been changes to areas, such as Section 60 policy where local Superintendents are now the ratifying officers and Force Incident Managers (FIM's)/Local Policing Area (LPA) Chief Inspectors, are the applicants allowing for more localised oversight and governance. In May 2024, WMP changed its policy so that compliant handcuffing is now recorded as a use of force, meaning that all uses of handcuffing now require a use of force form to be submitted.



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. The 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 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 within 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 reducing reoffending; delivering justice for women and girls; and supporting victims and witnesses.

The LCJB has responded to several key emerging issues during the year, including the Crown Court case backlog and the number of sitting days, and the prison population pressures and early release schemes. The Board has also focused on racial disproportionality in the criminal justice system, and improving support for victims, particularly victims of hidden and underreported crime.

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 cause high levels of harm, such as violence against women and girls, domestic abuse and sexual violence.

Victims

Throughout 2024-25, 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; to enable them to cope and recover; 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 and acting on the voices and experiences of victims and survivors.

I have continued to consult with victims, to better understand their needs and to ensure that services I commission, continue to meet the diverse needs of the victims living in my region. This has helped to shape the Protecting Victims and Witnesses chapter of my Police and Crime Plan 2025-2029.

I have continued to work with key partners, to review regional governance arrangements to ensure matters in relation to key thematic areas, including Domestic Abuse, Sexual Assault and Abuse, Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking and Exploitation and Missing, can be discussed and escalated. These governance structures are key to partnership working and an avenue to drive collaboration and improvements across the system.

One example of collaborative working led by my office, is to address the long waiting times for safe accommodation and an overreliance on temporary/emergency accommodation, I led discussions around the implementation of a reciprocal housing scheme, for all victims of exploitation and abuse. This would reduce homelessness, improve victim safety and create more housing options for victims of abuse.

Commissioned Services

During 2024-2025, I commissioned 56 services which in total supported 62,224 (new victims supported) 78,157 (new and existing) and included a total spend £6,190,807.46. Victim Support is my largest provider for victims of multi crime, which includes theft, robbery, burglary and standard risk domestic abuse.

Following publication of the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners (APCC) Victims Hub Landscape Review ([APCC findings report: Victim hub landscape review - The Association of Police and Crime Commissioners \(apccs.police.uk\)](#)), I carried out an extensive comparative analysis of the victims Hubs in areas most comparable to the West Midlands to inform best practice in our area, which will be taken into account through the recommissioning process currently being implemented by my office.

Assessing need and continuous improvement, is an ongoing process across all my commissioned services. During 2024-2025 I carried out a needs' analysis, to ensure there was an equitable split of resource for IDVA services across the 7 local authorities. The analysis was based on several data sources including female population, MARAC referrals, and recorded demand from monitoring returns. The analysis showed a need for re-distribution, to ensure an equitable spread and need for a regional bespoke IDVA service for men, due to limited existing pathways.

I also launched a Hidden Harmful Practices Fund of £110k, to consider applications from organisations working to support victims of harms, such as faith based/witchcraft based/breast ironing/transnational marriage abandonment, which despite being hidden can have an immense and long-lasting impact on victims.

In readiness for the Duty to Collaborate, I have been leading the way nationally on the development of 2 new and innovative commissioning frameworks, which have received national attention with my office being invited to present to all PCCs via the APCC.

Violence Against Women and Girls

I have continued action to tackle violence against women and girls throughout 2024-2025. Together with my Violence Prevention Partnership, I wrote to the Safeguarding and Victim's Minister, Minister for Education and the Home Office and Ministry of Justice, around the need for preventative VAWG/misogyny education and the need to strengthen provision in RSHE, including through provision of sustainable and multi-year funding for this work.

I have also worked with partners, through my Ending Male Violence against Women and Girls partnership board, to raise awareness of hidden forms of VAWG such as female genital mutilation (FGM) and so called 'honour' based abuse (HBA) and published a series of practice frameworks which draw together the views of partners on the necessary steps to build regional capability, in ensuring a proactive response to these harms. All practice frameworks can be found [here](#).

The NPCC VAWG taskforce Stakeholder Practice Sharing event, which is attended by senior national leaders, such as the Domestic Abuse Commissioner, the National Victims Commissioner and Chief Executives of charities, such as Rape Crisis England and Wales and Karma Nirvana took place on the 7th November 2024. The meeting heard from NPCC VAWG innovation projects nationally and as winners of the 2023 NPCC VAWG Awards, my office was invited, in continued recognition of my innovative response in this space.

I have commissioned two needs assessments, into the experience of sexual assault and abuse victims. One is looking into the mental health needs and pathways for victims, while the other focuses on the needs of Black and Minoritised Victims. The findings from these needs' assessments, will be shared regionally and will drive improvements where required.

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.

In the Criminal Justice Scorecards regarding adult rape, published quarterly, WMP are increasing the positive outcome rate, demonstrating closer working with CPS partners, particularly in the areas of Early Investigative Advice (EIA) and triage, which is allowing quicker and better outcomes for case progression.

This work, alongside my commissioned Independent Sexual Violence Advisors (ISVA) and specialist sexual assault and abuse services, has seen an improved level of procedural justice and engagement with victims and witnesses. However, as mentioned in my recent letter to Ministers, the provision of specialist support for survivors is vastly underfunded and the services we commission are struggling to cope, to provide the needed level of support through the funding available.

I have continued work with local MPs, the Chief Constable and others, to clearly highlight to central Government that the existing funding formula and previous policing cuts, undermines the ability of WMP to embed a sustainable RAOSO specialism.

Domestic Abuse

During 2024-2025 the Home Secretary, Yvette Cooper, announced that the initiative to place domestic abuse specialists in 999 control rooms, will form part of 'Raneem's Law'. With experts being embedded to advise on risk assessment, work with front line officers and ensure victims receive an effective response, as well as onward referrals to support services as fast as possible. WMP are part of the initial roll out and are already seeing positive results.

MARAC, which is the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference for domestic abuse, came out of the 'engage' status with HMIC, after significant action from WMP supported by my office. To manage demand and to future proof the system, a new operating protocol is being developed, which all MARAC partners will sign up to.

