

PERFORMANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY MEETING

DATE: 16 July 2021

LOCATION: Office of the Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner, Sackville House, Lewes

PRESENT: Police & Crime Commissioner – Katy Bourne (KB)
Chief Executive Officer – Mark Streater (MS)
Chief Constable – Jo Shiner (JS)
Acting Assistant Chief Constable – Tanya Jones (TJ)

Digital Content Officer – Sammi Carwardine (webcasting)
Correspondence and Admin Officer – Elliot Saunders (webcasting)
Head of Performance – Graham Kane (minutes)

REASSURANCE TO SUSSEX COMMUNITIES – CORONAVIRUS

The final step on the ‘road map’ towards easing the lockdown in England will be achieved on Monday [19 July] when all remaining legal limits on social contact are removed.

A. How prepared is Sussex Police for ‘Freedom Day’ and the removal of these final restrictions?

B. What impact is this anticipated to have on demand across the remainder of the summer? And, are any further changes to demand predicted throughout the rest of the calendar year?

C. Anyone arriving in the UK from a ‘red list’ of countries is required to quarantine in a government-designated hotel for 10 days. What impact has the designated hotel in Sussex had on the Force? And, how is Sussex Police continuing to work and engage with the relevant partners in this area?

The Chief Constable began by thanking [the vast majority of] members of the public for the responsible behaviours they continue to demonstrate and the ongoing consideration for others in communities of Sussex. Individuals were warned against complacency once the remaining limits on social contact are removed next week. JS also stated again that she remained proud of the frontline policing response delivered throughout the pandemic in Sussex.

Operation Apollo – the joint Sussex and Surrey Police response to COVID-19 – will continue to remain in place for the foreseeable future to assess any changes in demand, triage any requests for service and to coordinate the local policing response provided, in collaboration with multi-agency partners. Operation Apollo is one strand of Operation Titan – the overarching response to ensure that effective planning arrangements are in place to manage the capacity and capability of the Force to deliver local events across the summer and autumn months – matching frontline resources to any planned increases in demand – and supporting mutual aid commitments to other police force areas throughout England and Wales.

The combination of ‘Freedom Day’, improving weather, impending school holidays and the predicted growth in demand for coastal areas, beauty spots and staycations this summer [with overseas travel still significantly restricted] are all anticipated to generate a substantial increase in ‘business as usual’ demand and contribute to an “incredibly busy period” for the Force. Reassurance was provided to KB that Sussex Police remains ready to respond to any additional challenges that are created by the lifting of the restrictions – a position that has been maintained at each stage of the road map to date.

The Chief Constable provided KB with assurances that the designated hotel in Sussex [available for anyone who is required to quarantine after returning from a 'red list' county] has had "very little impact" on the Force to date. It was recognised that Visas and Immigration, Border Force and other security services are responsible for the majority of the processes and procedures in this respect and that dedicated resources within Sussex Police continue to support the work of these partners in this area.

MS asked the Chief Constable whether Sussex Police has seen an increase in the number of officers and staff required to self-isolate at home as a result of being 'pinged' by the National Health Service (NHS) COVID-19 App after coming into contact with someone infected with coronavirus. JS confirmed that there had been an increase in the number of individuals self-isolating across the workforce and recognised the importance of officers and staff continuing to do so whenever they are asked. This was not considered to be an area of concern at present and the Force is continuing to monitor, manage and respond to this position as appropriate.

HMICFRS – REVIEW OF POLICING DOMESTIC ABUSE DURING THE PANDEMIC

Last month (23 June), Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) published their '*Review of policing domestic abuse during the pandemic*'. The report looked at how the police prevented and responded to domestic abuse during the COVID-19 pandemic.

A. HMICFRS recognised that "*the police responded proactively to protect victims of domestic abuse*". As highlighted within the report, Sussex Police introduced a Local Resolution Team of specialist officers and staff to deal with domestic abuse cases. How did this team support victims of domestic abuse during the pandemic? What impact has this team had? And, how is performance in this area being measured?

