



Association of
Police and Crime
Commissioners



PCCs MAKING A DIFFERENCE VAWG IN FOCUS

PCC case studies highlighting where PCCs are making a difference
in addressing Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG)

PCCs MAKING A DIFFERENCE

VAWG IN FOCUS

by Dame Vera Baird QC, PCC for Northumbria and APCC Portfolio
Lead for Supporting Victims and Reducing Harm

This PCC VAWG In Focus highlights six innovative projects undertaken by Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs), which are making a real difference to the lives of women and girls affected by violence.

In England and Wales PCCs have a responsibility for commissioning the majority of local services to help and protect victims and survivors of crime, including Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG). We do this working in close partnership with other stakeholders such as local authorities, health services and, crucially, the bodies with expertise working with survivors of VAWG – for example, specialist third sector organisations and charities.

Each PCC has a Police and Crime Plan, which sets out the strategies we develop to prevent and detect crime and to support victims. Each Police and Crime Plan is based on the community's needs. My office, in collaboration with the PCCs from Durham and Cleveland, also established the first PCC Regional VAWG Strategy in 2014, setting out our plans to tackle VAWG in the North East.

PCCs also take on other roles key to influencing improvements in tackling VAWG. We are senior, locally elected Criminal Justice Service (CJS) leaders, with a duty to cooperate with other justice sector agencies and ensure an effective and efficient local CJS. This enables us to bring about real change in how VAWG is tackled and how victims and survivors are supported. And that is precisely what I myself and many of my colleagues are seeking to do up and down the country, many of us going beyond what is our statutory duty.

For example, in March 2016 the Government published its revised VAWG Strategy. A key part of this involved the launch by the Home Office of a VAWG Transformation Fund, which offered £17 million to be used for new local services to tackle VAWG. Of the 41 successful bids, 15 were from PCCs, seeking additional funds to improve services for victims and survivors in their areas.

My office bid successfully for monies from this fund and secured **£646,287**, which is being utilised in Northumbria to take forward **four strands of work**, aimed at developing a whole system response to VAWG:

01

Domestic Abuse Practitioner Standards (DAPS) - will be developed to provide standardised training to over 2,000 multi-agency staff from the statutory and voluntary sector across six local authority areas, to create improved capability and skills of staff in the future.

02

Diversion Support Workers - recruited to work within a Northumbria Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC), with low-level women offenders who are eligible to trial a new conditional cautioning scheme, which includes a "women-specific caution" (WSC). This acknowledges that most women offenders are also victims of abuse (current or historical) and this is often an underlying root of offending.

03

Cyber-Stalking and Harassment Pilot - established with a team from the Police and the voluntary sector. The pilot is working to identify new ways to evidence, investigate and prosecute these cyber offences and safeguard victims. It is hoped that new methods will eventually become part of mainstream policing and internal training.

04

Sexual Violence Complainant Advocates (SVCAs) - a new role to be piloted to provide independent legal representation to complainants of sexual violence, ensuring they are properly advised, protected against inappropriate intrusion into their private lives and their voices are heard throughout the Criminal Justice process.

PCCs are committed to supporting victims of all crime, as well as working to deter and punish perpetrators where applicable. Given the impact of austerity over recent years it is more important than ever that PCCs and other leaders work together locally and ensure that, at a national level, the Government does more to support victims.

With the upcoming Domestic Abuse Bill, there is some opportunity to improve the system for dealing with VAWG, including the criminalisation of upskirting, revenge pornography, the introduction of stalking protection orders and improvements in the treatment of complainants of domestic and sexual violence in the Criminal Justice System. Every member of the public should lobby their MP and PCC, and every PCC should take on the struggle finally to get it right for victims of these horrifying and impactful crimes.

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This PCC VAWG In Focus highlights FIVE further innovative projects currently being undertaken by PCCs and funded by the VAWG Transformation Fund, that are making a real difference to the lives of women and girls affected by violence:

- 1 **Cambridgeshire**
COGNITIVE BEHAVIOUR THERAPIES
- 2 **West Yorkshire**
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PROTECTION ORDERS
- 3 **Lancashire**
HEALTH SETTING SUPPORT FOR SEXUAL VIOLENCE VICTIMS
- 4 **Avon and Somerset**
ABUSE OF PEOPLE WITH LEARNING DIFFICULTIES AND MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES
- 5 **Thames Valley**
IMPROVING THE MULTI-AGENCY RESPONSE TO VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS IN BAMER COMMUNITIES