The domestic abuse desk, launched in April 2023 continues to deliver positive outcomes through 2024-2025. Officers complete a Domestic Abuse Risk Assessment (DARA), capturing the voice of the child where relevant, via video call. Following the call, the victim has the option to be transferred to an IDVA or receive a call back. Officers are also in plain clothes and the link to the video call leaves no trace on the caller's phone. The IDVAs attached to the DA desk are partially co-located with the team and share good practice, offer advice, and can take some of the calls.

This year has seen the expansion of the innovative, integrated, domestic abuse family court otherwise known as the Pathfinder Court. Pathfinder places IDVAs within family courts, to ensure safety is prioritised above all else, in private family court proceedings. The Pathfinder is already in the Birmingham Family Court and the project will be rolling out in the Wolverhampton and Telford Family Courts from November 2025.

My office continues to lead the way in its work around suicide following domestic abuse. This year the Vulnerability Knowledge and Practice Programme (VKPP) Domestic Homicide Project has published its year 4 findings, which shows again the number of suicides has exceeded homicides. I continue to work alongside Community Safety Teams and the University of Birmingham in response to this.

Restorative Justice

Restorative justice is an approach that focuses on repairing the harm caused by crime or conflict by actively involving victims, offenders, and sometimes the wider community in a structured process.

The process typically includes facilitated meetings or communication, where the person responsible acknowledges the impact of their actions, the person harmed can express how they have been affected, and both parties work together to agree on steps to make amends or repair the harm. Participation is voluntary, with the aims of fostering accountability, promoting healing, repairing relationships, and supporting reintegration into the community.

I have been reviewing my commissioned service having regard to new NPCC guidelines, and a new Restorative Justice (RJ) Service Specification will seek to modernise the 2018 West Midlands Service by aligning it with NPCC guidance, recent legislation, ASB priorities, and out-of-court resolution (OOCR) reforms.

ASB, although often categorised as low-level offending, can cause profound cumulative harm that undermines victims' wellbeing, sense of safety, and trust in local services. Research and statutory guidance emphasise that ASB affects individuals differently, depending on contextual and personal factors such as vulnerability, social isolation, or housing conditions. It is for this reason that I will be including ASB within the RJ specification.

Modern Slavery Human Trafficking

This year I wrote to Ministers, including the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State (Minister for Safeguarding and Violence Against Women and Girls) Jess Phillips MP, Minister for Victims and Violence Against Women and Girls Alex Davies-Jones MP, the Minister of State at the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government - Matthew Pennycook MP and Minister of State for Border Security and Asylum - Dame Angela Eagle DBE, to raise the urgent need to include victims of modern slavery as a category of priority need.

Evidence suggests that there are clear links between experiences of homelessness and modern slavery. Previous research also suggests that homeless people are vulnerable to becoming victims of modern slavery, particularly where they have multiple or complex needs. Equally, victims of modern slavery may also be particularly vulnerable to becoming homeless, where accommodation is linked to the work a victim is being forced to undertake.

This year there have been several national reforms and updated policy directions in relation to Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking. The Home Office published its long-awaited Modern Slavery Action Plan, which brings forward new measures to tackle this heinous crime. It has also updated its Section 54 Transparency in Supply Chain guidance, which will see many organisations including my office, update their approach to identifying slavery within the supply chain.

West Midlands Violence Reduction Partnership

I am 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. I also host our Violence Reduction Partnership, within the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner.



WEST MIDLANDS
VIOLENCE
REDUCTION
PARTNERSHIP

In addition, on behalf of all PCC's, I am the joint Serious Violence lead, for the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners. I represent PCCs, when dealing with government ministers, the Home Office, the National Police Chief's Council and national partners, in relation to serious violence.

The WMVRP partnership and delivery model

The WMVRP consists 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.