C. What other improvements to accessibility did Sussex Police implement to increase contact channels and create safe spaces in different community locations [for victims to report incidents or speak with specialist support staff]? And, how has the Force supported police-led and other national and local campaigns for domestic abuse and stalking over the past 12 months?

D. Was there an increase in the reports of domestic abuse received in Sussex following the introduction of the lockdown restrictions? How was this demand categorised? Did the Force receive an increase in calls from victims reporting domestic abuse for the first time? Was there an increase in high-risk victims of domestic abuse reporting further abuse to the police during lockdown? And, was there an increase in reports of stalking or harassment in Sussex?

E. Was there any change in the response to calls for service during the pandemic or did the Force continue to use the Threat, Harm, Risk, Investigation, Vulnerability and Engagement (THRIVE) model to tailor the service provided to the individual needs of each victim? And, was any additional training provided to officers and staff about the risks of hidden harm and the need to be "*professionally curious*" when attending incidents?

F. What work was undertaken by the Force to manage the risk posed by previous or repeat perpetrators of domestic abuse during this period? Did the number of applications for Domestic Violence Protection Orders and Non-Molestation Orders increase, as was the trend for many other force areas? How many breaches of each were recorded? What did the Force response look like for these? How many arrests were made for domestic abuse offences during this period? How does that compare to previous years? And, how many of these arrests resulted in a charge?

G. The report found that "*police and partner organisations made good use of technology*", including the secure management of disclosures online [under the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme] and virtual applications to remand courts for Domestic Violence Protection Orders. Aside from the "*virtual appointments*" delivered by the Local Resolution Team, how was technology used to support the Force response? And, will any of these revised approaches continue beyond the pandemic?

H. HMICFRS found that, on average, three in every four domestic abuse crimes reported to the police are closed without the perpetrator being charged – a situation which has gradually worsened over the last five years. What proportion of domestic abuse cases in Sussex are discontinued for outcome 16 or outcome 15?

I. The report highlighted "*significant concerns*" about the delays and backlogs in the criminal justice system, potentially exposing victims to further risk of harm and resulting in some victims withdrawing their support for prosecutions. What impact are these continued delays having on the ability of Sussex Police to provide support and assistance for victims and witnesses? And, how is this being managed by the Witness Care Unit?

J. The report made three recommendations for police forces to undertake "*immediately*" to better safeguard victims of domestic abuse. What plans are in place to ensure that each of these recommendations is progressed in Sussex?

TJ welcomed the HMICFRS report and confirmed that Sussex Police has thoroughly reviewed the content, reflected on the findings and put plans in place to progress each of the three recommendations set out in the report.

In April 2020, Sussex Police introduced a Local Resolution Team (LRT) to respond exclusively to low-risk, non-urgent reports of domestic abuse. The team comprises 39 specialist officers who have each received enhanced training in victim safeguarding, support services and evidence-led prosecutions to try and improve criminal justice outcomes for victims.

Following triage, the LRT endeavours to make contact with a victim of domestic abuse within 24 hours and to make an appointment – either in person [at a location of their choice] or online [via a virtual video call accessed through a secure 'one-time' link sent to their digital device] – within 48 hours of initial contact. The team then investigate the allegations, provide safeguarding advice and signpost individuals to specialist agencies, as appropriate. The LRT conducted 2,930 appointments in the past six months, with appointments secured within the two-day timeframe on 93% of occasions. The team has also contributed to improvements in the weekly customer satisfaction rates for victims – with 96% of individuals who have used this dedicated service either 'satisfied' or 'nearly satisfied'. Performance in this area continues to be monitored and measured through Power BI and internal audits and is reviewed at the Police, Effectiveness, Efficiency and Legitimacy (PEEL) Board.

KB was pleased to note that the Force had demonstrated an increased policing presence in supermarkets throughout the pandemic by introducing specially trained officers to identify vulnerable individuals and/or victims, together with a series of awareness raising banners. The Force Contact, Command and Control Department (FCCCD) introduced trained social media users to scan networks and identify individuals at risk of abuse before proactively reaching out and engaging with them to understand whether help or assistance is required. A facility to report domestic abuse online was also added to the Single Online Home – a common platform that allows individuals to report, transact and contact the police.