1

Cambridgeshire
**COGNITIVE
BEHAVIOUR
THERAPIES**

JASON ABLEWHITE, THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER FOR CAMBRIDGESHIRE AND PETERBOROUGH, WAS GRANTED £400,000 OF FUNDING FROM THE TRANSFORMATION FUND TO PROVIDE TRAUMA-FOCUSED COGNITIVE BEHAVIOUR THERAPEUTIC SUPPORT (CBT) TO YOUNG PEOPLE WHO HAVE BEEN VICTIMS OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE OR DOMESTIC ABUSE OR HAVE WITNESSED IT.

Innovatively, the work also supports young people who are displaying risky behaviours as a result of what they have experienced.

The project, known as Time4U, is delivered by national charity Embrace - Child Victims of Crime (CVOC) and supported by Cambridge and Peterborough Rape Crisis Partnership (CAPRCP) and the county's Youth Offending Service who offer the Break4Change programme.

Some of the methods Embrace use, in addition to one-to-one therapy, are truly innovative: for instance, horse-based therapy can help young people to heal.

Embrace is solely focused on delivering emotional, practical and cheer-up support to children and young people and their immediate families, affected by serious domestic abuse and sexual violence.

Additionally, support provided through Cambridge and Peterborough Rape Crisis Partnership enables a small number of young survivors already engaged with them to have the choice to continue their recovery journey within their counselling service. This element of choice and empowerment can be crucial in allowing a young person to feel they can regain control of their own lives.

Since April 2018 a total of 223 young people (168 females and 54 males) have benefited from the VAWG support service.



One such example is ten-year old Emily: she was a victim of serious, ongoing domestic violence. Her experiences left her extremely timid and withdrawn. Emily regularly witnessed her mother being sexually abused in an adjoining room.

Emily was referred to Time4U and was provided with one-to-one counselling, along with her three siblings, so they could freely discuss the fear they felt and the impact of the extensive domestic abuse. Following that, she attended four sessions of equine-assisted therapy. Emily's mother was delighted with the positive effects on her daughter, reporting that it had "increased her confidence and helped her find a calm place".

Embrace have now funded a further six follow-on riding lessons, so Emily can continue her education with horses. Other life-changing experiences funded to help young survivors recover include piano lessons, art therapy, or fitness clubs.

It is stories like Emily's that demonstrate how practical therapy can help the most vulnerable people concentrate on recovering from their experiences and move on to a more positive future, guiding the young person away from bad memories to good ones.

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West Yorkshire
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PROTECTION ORDERS

MARK BURNS-WILLIAMSON OBE, THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER FOR WEST YORKSHIRE, SECURED £600,000 FUNDING FOR THE WEST YORKSHIRE POLICE FORCE TO RUN A PILOT ISSUING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PROTECTION ORDERS (DVPOS) AS A PROTECTIVE MEASURE AND SAFEGUARDING TOOL TO ALLOW VICTIMS “BREATHING SPACE” FROM THE PERPETRATOR.

The pilot focuses on improving how these orders are used to protect victims, increasing the proportion of top-quality applications for such orders, whilst working closely with districts and partners to protect vulnerable victims more effectively.

The funding allows a team of five West Yorkshire Police staff to make applications for DVPOs across the force. And an Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) is also seconded to the team to bring extra knowledge and experience. The new DVPO policy has been well embedded and communicated; this means District Safeguarding Units now work collaboratively and receive regular feedback to ensure all initial paperwork and documentation is completed to the highest possible standard.

On average the team receives at least one application per day.

Also, compliance checks are being carried out more frequently; this has, ironically, resulted in the breach rate increasing as a result of more accurate monitoring.

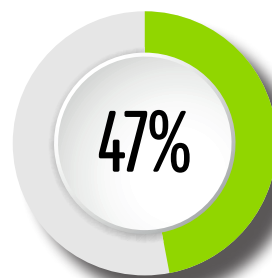
FEEDBACK IS CAPTURED FROM THE VICTIMS AS TO THEIR EXPERIENCE OF THE DVPOS:



80% of victims felt supported by the Police



65% of victims felt that a DVPO was useful



47% of victims scored 5/5 when asked “Do you have a better understanding of domestic abuse and would you feel encouraged to engage with support services in the future?”