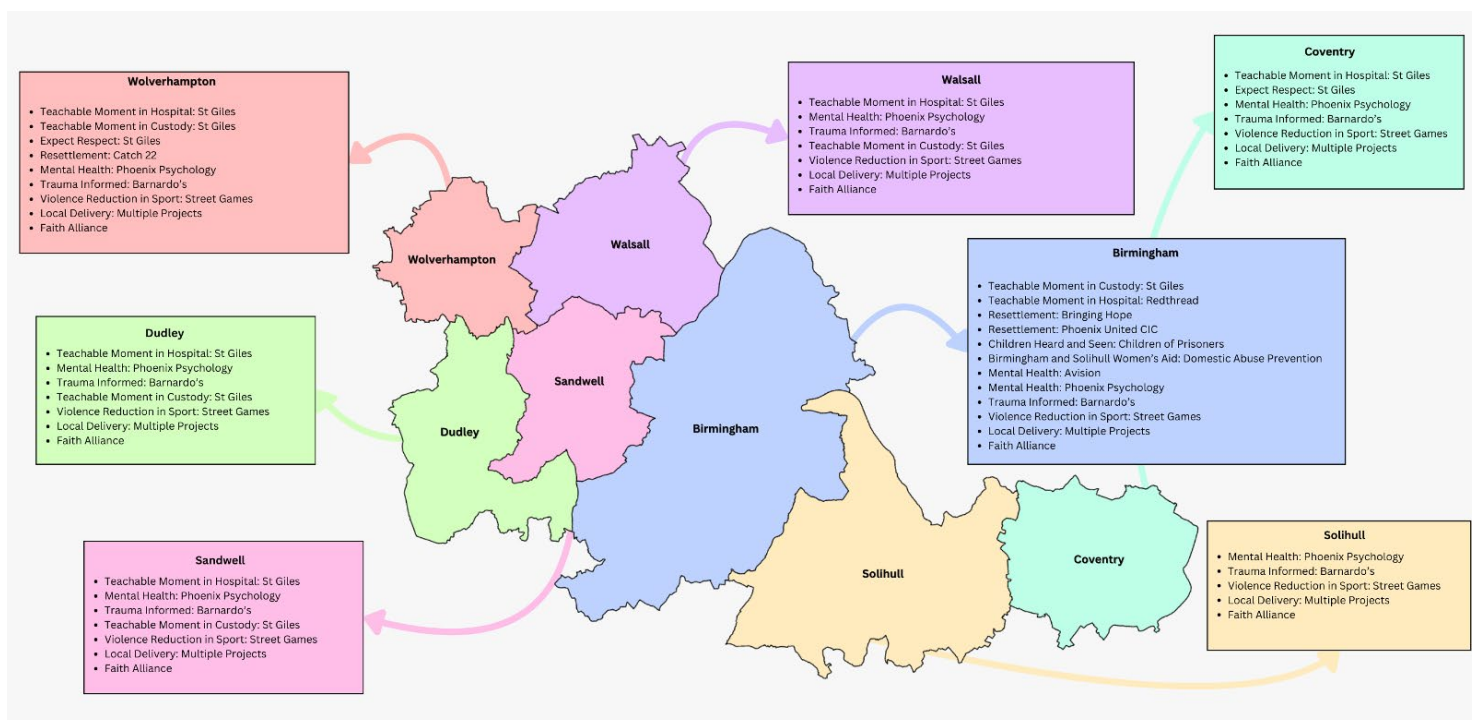
Working in Local Places

During 2024/25, the VRP funded around £3 million in commissioned activity across the West Midlands. These interventions reached just over 35,000 individuals. The training and awareness raising provision the WMVRP delivered, benefitted just over 7,000 professionals including teachers, social workers, youth workers and others. Trends in police-recorded crime continue to reinforce a positive trajectory across the West Midlands, particularly in relation to violence reduction. Notably, knife crime offences, classified under ADR160, have declined by 17.3% across the force area, falling from 3,762 incidents in 2023/24 to 3,108 in 2024/25.

Figure 3. VRP commissioned projects

VRP 24/25 Commissioned Projects

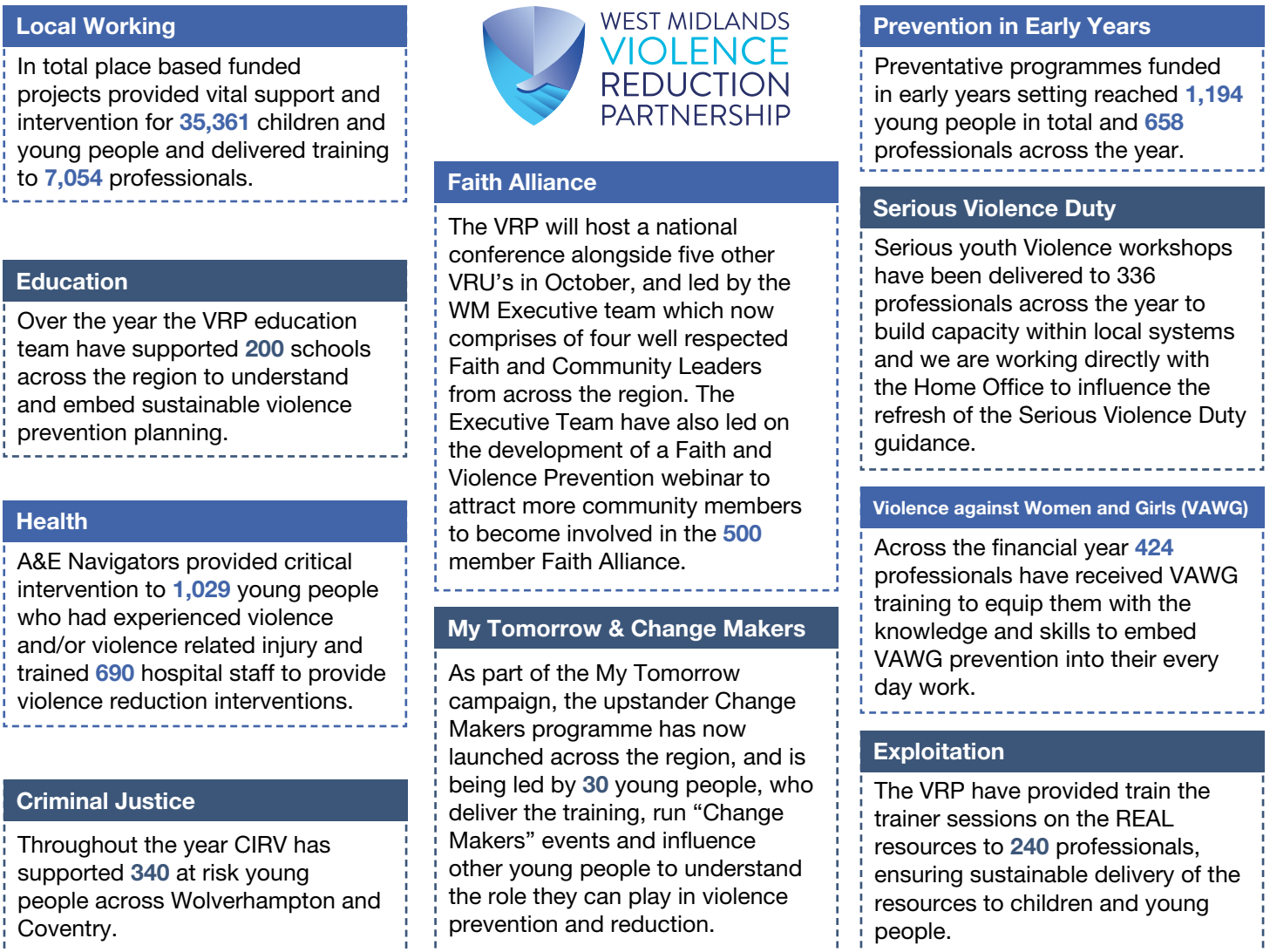
Across the West Midlands in the financial year 24/25 the VRP funded various commissioned activity. Below is a map infographic breaking down the interventions in each local authority.



The VRP Annual Report 2024/2025 sets out the following highlights:

Figure 4. VRP highlights

West Midlands Violence Reduction Partnership 2024 - 2025



Serious Violence Duty

During 2024/25, the VRP continued to embed regional implementation of the Serious Violence Duty (SVD), 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 also continued to work towards the 5 objectives in the West Midlands Violence Reduction Strategy (2023-26).