Sussex Police used the national campaign materials available to develop and create bespoke information about the domestic abuse support services available in Sussex and proactively communicated these to members of the public to raise awareness of domestic abuse and to remind victims that the Force was still accessible during this time. Examples of these communications included leaflets in General Practitioner (GP) surgeries, printed messages on the bags used by pharmacies, advertising 'livery' on refuse trucks and support for 'Ask for ANI' [assistance needed immediately] – a scheme to alert staff that a victim needs immediate support or assistance through an emergency police response or contact with a domestic abuse specialist support service.

It was highlighted that 18,968 reports of domestic abuse were made between 23 March 2020 and 22 March 2021. This was 1,509 fewer [7%] than the 20,477 crimes recorded the year before and was attributed to restrictions in travel and movement and the difficulties experienced by victims trying to access support services. This included a 27% reduction in reports from high-risk victims (1,455 fewer crimes) and 14% fewer reports received from standard-risk victims (898 fewer crimes), with only medium-risk victims recording a 5% increase in reports (308 additional crimes) [EDIT: The three categories of risk for domestic abuse victims are based on the frequency and severity of the abuse].

It was also highlighted that there was no discernible difference between the crimes recorded against repeat victims and all domestic abuse crimes, with both types reducing by 7% [as described above]. TJ was unable to confirm whether Sussex Police had experienced an increase in 'first time' victims of domestic abuse [as was apparent in other force areas] because the database does not enable the Force to identify victims reporting domestic abuse for the first time. KB asked whether other police forces in England and Wales can identify these victims through a flag or marker on the system.

KB was reassured to note that the ability of Sussex Police to respond to victims of domestic abuse did not change over the course of the pandemic. The Force did not need to amend the delivery model used and continued to use THRIVE to tailor the service provided to the individual needs of each victim. This approach was enhanced through adaptations made to the SOH to facilitate the reporting of domestic abuse online.

Additional training was also provided to frontline officers and staff about domestic abuse. This included the provision of an internal training video, a presentation about enhanced vulnerability during lockdown and an increased focus around the risks and identification of hidden harm, professional curiosity and the recognition of vulnerability for those individuals responding to telephone calls received in the FCCCD.

At the start of the pandemic, Sussex Police initiated 'Operation Hope' – a proactive operation to approach repeat and high-risk victims of domestic abuse to review and discuss their safeguarding arrangements and plan for the challenges presented by the lockdown. The Force also ran a pilot project [similar to the approach used in Integrated Offender Management] to proactively engage, work with and manage a cohort of high harm and repeat perpetrators of domestic abuse – identified through a bespoke dashboard – to act as a further deterrent.

In addition, the Force developed a Complex Domestic Abuse Unit (CDAU) to deliver a High Harm Serial Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Intervention Programme. The CDAU comprises a specialist multi-agency team of police officers, offender managers, an Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA), a substance misuse worker and a Mental Health Co-ordinator and works to address the complex needs of perpetrators to help them achieve more stability and reach a position where they are able to acknowledge and start to address their offending behaviours [EDIT: The £98,000 funding for this unit was secured from the Home Office following a successful bid by the PCC].

Between 1 April 2020 and 31 March 2021, Sussex Police made 1,195 referrals to The Daisy Chain Project – a charity who provide victims with pro bono legal advice and guidance – for NMO applications. This is a court order typically issued to prohibit an abuser from specified behaviour, such as using or threatening physical violence, intimidating, harassing, pestering or communicating with a victim(s), or limiting their actions by prohibiting them from returning to or visiting the home of a victim. A breach of an NMO is a criminal offence and is punishable by up to five years imprisonment as a contempt of court.

Sussex Police made 290 applications for Domestic Violence Protection Notices (DVPNs) during 2020/21, in comparison to the previous year when 194 applications were made. A DVPN sets out prohibitions that bar a suspected perpetrator from returning to the home of a victim and/or contacting the victim and last for a maximum of 28 days to enable a period of reflection and enable both parties to get help, advice and guidance. Following the issue of a DVPN, the police must apply to the Magistrates' Court for a Domestic Violence Prevention Order (DVPO) to be granted if the required conditions are met.