Feedback also shows that victims of domestic abuse are gaining a better understanding of abuse and are better able to identify the signs of abuse or when they are at risk. Also, the Police are largely thanked and appreciated by victims as a result of this process.

2

West Yorkshire
**DOMESTIC
VIOLENCE
PROTECTION
ORDERS**

QUOTES FROM VICTIMS SUPPORTED BY THIS DVPO INITIATIVE INCLUDE:

- “ I could have never gone to court and prosecute, but the Police have done this for me, which has been very helpful. I’m very grateful to the Police for this. ”
- “ The Police have been smashing and have done their job many times. The IDVA has been very supportive and she is helping me find a property, which will get me out of this drug-filled area. ”
- “ The DVPO was helpful and it was good that the Police were able to take it into their own hands and put that order in place. We are no longer together and that’s what’s best for me ... Things are looking much better now for me and my future. ”
- “ It was nice to have no contact and for him to leave me alone. I have now left the relationship and don’t want anything to do with him. I’m happy with just me and my dog. ”

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CLIVE GRUNSHAW, THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER FOR LANCASHIRE, SECURED £300,000 OF FUNDING FOR LANCASHIRE, IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE BLACKPOOL TEACHING HOSPITALS NHS FOUNDATION TRUST, FOR A THREE-YEAR PROJECT TO TRANSFORM THE CARE SEXUAL VIOLENCE VICTIMS RECEIVE WHEN THEY PRESENT AT HOSPITAL.

The **Health Setting Support for Sexual Violence Victims Project** ensures that victims of sexual violence or rape who present at hospital and wish to make a disclosure (recent or historic) are offered timely and appropriate support. Hospital staff were also empowered to identify possible victims, building on the success of the Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) programme within the hospital.

A HEALTH ISVA SERVICE CO-ORDINATOR, INITIALLY WITHIN BLACKPOOL:

- Delivered training to doctors, nurses and relevant hospital staff;
- Made strategic links with relevant partners to highlight the role and improve pathways for victims both within the health service but also in mental health services and in counselling;
- Supported victims to report to the Police and/or seek further support, if required.

Professional support for the IDVA Co-ordinator is provided by Lancashire Victim Services, in line with good professional practice.

PHASE TWO of the project will see a Health Setting Sexual Violence Liaison Officer appointed to East Lancashire Hospitals, working under the co-ordinator's guidance to replicate the work done in Blackpool. The Health SVLO will be based within the family division, with links to gynaecology and maternity, as well as the wider hospital.

PHASE THREE will see the establishment of a Health SVLO within Lancashire Teaching Hospitals.

Independent evaluation of the project and its effectiveness will be provided by Lime Culture CIC, the leading training provider for ISVAs in the UK. Interim reviews, prior to the expansion of the project, will also ensure that lessons are learned, and necessary improvements made.

A victim who accessed the service following attendance at A&E said: **“ I found the support of my ISVA invaluable. You see many different members of staff and have to repeatedly explain your story over and over. ”**

“ I find it difficult to discuss my situation to people I don't know. Julie (service co-ordinator) took on the role of explaining who she was and what my situation is, so I didn't have to. She was very professional, and it took such a huge weight off my shoulders. ”

“ If I had been on my own, I would have given as little information as possible; however this sometimes isn't helpful as the medical staff don't get the whole picture. ”

In the co-ordinator's first six months in post (June to November 2018), 47 interventions were delivered to victims - this includes direct work with victims, and also advising staff and community ISVAs on appropriate courses of action.

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Avon and Somerset
ABUSE OF PEOPLE WITH LEARNING DIFFICULTIES AND MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES

SUE MOUNTSTEVENS, THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER FOR AVON AND SOMERSET, SECURED £123,465 OF FUNDING OVER THREE YEARS TO IMPROVE LIVES AND BUILD RESILIENCE FOR THE MOST VULNERABLE VICTIMS OF SEXUAL ASSAULT WITH ADDITIONAL NEEDS, LINKED EITHER TO LEARNING DIFFICULTIES OR TO MENTAL ILL-HEALTH.

This project is made up of two services working together to explore the support needs of victims. Funding is being used for both a Specialist ISVA (Independent Sexual Violence Advisor) and Befriending support and will be evaluated at the end of the project so that we can understand what works and share good practice.