The VRP continues to support 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

In the West Midlands, 16 Youth Commissioners were elected by their peers to serve two-year-terms. As young leaders, my Youth Commissioners work to engage with young people, consult with me on policies and help build a better relationship between young people and policing.

In their second year as Youth Commissioners, they have further developed their knowledge around operational policing and supporting me in holding WMP to account. This year, Youth Commissioners visited WMP operational units, to observe how the police protect the public and support crime prevention within the West Midlands.

In 2024, the Youth Commissioners assisted the consultation on my Police and Crime Plan, advocating for the voices of young people. The cohort supported the summer of consultation, by attending events and speaking with members of the public, to engage and understand how young people should be better protected in the West Midlands.

In January 2025, the Youth Commissioners developed their own campaign on the impact of online harm for young people. They surveyed young people within the 7 local areas in the West Midlands, to understand experiences online and the impact it has on their wellbeing. They received over 1,000 responses and produced a report 'Youth Commissioner Research Report: The Experience and Impact of Online Harm for Young People', to present to WMP at the Accountability and Governance Board.

Throughout the year, the Youth Commissioners continued to support regional and local events, like the Annual Walsall Youth Summit and workshops at the West Midlands Young Combined Authority Youth Summit, to further support young people and ensure that their views are represented and advocated for across the West Midlands.

Drugs and Alcohol

The Arrest Referral Service

My Arrest Referral Service provided by Cranstoun, allows people in custody, who have had a positive drug test 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 Requirement.

In 2024-25, there were 14,376 contacts, assessments and interventions delivered by the Arrest Referral Service. Figure 5 shows what my Arrest Referral service has achieved over the course of the year.

Table 1. Arrest Referral Service outputs

Assessments completed	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	Total
Required Assessments following positive test	712	625	705	807	2,849
Voluntary Custody Assessments	132	147	107	140	526
Court Assessments	130	175	249	186	186
Total assessments	974	947	1,061	1,133	4,115

In 2024/25 there were a total of 235 Drug Rehabilitation Requirements granted, and 126 Alcohol Treatment Requirements granted as a result of my arrest referral service.

In 2024/25, there were a total of 2,224 referrals to specialist treatment from my arrest referral service.

Divert

Divert is a pre-arrest diversion scheme, which is currently provided by Cranstoun. It allows individuals found in possession of a controlled drug, for personal use not intent to supply, to receive a non-criminal sanction – a Community Resolution, rather than a more traditional outcome, such as an arrest and subsequent caution or prosecution.

From 1st April 2024 to the 31st March 2025, West Midlands Police made 4,126 referrals to the Divert Programme. 2,712 initial interventions were carried out, and 1,762 attended group sessions.

Cannabis was the most common drug individuals were found in possession of when referred onto the Divert Programme - 1,750 adults and 288 young people under 18.

The most common age group of those referred was 18 to 24 (1,067 referrals).

Offending to Recovery (O2R)

My O2R programme in Birmingham, seeks to reduce retail offending and associated criminality by diverting serial offenders, who are offending due to drug and/or alcohol addiction into treatment programmes or residential rehabilitation.

The main activities are:

- Working with people with long-standing drug dependency.
- Identifying clients through a combination of assessing crime statistics, intelligence from partner agencies and retailer referrals.
- Outreach work and engaging with potential clients (takes time to build this trust and for clients to agree to be on the programme).
- Assessment of a client's needs which helps to determine the best pathway options.
- Prehab sessions before entering residential rehab (if it is decided that is the best option).
- Ongoing support throughout the client's treatment as well as aftercare, including dry houses and community support.

At the end of 2024/25 there were a total of 144 referrals to the programme in Birmingham. A total of 13 individuals had entered residential rehabilitation. At the end of March 2025, 39% had completed residential rehabilitation, 46% were discharged early, but were still engaged with O2R, and 15% were discharged, but no longer engaged.

Alternative treatment pathways to rehabilitation also included, 15 individuals on Buprenorphine, 16 on Espranor, 12 on Methadone, and 9 in recovery communities. This does not include the individuals who continued to be supported by the team, but had not formally engaged in treatment at this stage.

The Birmingham O2R overall re-offending rate for the 24/25 period averaged at 25%, suggesting a desistance rate across the cohort of 75% since April 2024.

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, including West Midlands Police, Transport for West Midlands and local authorities. Last year the Partnership launched the Refreshed Regional Road Safety Strategy 2023-2030, which adopted the Vision Zero policy of eliminating deaths and serious injury on our roads.

I have been holding the Partnership to account for delivery of the Regional Road Safety Strategy published in November 2024, which outlines 23 actions for partners, with the aim of halving the number of people killed and seriously injured by 2030.

Actions include:

- Funding for extra staff to review speed camera and dashcam footage to increase the number of people prosecuted for speeding and dangerous driving.
- A quarterly review of all road deaths and serious collisions to learn lessons and advise on action
- Working with the food delivery industry to improve safety and compliance for their staff
- Further action to identify and remove uninsured vehicles and drivers from our roads
- Working with media to highlight successful prosecutions for dangerous driving – showing justice being done
- Providing additional support for victims through restorative justice and working with organisations like Road Peace
- Working with local councils to design safer roads

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.

In February 2025, West Midlands Police received three new speed vans as a result of this funding, and I agreed to fund the purchase of a fourth van. This doubled the number of speed vans that West Midlands Police owned. It means the force can be stationed at even more hot spot locations across the West Midlands, to help put the brakes on speeding drivers.

Part of the funding also went 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 continue to produce a high positive outcome rate.

Table 2. The total number of reports and outcomes during 2024/25 by month

Date of submission	Submissions	Positive Outcome Rate	No further action	Other (such as False Plates)
April 2024	1,239	81%	17%	2%
May 2024	1,304	80%	19%	1%
June 2024	1,493	86%	13%	1%
July 2024	1,409	89%	10%	1%
August 2024	1,257	84%	15%	1%
September 2024	1,632	83%	16%	1%
October 2024	1,658	82%	17%	1%
November 2024	1,518	85%	14%	1%
December 2024	1,220	84%	14%	2%
January 2025	1,662	86%	11%	2%
February 2025	2,098	86%	12%	2%
March 2025	2,441	85%	13%	2%

In November 2024, I launched my ‘Record Report Result’ campaign to raise awareness of Operation Snap; to tell members of the public how to submit their footage; and to encourage the public to help put a stop to dangerous driving. The campaign appeared on digital billboards, buses and fuel nozzles across the West Midlands, as well as on social media.