A total of 264 DVPOs were granted by the courts in 2020/21, in comparison to 170 in 2019/20 – an increase of 94 orders. This also represented an increase in the conversion rate [from DVPN to DVPO] to 91% [compared to 88% the year before]. This improved rate was attributed to the quality and comprehensiveness of the evidence gathered and captured to support evidence-led prosecutions in the first instance.

There were 92 breaches of the DVPOs in 2020/21, compared with 53 breaches the year before. The importance of effective 'follow up' activity was highlighted when a breach is recorded. Sussex Police aim to visit each victim a minimum of three times as part of the policing response, with the first visit undertaken within 48 hours of the breach, in partnership with an IDVA [to provide additional support]. The two subsequent visits occur at intervals of approximately 14 and 21 days respectively.

During 2020/21, Sussex Police recorded 18,968 domestic abuse crimes. Arrests were made for 44.9% of these offences, with an overall charge rate of 9.8% recorded [for 834 crimes]. This represented a reduction in the charge rate of 12% [for 1,095 crimes] recorded across the same period in 2019/20, when the Force recorded 20,477 crimes and delivered an arrest rate of 44.5%. It was also recognised that there are still 458 domestic abuse crimes being investigated from 2020/21 that are anticipated to generate additional charges being secured and increase the overall charge rate further still.

The Chief Constable emphasised that not all victims of domestic abuse want a criminal justice outcome which further highlights the importance of ensuring that appropriate measures are place to safeguard individuals appropriately.

TJ confirmed that face-to-face Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARACs) were replaced with 'virtual' meetings during the pandemic. This increased the capacity and capability of the MARACs [with a greater number of cases being heard at each meeting] and ensured that victims continued to receive consistent and appropriate support through this continuity of service provision. Sussex Police also worked with the courts and solicitors to amend DVPN processes by enabling suspects to appear at court – via telephone link instead of in person – which ensured that these hearings and the protection of victims could continue. The creation of an 'App' has supported referrals for NMOs to The Daisy Chain Project through an online platform too. KB was pleased to note that the Force has made a commitment to continue using any revised approaches to technology beyond the pandemic where improvements to efficiency and effectiveness have enhanced the service provided to members of the public.

It was highlighted that 20% of all domestic abuse cases in Sussex are discontinued for outcome 15 [victim supports the prosecution, but evidential difficulties exist], a position that is in line with the average for England and Wales. However, 60% of cases are discontinued for outcome 16 [suspect identified but victim does not support the prosecution], although this was still recognised to represent a slightly better position than the national average.

From 1 April 2021, changes were made to the provision of victim services in Sussex. The introduction of four multi-agency Victim Hubs – comprising police and partners from commissioned support providers – has enabled the Force to tailor support to victims of domestic abuse in a more efficient and effective manner. The hubs [in Eastbourne, Hastings, Horsham and Brighton] reduce duplication and provide an enhanced experience through the provision of a more co-ordinated and co-located approach to victim support. These improvements to the safeguarding interventions delivered are anticipated to contribute to an increased number of victims of domestic abuse with the confidence to support prosecutions through the criminal justice system.

The Temporary Assistant Chief Constable confirmed that the timescales for court hearings have returned to pre-pandemic [Transforming Summary Justice] levels for the Magistrates' Court – with hearings at 14 days for 'guilty anticipated pleas' and 28 days for 'not guilty anticipated pleas', nationally.

The Force is continuing to manage the backlog of outstanding cases already in the system, whilst simultaneously balancing any new cases that are reported to the Witness Care Unit, by ensuring that victims and witnesses remain updated, engaged and supportive of the prosecution process, utilising specialist support from the IDVAs to put evidence across as appropriate.

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 will provide further protection to those individuals who experience domestic abuse by strengthening the measures in place to tackle perpetrators. This is anticipated to reduce the amount of cross-examination and is supported by the inclusion of a legal definition for domestic abuse – incorporating a range of abuse beyond physical violence, including emotional, coercive or controlling behaviour and economic abuse.