People with a learning disability can be particularly vulnerable to sexual abuse and assault; the incidence of abuse of people with disabilities may be as much as four times higher than it is within the non-disabled population. And they are often less likely to report the incident to the Police.

This funding has helped transform the way the PCC is able to support victims but has also developed new partnerships and ways of working that are already emerging, not just within the specialist sexual violence sector, but more broadly with support agencies working with mental health and learning difficulties.

Prior to the funding of this project, the additional and often complex needs of these victims were only supported within the generic caseload of an **Independent Sexual Violence Advisor (ISVA)**. However, this initiative has enabled the charity Safelink to fund an ISVA to provide specialist, tailored support to victims with learning difficulty and/or mental health support needs.

THIS ENABLES VICTIMS TO:

- Tell their story in the best way for them;
- Get help obtaining benefits;
- Get help with housing;
- Get help reporting to the Police, if that is their wish;
- Learn about healthy and/or safe relationships, and when to say, “Yes”;
- Get support to cope and recover;
- Access other specialist help.

The half time post can support 12 clients at any one time and during 2017/18 29 victims were supported by the service.

Safelink has also been able to further develop specialist partnerships and joint-working arrangements across sexual violence services, learning difficulty services, and mental health support agencies.

ONE VICTIM WHO HAS RECENTLY HAD A “NO FURTHER ACTION” DECISION, SAID:

“ I feel loads better than I did when I first knew you. You actually listen to me. My mum always says I just need to move on and this just makes me angry. She doesn’t get it. When I speak to you, you actually let me talk and listen to me. ”

4

Avon and Somerset
**ABUSE OF PEOPLE
WITH LEARNING
DIFFICULTIES AND
MENTAL HEALTH
ISSUES**

In addition, the **Womankind Befriending Service** has been able to broaden support for 20 victims per year who also had needs linked to mental ill health, with 40 indirect beneficiaries (such as children or partners).

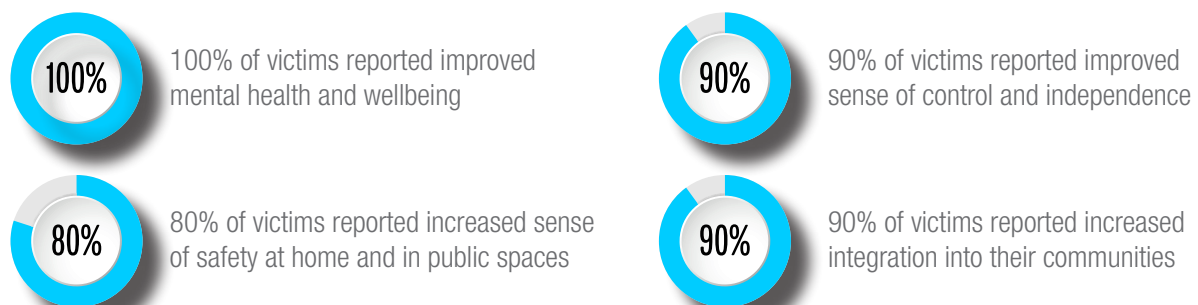
BEFRIENDERS PROVIDE VICTIMS WITH REGULAR SUPPORT AND OPPORTUNITIES TO:

- Get out and about
- Develop new interests and hobbies
- Learn new skills
- Improve their routine
- Build new friendships/support networks
- Increase confidence
- Feel more independent
- Feel safer
- Have healthier relationships
- Cope and recover.

FEEDBACK IS CAPTURED FROM THE VICTIMS ON THEIR EXPERIENCE OF THE BEFRIENDING SERVICE. ONE RECENT QUOTE FROM ONE VICTIM:

“ It’s been an amazing journey back into life again. I didn’t think I would ever be able to enjoy anything, let alone swim in the sea, go for walks, go back to work, be happy on my own, treat myself, cry and laugh and be myself! Thank you for helping me experience life again. ”

OUTCOMES FOR 10 VICTIMS WHO RECEIVED BEFRIENDING OVER THE PAST SIX-MONTH PERIOD:



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ANTHONY STANSFELD, THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER FOR THAMES VALLEY, OBTAINED £400,000 FUNDING OVER TWO YEARS FOR OUTREACH TO BLACK, ASIAN, MINORITY ETHNIC AND REFUGEE (BAMER) COMMUNITIES, INCLUDING MULTILINGUAL TRANSLATION AND ENGAGEMENT WITH COMMUNITIES SO THEY CAN IDENTIFY AND CHALLENGE ABUSE.