Retaining Fixed Penalty Fines

I have continued to lobby 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.

In November 2024, the Mayor of the West Midlands and I wrote a joint letter requesting a pilot scheme in the West Midlands to test local retention of all road safety related fixed penalty fines revenue. I believe this would demonstrate how, when that revenue is reinvested directly into road safety, it can prevent and tackle crime and anti-social behaviour, reduce the number of people killed and seriously injured on our roads, reduce economic losses, and provide a scalable model for other regions.

Support for Victims of Fatal and Serious Collisions

I currently commission Victim Support, to offer a bespoke, trauma-informed support service for individuals and families, affected by fatal or life-changing road traffic collisions across the West Midlands force area. The service provides emotional, practical and advocacy support from point of referral through to recovery and provides continuity of care, beyond the remit of Family Liaison Officers.

Section 3

Police Collaboration

Strategic Policing Requirement

The Strategic Policing Requirement (SPR) was last updated in February 2023 and sets out the biggest threats, in the Home Secretary's view, to public safety. These are currently identified as Serious and Organised Crime (SOC); Terrorism; Cyber; Child Sexual Abuse; Public Disorder; Civil Emergencies and Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG). PCCs must have due regard to the SPR when issuing or varying Police and Crime Plans, and I have ensured it has been properly considered in developing my new Police and Crime Plan.

The SPR supports PCCs and 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. I ensure that West Midlands Police has the capacity and capability to respond to national policing threats and are working cooperatively and in collaboration with other police forces and agencies to achieve this.

In order to ensure that the regional and national collaborations are effective, I continue to host a small Regional Policy team, that works across the four PCC areas in the region. They scrutinise activity under the main areas of regional and national collaboration and ensure that the collaborations remain effective and lawful.

As part of this, all four PCCs in the region have local briefings with the Counter-Terrorism and ROCU leads, to ensure effectiveness and to be informed of activity within each area. 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 Operations 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 that National Police Air Service (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 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. We have unfortunately witnessed this through the tragedy in Southport, which raised significant questions around the definition of terrorism, young people's susceptibility to mixed extremist and violent narratives through the online space, and whether our current safeguarding systems and referral mechanisms, including Prevent, are fit for the current threat and risk. These issues continue to be discussed, and in my role as National Counter-Terrorism lead for PCCs on behalf of the APCC, and as Chair of the National

Counter-Terrorism Collaboration Agreement Strategic Board, I have ensured PCCs nationally, are informed on key developments relating to the issues arising from this tragedy and the implications of this for the local management of threat and risk.

Alongside my PCC colleagues in Staffordshire, Warwickshire and West Mercia, I provide joint scrutiny of the regional 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 - prepare, protect, prevent, pursue, as well as other business updates. I also receive local tailored briefings each quarter to oversee and hold WMCTU to account, with regards to activity in our area and utilise this opportunity to raise the concerns and views of our community.

Having oversight of counter-terrorism mechanisms at a national, regional and local level, I remain assured by the response, and I will continue to ensure PCCs and the public are heard in this space.

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. My office continues to keep our response capability under review.

West Midlands Regional Organised Crime Unit (WM ROCU)

WM ROCU is hosted by West Midlands Police, who are the lead force for the ROCU in the West Midlands. I work collaboratively with PCC colleagues from West Mercia, Staffordshire and Warwickshire, to ensure that the ROCU maintains an effective and robust response to serious and organised crime across the region.

Through quarterly Regional Governance meetings, I, together with my fellow PCCs and Chief Constables across the region, ensure that the ROCU is delivering effectively for the communities of the West Midlands region. Collectively we sought efficiency savings for the ROCU from its 2025/26 budget. I am confident that they will still be able to deliver an effective service cross the region, to tackle Serious and Organised Crime.

I receive quarterly briefings from the Head of ROCU to update and inform me as to how the ROCU is tackling criminality, that affects communities in the West Midlands. I also review the progress the ROCU is making against the areas for improvement, that HMICFRS identified in its inspection of the ROCU published in 2024. I will continue to do this and expect that all of these improvements will be in place during 2025/26.



Section 4

Civic Leadership and Campaigning for Change

When I was re-elected in May 2024, I pledged to keep the views of residents at the heart of my plans for policing. Equally important, was my commitment to continuously engage, inform and communicate effectively with the people of the West Midlands, ensuring everyone, no matter which community they belong to, feels heard and informed, when it comes to policing and crime. To help me deliver on this, I have a communications and engagement team supporting me 365 days a year.

Broadcast, digital and print

I prioritise a proactive and transparent approach to communications, utilising broadcast, digital and print channels, to ensure a wide and comprehensive approach to keeping residents informed. Delivering multiple weekly updates, I work closely with regional and national journalists to keep the public informed, raise awareness of current issues and campaign for change.

One of the biggest issues I have regularly focussed on in this period, has been improving road safety across the West Midlands. Coverage of measures, including funding new speed vans, campaigning to retaining driving fines in the region and the launch of Operation Snap, all resulted in regional and national broadcast, digital and print media coverage.

I have also focussed on rebuilding community policing, tackling knife crime, reducing violence against women and girls and campaigning for fairer funding for policing in the West Midlands.

A total of 111 pro-active stories or statements were released by the communications team during 2024/25 – with dozens more reactive comments and interviews taking place.

Social Media

My communications team oversee Facebook, Instagram, X, LinkedIn and TikTok accounts on my behalf. The Violence Reduction Partnership also has Instagram, Facebook and X accounts.

The OPCC Facebook account experienced significant growth in 2024/25 compared to 2023/24. Content interactions were up by 389% to 12,200, while link clicks trebled to 30,100. We also gained 589 new followers.

The OPCC Instagram page grew, with 50,800 accounts reached – more than triple the number of the previous year. In this time, our most viewed post on our Meta accounts was a plea for residents to have their say on our budget and precept public engagement, reaching 130,000 people, while news of the PCC's roll out of new speed vans was seen by more than 50,000.