KB was informed that the following progress has been demonstrated by the Force in respect of the three recommendations highlighted in the HMICFRS report:

Recommendation 1 – Immediately review the use of a telephone-based initial response to domestic abuse and immediately introduce an effective supervision and monitoring framework for online contact.

Sussex Police do not resolve domestic abuse by telephone. There are exceptional circumstances where this response has been undertaken previously, in the absence of any other contact arrangements, with the requirement for the investigation to be reviewed and endorsed by a supervisor within the FCCCD and an officer of [at least] Detective Inspector rank.

Virtual contact for domestic abuse is delivered by the Force through the LRT and is supported by robust performance monitoring, supervisory reviews and audit processes of the quality, risk assessment and safeguarding advice provided.

Recommendation 2 – Immediately review capacity to provide ongoing support and safeguarding to those victims who are awaiting trial at court.

This recommendation has been allocated to the Criminal Justice Department within Sussex Police for progression.

Recommendation 3 – Immediately review the use of outcome 15, outcome 16 and evidence-led prosecutions.

The Force had previously commissioned an inspection into the use of these two outcomes through the PEEL Board. This work was previously undertaken 18-months ago and is currently being repeated.

ACTION: KB would like to know whether there was an increase in reports of stalking or harassment in Sussex during this period, as demonstrated by several other forces.

ACTION: KB would like to know whether other police force areas in England and Wales can identify 'first time' victims of domestic abuse. If so, how is this recorded – through a flag, marker or otherwise?

ACTION: TJ agreed to share a copy of the Terms of Reference for the Domestic Abuse Partnership Board with KB for information.

HM GOVERNMENT – END-TO-END RAPE REVIEW

Last month (18 June), Her Majesty's Government published '*The end-to-end rape review report on findings and actions*' which set out proposals to achieve the ambition of returning the volume of cases referred, charged and reaching court to 2016 levels.

- A. How have you reflected on the findings of the report?**
- B. Can you provide me with a summary of the number of rape offences reported in Sussex? How do the reports and solved rate compare to previous years?**
- C. It is accepted that rape investigations are amongst some of the most challenging and complex for investigators to undertake. Can you explain what some of these complexities include?**
- D. What are Sussex Police doing to target repeat perpetrators?**
- E. At the end of last year, Sussex Police and the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) agreed to commence an early advice pilot. What is the remit of this pilot? How long will it run for? And, what impact has this pilot had to date?**
- F. The review sets out examples of emerging innovations around investigations – such as Project Bluestone and Operation Soteria – around the provision of dedicated investigation teams for offences of rape and serious sexual offences. Has the Force considered introducing any such teams locally? Have any innovative practices been introduced in Sussex to improve performance in this area? And, are any further areas of innovation planned moving forward?**
- G. Training is recognised to be one of the contributing factors towards improving victim outcomes. What training and support is provided to police officers and staff to help them identify, assess and respond to rape investigations in Sussex? How frequently is this training reviewed and refreshed? And, how is any 'best practice'?**
- H. The review set out an action plan, including three specific actions for the police and CPS to transform the way they investigate and prosecute cases of rape. What work do Sussex Police need to do to support this plan? How will these actions be progressed in Sussex? And, how will performance in this area be monitored?**
- I. I have recently been successful in securing additional funding [£726,028] to increase the number of Independent Sexual Violence Advisors (ISVAs) in Sussex. The review highlights the importance supporting victims and survivors throughout the criminal justice journey, with individuals 49% more likely to remain engaged in the process when supported by an ISVA. How is Sussex Police working with victim and survivor support services locally? And, what work has the Force undertaken to support ISVAs in Sussex?**
- J. How efficient and effective are the digital forensic capabilities of Sussex Police to balance the needs of the victim with the requirements of the criminal justice system to examine, retrieve and analyse content on all digital devices? How are these digital examinations prioritised against threat, risk, harm and vulnerability? What do the timescales look like for the examination process? Are these services delivered internally or are any elements outsourced to specialist organisations? And, does data protection potentially compromise victim safety at any point?**

TJ reflected on the findings of the report, in partnership with the 'joint thematic inspection of the police and CPS response to rape' [published 16 July 2021] which identified 32 actions for the police and CPS to work together to improve their joint response to rape cases in the next three years.