This is the first time that domestic abuse services are working in partnership across the Thames Valley (Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire) and involves 18 local authorities working together.

WHAT WILL BE DIFFERENT FROM BEFORE?

Informed by evidence of local need, there was no 'by and for' organisation supporting BAMER communities across Thames Valley.

AS SUCH, THE PROJECT AIMS ARE TO:

- Assess, improve and better coordinate the multi-agency response to VAWG in BAMER communities across the region.
- Generate and map localised knowledge and networks to facilitate systemic change, and to provide a robust evidence base to inform future commissioning and support third sector grant applications.
- Improve awareness of VAWG issues in Thames Valley's BAMER communities; engaging and empowering these communities to identify and challenge these abuses, and ensure they know where and how to access timely and appropriate support.
- Ensure the needs of Thames Valley's BAMER communities experiencing VAWG are met through improved and better-informed service provision and pathways.

PROGRESS SO FAR

A multilingual VAWG Strategic Lead for BAMER communities has been recruited and is based in one of our local authorities (Oxfordshire). Multilingual BAMER outreach/engagement workers have also been recruited across the Thames Valley - two per county. The Strategic Lead and outreach/engagement workers are all from BAMER communities.

A Thames Valley BAMER Board has been established and is a pan-Thames Valley partnership arrangement intended to provide strategic advice to Community Safety Partnerships to ensure the needs of Thames Valley's BAMER communities experiencing VAWG are met. This includes improved and better informed service provision and pathways, generating and mapping localised good practice knowledge and networks to facilitate systemic change, and providing a robust evidence base to inform future commissioning practices for local authorities across Thames Valley.



PARTNERSHIP

It is important that sexual violence is within the scope of the project. As such, a representative from Rape Crisis and a representative from an Office of the PCC funded Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) project also sits on the board.

DELIVERY PARTNERS INCLUDE:

- Bucks and Milton Keynes - MK ACT
- Berks West - Berkshire Women's Aid
- Berks East - Hestia
- Oxfordshire - A2 Dominion

FUTURE AMBITIONS

- To ensure we have an accurate idea of the VAWG sector services for BAMER communities in Thames Valley, sharing good practice and meeting BAMER victims' needs. This will inform our domestic abuse services, policy development and commissioning practices going forward to make a real sustainable difference for BAMER communities in Thames Valley.
- To develop Focus Groups for survivors of VAWG abuses and women and men from BAMER communities.
- To produce a Strategic Report of current landscape, including community engagement.
- To implement recommendations from the Strategic Report.
- To deliver a Thames Valley-wide specialist support service.
- To set up a working group for preventative work for children and young people.

“ MK-ACT is pleased to be involved in this important work and to have the opportunity to work with other providers collaboratively to make the project a success. ”

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WHAT IS VAWG?

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS

Violence against women and girls is both a form of discrimination and a violation of human rights.

The United Nations Declaration on Elimination of Violence against Women defines violence against women as:

‘Any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women [or girls], including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty.’

(1993, Article 1)

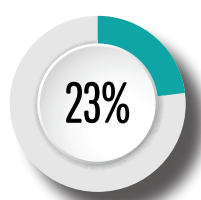
IT COMES IN MANY FORMS INCLUDING:

- Domestic abuse, including physical, financial, sexual, emotional and psychological abuse.
- Sexual violence.
- Human trafficking.
- ‘Honour’ based violence (HBV) such as Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage (FM).

REPORTS TO THE POLICE RISE EXPONENTIALLY EACH YEAR AND THE 2017 CRIME SURVEY OF ENGLAND AND WALES SHOWED A:



20% increase in reports of domestic-abuse related offences,



23% increase in reports of sexual offences in general, and



29% increase in reports of rape.

ALTHOUGH THIS VAWG IN FOCUS FEATURES SIX PCCs, THERE ARE MANY MORE WHO ARE ALSO MAKING A REAL DIFFERENCE IN THEIR LOCAL COMMUNITIES BY HELPING TO ELIMINATE VIOLENCE AND KEEP WOMEN AND GIRLS SAFE. OTHER EXAMPLES CAN BE FOUND VIA PCCs OWN WEBSITES WHICH YOU CAN ACCESS HERE: www.apccs.police.uk/find-your-pcc/



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