The OPCC began using our TikTok account in 2024/25, with several posts hitting five figures in terms of views. The most popular video in this time was seen almost 30,000 times.

We also began using LinkedIn more frequently and built up a strong network of stakeholders, partners and residents. Impressions rose by a third, with comments up by more than half.

Campaigns

The standout campaign during this year, was my awareness campaign for Operation Snap, which encourages drivers to submit dashcam footage of dangerous, careless or reckless driving to the police. The campaign used £17,000 of Safer Streets funding and was designed to raise awareness of Op Snap and how drivers can make reports.

We utilised the funding to run a significant out of home advertising campaign, with our messages appearing on billboards across the region, as well as bus shelters, and petrol pumps. We also boosted social media content across Meta platforms.

The out of home advertising was seen more than four million times, while the social media was seen more than 100,000 times. The campaign had a huge impact – with a 70 per cent increase in reports, leading to more than 6,000 motorists fined.

Other campaigns included promoting my weapon surrender bins and tackling violence against women and girls.

Engagement

Police and Crime Plan

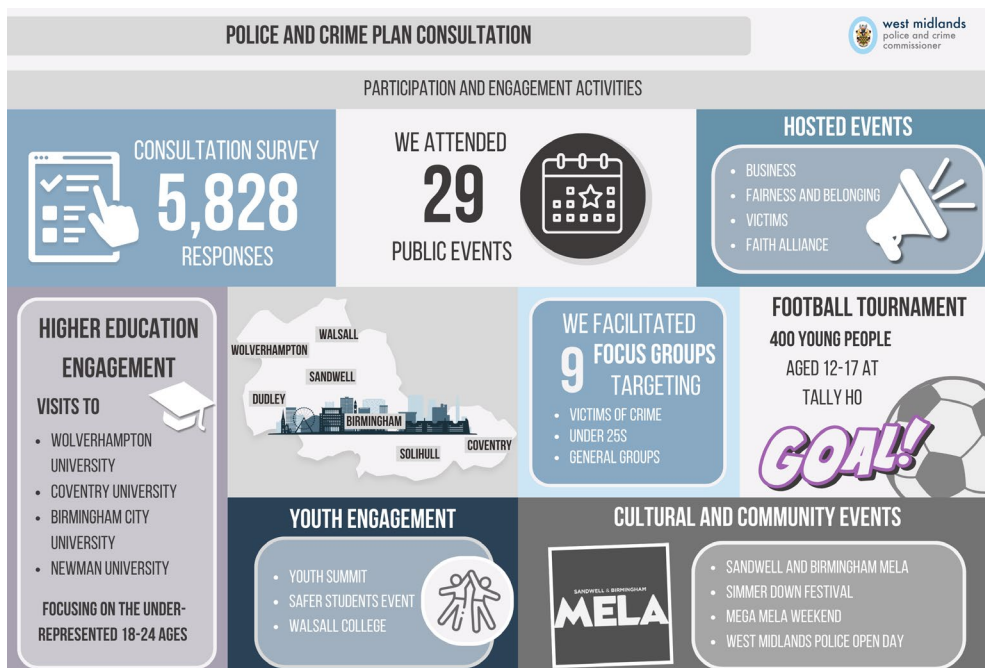
Extensive engagement and consultation took place between July and October 2024, to inform the writing of the new Police and Crime Plan. As part of this approach, the team at the OPCC ensured the public understood my priorities and sought their views on the draft plan.

To consult with the public, my team and I attended 29 public events, facilitated 9 focus groups and attended a range of events including at universities, melas and other festivals. As a result, the consultation received nearly 6,000 responses and, crucially, captured the views of a sample of residents from an extensive and diverse range of communities.

This consultation showed that the public's top three policing priorities were, preventing knife crime, investigating crimes and bringing offenders to justice, prompt response to 999/101 calls and a rapid attendance at incidents.

I launched my new Police and Crime Plan 2025 to 2029, at an event at the Brasshouse Community Centre, Smethwick, with key stakeholders, West Midlands Police, local authorities, and regional partners in attendance on 26 March 2025.

Figure 5. Police and Crime Plan consultation



Precept

My annual precept public engagement ran from January – early March 2025, with more than 700 people having their say. Using social media, as well as traditional media and business engagement, I encouraged the public to share their views. The engagement showed us that 66% were in favour of a council tax rise to support policing in the region.

Meeting with communities

Throughout the year, I have engaged consistently with residents, prioritising meaningful relationships built on accessibility, trust, visibility, and open dialogue. By spending time in communities, attending local events, and meeting people in their own environments, I gained a clear understanding of the issues that matter most to my constituents. Listening closely to their concerns and needs not only informed my work, but also strengthened my commitment to delivering on pledges, initiatives and services that reflect those needs.

I attended 257 community engagement events, including with resident’s groups, ward forums, civic events, partners, businesses, stakeholders, MPs and Councillors, faith groups and visits to West Midlands Police.

I attended and spoke at conferences, including the Midlands Fraud Forum and the International Zero Tolerance of FGM Day. I held meetings with the Transport Secretary, to discuss street racing and road safety, as well as meeting the Prime Minister to call for tightening of restrictions on social media firms. I visited new police facilities, such as the tactical training centre in Birmingham and force contact, after improvements were made to 101 and 999 call answering.

I received 365 pieces of casework, highlighting a significant level of correspondence with people and organisations from across the West Midlands, who raise a variety of concerns, issues and matters.

To further build on my public engagement, I appointed a new engagement team in January 2025, consisting of an Engagement Officer and an Engagement Coordinator.

Section 5

Good Governance, Transparency Equality and Public Engagement

Writing and Launching my new Police and Crime Plan

After being re-elected as West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner in May 2024, I commenced an extensive and wide-ranging consultation, to inform my new Police and Crime Plan as already set out above, seeking to build on my achievements in my first term. I then worked with my Head of Policy and wider team, to develop a renewed Plan to best drive forward those matters I campaigned on.

I was determined that my new Plan would be clear and transparent. I have ensured that each section is prefaced by a series of distilled 'I will' statements with key performance indicators attached and the latest KPI data, being viewable on the online version of the plan.