KB was informed that Sussex Police are working hard to make improvements "over and above" those identified across both reports. This includes tackling myths about rape, conducting suspect-centric investigations, increasing early advice and charging submissions to CPS and improved partnership working, supported by ISVAs.

It was highlighted that the number of reported rape offences in Sussex has increased by 46% across the past six years, with year-on-year increases in recording. In 2015, there were 1,166 rapes reported in Sussex, compared with 1,708 rapes recorded in 2020 – an additional 542 offences. These increases are attributed to improved trust and confidence in the police and partner agencies to respond effectively to any reports that are received.

The solved rate for rape in Sussex is 5.4%. This is the highest level it has been since 2017 [and above the national average of 3%] and is recognised to be the result of increased submissions to the CPS for early investigative and charging advice – an aspect that has doubled in the past six months. It was also acknowledged that whilst performance in this area is improving, further work is required to return to the solved rates previously demonstrated by the Force.

Rape investigations are complex because the offence is often committed in private, with the victim and the suspect the only witnesses present. Traditional forensic opportunities are limited too because the account provided by the suspect is usually one of consent. It was also highlighted that 40% of all victims reporting rape offences are vulnerable and require specialist help, support and time [to build and develop trust] before an evidential account can be obtained. Sussex Police then work with the CPS to progress the rape cases through the criminal justice system, although it is far more difficult to secure evidence-led prosecutions on the 50% of occasions where prosecutions are not supported by the victims.

KB was informed that Sussex Police introduced Operation Lilly to proactively identify and target repeat offenders and suspects of sexual offences who have been subject to 'no further action' on two or more occasions in the past five years. Perpetrators are selected based on frequency, gravity, severity and recency data and are reviewed for further investigative opportunities. This approach enables a bespoke management plan to be created to manage the risk and vulnerability for each individual, with the overall aim of protecting future victims by reducing their opportunities for further offending.

A monthly Hub Intelligence Meeting – comprising representatives from the Neighbourhood Policing Team, Response, Criminal Investigations Department and Public Protection – is used to support this approach and consider the suspects identified [from across the Force] as posing the greatest risk of harm. Sussex Police also uses the Police National Computer and the Violent and Sex Offender Register (ViSOR) to monitor the movement of known perpetrators throughout England and Wales [EDIT: ViSOR is a database of individuals required to register with the police under the Sexual Offences Act 2003, those jailed for more than 12 months for violent offences and those thought to be at risk of offending].

The Temporary Assistant Chief Constable confirmed that the early advice pilot began in November 2020 across the police force areas of Sussex, Surrey and Kent. The purpose of the pilot is to support joint investigations between the police service and the CPS – from the beginning of a rape investigation all the way through to its conclusion – with the collective aim of reducing the length of time it takes for a case to progress from investigation to charge to court.

Through the pilot, joint lines of enquiry and timescales for delivery dates are agreed between both parties and set for actions to be completed within. The provision of a named lawyer throughout the duration of case provides continuous and consistent direction, monitoring and targeted lines of enquiry and ensures that the case can be expedited towards a charging decision more efficiently.

A total of 264 cases have been submitted for early advice to date, of which 125 cases have been put forward by Sussex [47%]. One successful charge has been delivered in the first six months of the pilot and, with the average length of an investigation taking a year, additional charges are expected to strengthen further the impact that this pilot has had. KB agreed to revisit the early advice pilot again in December 2021.

TJ confirmed that the Force continues to assess and scan the work that is delivered by other police force areas to identify any innovative or best practice. There is no dedicated investigation team for rape and serious sexual offences in Sussex that is comparable to the examples provided within the review. Sussex Police has a Sexual Offences Investigation Team (SOIT) within the Safeguarding Investigations Unit (SIU) – comprising individuals with enhanced training and expertise in vulnerability – who provide the first response to victims of these offences, together with responding to other child and adult protection matters. The SOIT is supported by the Rape and Serious Sexual Offence (RASSO) team to obtain evidential accounts from victims that are passed to the SIU for investigation and progression through the early advice pilot.