My new Police and Crime Plan 2025-29 is based upon my 6 key principles, all of which are necessary to ensure justice, safety and security for the people and communities of the West Midlands. They are: prevention, partnerships, trust and confidence, bringing offenders to justice, the rights and welfare of victims and rehabilitation.

My new Plan aims to deliver, amongst other matters;

- Continuing to re-build community policing with my Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee
- Tackling violence, in particular violence against women and girls, youth violence and knife crime
- Reducing the number of people killed and seriously injured on our roads
- Improving the investigation of crime
- Bringing more offenders to justice
- Ensuring compliance with the Victims' Code

I launched my Plan on 26th March 2025 at the Brasshouse Community Centre in Smethwick. Progress against delivering this Plan will be reported regularly to the Police and Crime Panel and in my next Annual Report 2025/26.

Responding to His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS)

HMICFRS independently inspects and reports on the effectiveness and efficiency of WMP, as part of its role across England and Wales. These inspections assess how well the police force performs in keeping people safe and reducing crime, identify areas for improvement, and highlight issues of significance amongst police forces.

HMICFRS provides information to the public, by publishing inspections online about the force's performance and makes recommendations, to help WMP deliver better policing to communities across the region.

HMICFRS evaluate areas of force performance against its Police Effectiveness, Efficiency and Legitimacy (PEEL) inspection framework, which scores each area as inadequate, requires improvement, adequate, good, or outstanding.

In late 2023, HMICFRS 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.

On this basis WMP were placed into Engage status by HMICFRS. Following sustained improvements in WMP's performance, these three causes of concern are now closed and WMP were removed from Engage status. There is one cause of concern remaining. This relates to how the force carries out effective investigations, leading to satisfactory results for victims.

As part of my PCC responsibilities, I publish responses to HMICFRS inspections concerning WMP. During the 2024/25 fiscal year, I issued responses to 10 inspections. These included responses to thematic reviews, such as an inspection into public disorder during summer 2024, a State of Policing report, and inspections conducted jointly with other bodies.

Accountability and Governance

My Accountability and Governance Board continued to support me, in holding WMP to account and setting the strategic direction for the force. During 2024-25, it met in public on a monthly basis. The Board is transmitted live to the public and recordings are available for members of the public to view. 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 and which are set out in my Police and Crime Plan.

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 audit control and that arrangements are in place for the management of risk.

The Joint Annual Governance Statement, reflects the established governance framework and it is published alongside my annual accounts. A joint corporate governance framework also sets out, how governance operates for both the Chief Constable and myself. 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 HMICFRS recommendations as part of the now exited 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 attends my Accountability and Governance Board annually.

Ethics Panel

My West Midlands Police Data, Technology, and Operational Ethics Panel has continued, at a national and local level, to examine new, innovative technologies and the emerging ethical considerations they bring. The independent, expert advice offered by the Panel ensures honesty, transparency, and fairness in West Midlands Police's use of technology and data and is widely recognised as a good practice model.

During 2024-25, the Panel has considered many and varied projects that are being introduced into operational policing, performance management, or pilot stages. This has included the examination of the ethical implications of various AI technologies, LLMs, predictive tools, and policing strategies. For example, the Panel considered one tool on several occasions that sought to use an AI chat-bot to answer and manage 101 calls, that has since gone into operation and contributed to West Midlands Police becoming one of the best performing forces in answering emergency and non-emergency calls nationally.

While the practical advantages were recognised and have since been made evident in deployment, the Panel raised a number of concerns that helped mould and improve the project. For example, the transparency with callers that they were not talking to a real person was introduced, following panel members' concerns that it could negatively impact effectiveness and public satisfaction.

Concerns were also raised around situations in which the AI model would be unable to cope, such as with language or understanding barriers, scenarios where a 999 call was more appropriate, and issues of disaster recovery. Subsequent redesigns alleviated these issues and mitigated risks, by allowing the bot to be sidestepped in favour of speaking to a real human.

Other projects in which AI was involved, that were considered by the panel, include focus on initiatives to alleviate the strain on officer and staff capacity, improve accuracy and analyse video evidence. For example, the Match and Merge project seeks to automatically locate duplicate records of the same offender and combine them to improve the accuracy of intelligence.

Meanwhile, Video Analytics aims to use AI to recognise objects in footage and allow officers and staff to analyse video evidence in a matter of seconds and search for the objects in the footage, rather than having to manually watch for them.

The Panel raised major ethical issues, which later contributed to the policy of use for these projects. For example, any disproportionate use of Video Analytics to create a surveillance state, could infringe upon the public's right to privacy, right to protest, and public satisfaction. As such, suggestions that the technology only be used for serious crimes were made clearly, to mitigate the risk of abusing technology and over-policing. Further comments were made in regard to both projects, emphasising the imperative of accuracy for both, whilst also addressing the potential for skill loss amongst staff by increasing AI use.

The panel has also considered a number of projects with a more predictive or risk management function. The Stalking algorithm for example, aims to estimate the probability of certain individuals going on to commit, or be a victim of, high harm crime given they have been a previous victim or perpetrator of stalking or harassment.

Having considered and recognised the potential advantages of assessing risk and avoiding future harm, the Panel raised ethical concerns over the accuracy of the model given the possibility of high numbers of false negatives/positives, as well as the potential for the project to be considered a method of predictive policing. It was subsequently requested, that the project return to the Ethics Panel after further development.

The final notable example of a project considered by the Panel concerns the storage of digital evidence, specifically the use of an indecent image database. In this instance, West Midlands Police sought the advice of the panel, as to whether national guidance should be followed and all indecent images be uploaded to a national database, or it should continue to be left to individual officer discretion.

The Panel supported the use of the database, suggesting its benefits outweighed any reservations, but did raise concerns over whether the criminalisation response was proportionate in cases of children possessing indecent images of themselves or partners, considering that to submit the evidence, phones must be confiscated and wiped.

The Panel's suggestions of a more sensitive approach, which imposed the seriousness of the offence, without criminalising children, was adopted by the presenter. It was advised an evaluation be commissioned to consider and investigate the whole process and use learnings to dictate practice and discussion, in order to appreciate the benefits of the database whilst accommodating sensitive, tailored approaches to assess and resolve independent cases.

The Panel has primarily focussed on tackling live or upcoming projects rather than theoretical ideas, an approach praised in a University of Northampton, University of Glasgow, and Northumbria University report published in September 2024. The report, focussing on the responsible use of AI in policing, highlighted the support the Panel has offered to operational policing and described it, to have provided a model nationwide for the ethical use of AI and technology in policing.

The Panel has, as mentioned in the 2023/24 Annual Report, previously received high praise from the House of Lords Justice and Home Affairs Committee's report on technology in the justice system, where the Panel's independence and commitment to transparency has influenced the development of a national model.

Similarly, and also previously mentioned, the Panel has also featured favourably 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).

Independent Custody Visitors

During 2024/25, our dedicated ICVs conducted 251 visits to police custody suites across the West Midlands, supporting the welfare of 1,378 detainees. The scheme has 48 dedicated volunteers, who conduct face-to-face visit every week.

Over the course of the year, the scheme has seen many measures, to maintain and improve detainee rights, dignity and welfare. The scheme operates an effective oversight and 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. Against unprecedented demand, our 14 AA volunteers supported 1,480 vulnerable adult detainees (+569 on 23/24).

I continue to support the National Appropriate Adult Network's campaign to lobby the Government to change the law, to introduce a statutory provision for vulnerable adult detainees, levelling up the statutory requirements for vulnerable 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 of 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 Home Affairs Committee, 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 2024/25 was £582.2 million, which was an increase of £12.5 million on the previous year. This grant enabled WMP to continue to maintain police officer numbers during 2024/25 and support the so-called national uplift programme.

About 20% of WMP’s funding comes through council tax. I set the level of council tax for policing. The settlement for 2024/25 allowed PCCs to raise council tax by up to £13 per year per Band D property. This generated an additional income of £9.7 million. The West Midlands Police budget will still remain under significant financial pressure and the force is still projected to have about 700 fewer police officers by 2026 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.

Table 3. Police precept cost

Band	Statutory Proportion	2023/24 Precept £: p	2024/25 Precept £: p	Change Annual £: p	Change Weekly £: p
Band A	6/9	135.03	143.70	8.67	0.17
Band B	7/9	157.54	167.65	10.11	0.19
Band C	8/9	180.04	191.60	11.56	0.22
Band D	9/9	202.55	215.55	13.00	0.25
Band E	11/9	247.56	263.45	15.89	0.31
Band F	13/9	292.57	311.35	18.78	0.36
Band G	15/9	337.58	359.25	21.67	0.42
Band H	18/9	405.10	431.10	26.00	0.50

The full budget report for 2024/2025 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 2024/25

The Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 (POCA), enables money which has been seized from criminals to be used and re-purposed. In 2024/25, 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 7 LPAs, with the aim of supporting organisations to invest in their communities, helping them to be actively involved in projects, which can make a positive difference and contribute to crime prevention and reduction and community safety in the local area.

Table 4. Helping Communities Fund Allocations 24-25

Local Policing Area	Allocation	Number Of Projects
Birmingham	£101,762	21
Coventry	£28,854	6
Dudley	£28,854	4
Sandwell	£21,870	5
Solihull	£6,400	2
Walsall	£29,980	6
Wolverhampton	£36,130	8
LPA Reserve	£91,568	
Community Response Fund	£40,000	
Street Watch	£30,000	
Helping Communities Fund Total	£400,000	52

Prevention and Intervention Fund 2024-25

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

Table 5. Prevention and Intervention fund

Project/ Area	2024/25
Enterprise for employment (Birmingham)	£139,000
Arrest Referral (Drug Interventions Programme)	£500,000
Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Programme	£280,848
Offender to Recovery	£100,000
Safer Streets	£180,000
New Town Funds	£100,000
14 Projects Under £100K, including Stop and Search Education, Family Drug and Alcohol Courts, Cautions and Relationship Abuse	£667,952
Prevention and Intervention Total	£1,967,800

Community Safety Fund Budget 2024-25

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

Table 6. Community Safety fund

Activity	2024/25
Force Wide Commissioning Allocations	
Youth Offending	£652,108
Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC)	£501,000
Community Safety Partnership - Analysts	£230,000
Arrest Referral (Drug Interventions Programme)	£600,000
New Chance	£292,509
Restorative Justice West Midlands – ASB	£68,785
OPCC Contribution to Sexual Assault Referral Centres	£63,898
DA related Alcohol Violence - Early Intervention (CSP)	£120,000
Domestic Homicide Reviews	£35,000
Sub-Total	£2,563,300
Allocation to 7 Local Community Safety Partnerships	
Birmingham	£616,000
Coventry	£154,000
Dudley	£126,000
Sandwell	£154,000
Solihull	£90,000
Walsall	£126,000
Wolverhampton	£140,000
7 Local CSP's	£1,406,000
Total Community Safety Funding	£3,969,300

Victims Fund Budget 2024/25

Grants from the Ministry of Justice, which support this expenditure, have not increased in line with inflation. The PCC has therefore used reserves in 2024/25 to top up the Victims Support expenditure.

Table 7. Victims Fund Budget 24-25

Priority area	24-25
Domestic Abuse (DA)	£787,549
FGM Support Services	£38,278
Hate Crime	£157,500
Modern Slavery	£179,327
Victim Support – All crime service	£1,063,369
Restorative Justice	£236,250
Road Crime	£80,343
Sexual Violence	£61,950
Sexual Violence – Child Sexual Abuse	£530,758
Stalking and Harassment	£155,379
Those bereaved by DA	£12,855
Associated Costs	£472,000
Total Victims Fund Budget	£3,775,558

Independent Domestic Violence Advocate (IDVA) and Independent Sexual Violence Advocate (ISVA) Funding 2024/25

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.

Table 8. Independent Domestic Violence Advocate (IDVA) and Independent Sexual Violence Advocate (ISVA) Funding 2024/25

Priority area	24-25
ISVA's	£2,253,495
IDVA's	£675,814
Total Victims Fund Budget	£2,929,309



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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If you require any part of this document in Braille, larger print or another language, please contact my office.