The Chief Constable emphasised that the demography and geography of a police force area means that an effective approach taken by one Force may not be easily transferrable to another. The importance of obtaining the best possible evidence and early charging advice to maximise opportunities to secure successful prosecutions was highlighted when determining the most appropriate policing model and response to use.

It was recognised that effective training around this area is essential towards improving outcomes for victims of rape. In April 2021, Sussex Police delivered a 'Recalibration Event' – supported by a range of keynote speakers from academics, specialist support organisations and the CPS. A training package has been developed for all frontline police officers and staff to provide them with a better understanding about sex offenders, the impact trauma can have on evidence gathering and the importance of presenting evidence in the most effective manner. This programme will be delivered via a module system [which can be audited to monitor completion rates for individual sessions] and will be followed up by live webinars to reaffirm key messages.

The Force reviews training in this area whenever any new information, evidence base or academic research becomes available. This learning is also refreshed at least once a year to ensure that it remains current and fit-for-purpose as part of an ongoing commitment to continued professional development.

The Temporary Assistant Chief Constable provided KB with assurances that Sussex Police is well-positioned to respond to the three specific actions identified within the report for the police and CPS to transform the way they investigate and prosecute cases of rape. Progress in this area will be supported by joint working through Operation Lilly, the early advice pilot, and the South East Rape Improvement Group – chaired by CPS leads to oversee improvements in performance relating to domestic abuse. KB would like to know which agencies are represented on this group for the CPS region of Sussex, Surrey and Kent.

The RASSO works closely with victims through specialist services, such as Survivors' Network [the Rape Crisis Centre for Sussex] to support survivors of sexual violence and abuse. A monthly coordination meeting also exists between the RASSO, SOIT and ISVAs to improve ongoing working practices, increase engagement and liaison between the different teams and to review the 'victim's journey' – easing or removing any barriers and issues that exist between them as appropriate.

TJ confirmed that the Force uses a three-tier structure to deliver digital forensic examinations in Sussex. The level of investigation that is undertaken in each case is prioritised by what the victim agrees to and is determined by the individual Digital Processing Notice (DPN) created for each case. [EDIT: The DPN provides a framework for the digital examination of devices from victims and witnesses and ensures that a proportionate response is provided.]

Tier 1 is used for standard DPNs and included generic examinations of mobile telephones, such as 'all telephone calls' or 'all SMS messages'. This examination will usually be undertaken on the same day by the local policing division to minimise the disruption caused to victims.

Tier 2 is used for urgent DPNs where the examinations are more precise or relate to specific applications (WhatsApp, for example) and are undertaken by the in-house Digital Forensics Team. In these cases, a timescale of 48-hours is quoted to the victim [in case of technical difficulties], although the phone is often received, examined and returned on the same day. Tier 3 is used for the more complex DPNs – where there is a large amount of data on a device or hardware – and involves sending these items away to an external provider for specialist analysis. The average turnaround time for these requests is 19 days [from submission form to closed case] and is delivered against a service level agreement of 30 days. In these instances, an individual will be offered a replacement mobile phone to ensure that they have a means of communication during this time.

The Temporary Assistant Chief Constable concluded by reassuring KB that a business case has been approved for the Force to create a further five dedicated posts within the Digital Forensics Team to improve the capacity and capability of this team further still. A bid has also been submitted to Transforming Justice for the provision of laptops and specialist analytical equipment to enable more digital forensic examinations to be carried out locally in Sussex.

ACTION: Early Advice Pilot to be added to the PAM agenda on 17 December 2021.

ACTION: KB would like to know how many Sexual Offences Liaison Officers there are in Sussex.

ACTION: KB would like to know which agencies are represented on the South East Rape Improvement Group.

ACTION: KB would like to know whether any feedback is received from victims in respect of the Force response to digital forensics.

SUMMER DRINK-AND-DRUG DRIVE CAMPAIGN 2021

Sussex and Surrey Police ran a joint summer drink-and-drug-drive campaign in conjunction with the [delayed] Euro 2020 football tournament.

- A. How have you reflected on this latest campaign?**
- B. What was the total number of drivers who were breathalysed and/or tested for substances? And, how many individuals were arrested?**
- C. What should members of the public do if they have any specific concerns or suspicions about individuals they suspect of drink-or-drug-driving? Can these submissions be made anonymously? And, what happens if any allegations made prove to be unsubstantiated?**
- D. What other initiatives does the Force have planned to improve road safety throughout the rest of calendar year?**

The Chief Constable confirmed that Sussex Police carried out 2,174 vehicle stops and made 279 arrests for drink-and-drug-driving offences in Sussex as part of the summer campaign between 11 June and 11 July 2021.

The Force used a combination of high-visibility operational policing to carry out vehicle stops and checks [during the evenings and early in the mornings], together with a more targeted approach [using unmarked police cars] based on intelligence reports received from members of the public through Operation Crackdown in an attempt to prevent drink-and-drug-driving in Sussex. A concerted communications campaign provided additional support for the operation, together with the utilisation of available resources within the Road Policing Unit and the Tactical Firearms Unit to enhance the overall policing response.

Over the period of the campaign, the Sussex Police administered a combination of 712 breath and drug tests, of which 127 individuals were arrested for drink-driving related motoring offences and 152 individuals for drug-driving related motoring offences. This equated to a failure rate of 39%, with 84% of arrests male [234] and 16% of arrests female [45]. A total of 70% of the drivers arrested were aged between 21 – 39 years old [196 arrests], with a further 14% of drivers aged 40 years old and above [71 arrests] and 12 arrests of those aged between 17 – 20 years old [4%].

It was emphasised that Operation Entity – the Sussex Police response to an unlicensed music event in Steyning – also took place across the same period of the campaign between 27 – 28 June 2021. This resulted in a further 78 arrests: with 8 arrests for drink-driving offences [10%], 68 arrests for drug-driving offences [87%] and two arrests for individuals failing to provide a specimen [3%]. The ages of those individuals arrested through this operation ranged from 18 – 59 years old.

Individuals were reminded about the importance of taking personal responsibility for their own behaviour and the actions of others by abstaining from driving if they are planning to drink alcohol, use drugs or a combination of the two because the consequences could be fatal for them and/or others.

*Members of the public with any concerns about individuals they suspect are driving under the influence of drink or drugs were encouraged to report these offences to Sussex Police. It was explained that this can be done through a number of different methods: text to 65999; email to 101@sussex.pnn.police.uk; Operation Crackdown (www.operationcrackdown.co.uk) or the Force website (www.sussex.police.uk). Individuals can also contact Crimestoppers – the independent charity – anonymously by telephone to 0800 555111. **If it is known that someone is drink-or-drug-driving, members of the public should call 999 immediately.***

The Chief Constable stated that drink-and-drug-driving continues to remain a priority for Sussex Police in each of the 365 days throughout the year. This includes support for local initiatives such as Operation Downsway [to target offenders and to keep everyone safe on the roads through education and enforcement] and Operation Tramline [to target heavy goods and commercial vehicles], alongside other national campaigns such as Project EDWARD [Every Day Without A Road Death] and the road safety week delivered by Brake.

The Force will also continue to target and pursue those individuals responsible for drink-and-drug-driving and the other four components of the 'fatal five': excessive speed; using mobile phones when driving; not wearing a seatbelt and careless or dangerous driving, in order to reduce the number of individuals killed or seriously injured on the roads of Sussex.

*JS concluded by reminding members of the public that the use of electric scooters [outside of the 32 dedicated trials taking place in England] remains illegal and that it is a recognised offence to use these scooters on public roads, cycle lanes, footpaths and/or pavements. **Electric scooters can only be used on private land that is not accessible to the public.***

NEXT UP:

There is no PAM in August. The next PAM is on Friday, 17 September 2021 at 13:00. Further information can be viewed on my website through the following link:
www.sussex-pcc.gov.uk/get-involved/watch-live/