**Performance and Resources Scrutiny Programme 2018/19**

**Report to: the Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Essex**

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| **Title of Report:** | **Vulnerable Groups Quarterly Report** |
| **Agenda Number:** | **3** |
| **Chief Officer** | **ACC Andy Prophet** |
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| **Author on behalf of Chief Officer:** | **ACC Andy Prophet** |
| **Date of Approval:** | **14th February 2019** |

1. **Purpose of Report**

This report provides an overview of the work conducted within the Crime and Public Protection Command for Q3 of 2018/19 (1st Oct – 31st Dec 2018).

1. **Recommendations**

There are no specific recommendations within this report but the Board are invited to note the key areas of performance highlighted.

1. **Executive Summary**

The format of the report has been revised and provides a broader assessment of work taking place across the command, whereas previous reports concentrated on exception reporting and areas of concern.

The report is structured around the four operational departments within Crime and Public Protection (C&PP) and details core performance / crime data, outcomes, achievements, issues and identified next steps.

This report highlights a number of continuous improvement reviews that are underway to ensure we improve the service we provide. These programmes were launched in response to previous learning and recommendations from Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) reports.

**4.0 Introduction/Background**

C&PP has responsibility for investigating some of the most serious crimes against the most vulnerable in our communities and for tackling those offenders who pose the highest risk to our communities.

The four main departments are:

* Public Protection Investigation Units (PPIU): There are three PPIUs aligned geographical to the Local Policing Areas of Essex Police. Each PPIU is overseen by a DCI and includes Adult Sexual Abuse Investigation Teams (ASAIT) and Child Abuse Investigation Teams (CAIT).
* Management of Sexual Offenders and Violent Offenders (MOSOVO): Consisting of seven teams based across the county with responsibility for Managing Registered Sex Offenders, Managing Violent Offenders, Multi-agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) and delivery of the Disclosure Barring Scheme.
* Police Online Investigations Team (POLIT): One team with responsibility for investigations across the county into offences involving indecent images of children and paedophilia material held on a computer. This unit respond to referrals from other agencies (most significantly the NCA) and provide a proactive capability utilising systems to detect those people in Essex viewing and distributing indecent images of children via the internet.
* Operations Centre: Based at headquarters, providing support to the whole force and comprising of:
  + Adult, Child and CSE Triage Teams who receive, process and respond to referrals from partner agencies;
  + Assessment Team who review and provide intelligence for all reported incidents handled by the Force Control Room that relate to any of the 14 strands of vulnerability;
  + Central Referral Unit (CRU) providing specialist safeguarding services to victims of High Risk Domestic Abuse and Honour Based Abuse in support of LPA based Juno investigative teams.

**5.0 Current Work and Performance**

**Public Protection Investigation Units (PPIUs)**

Crimes Recorded:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **ASAIT** | Q3 2017/18 | Q3 2018/19 |
| Rape | 196 | 270 |
| Other Sexual Offences | 40 | 34 |
| Other Offences | 40 | 59 |
| Non-Crimes | 82 | 61 |
|  |  |  |
| **CAIT** | Q3 2017/18 | Q3 2018/19 |
| Rape | 130 | 130 |
| Other Sexual Offences | 160 | 176 |
| Other Offences | 263 | 295 |
| Non-Crimes | 213 | 127 |

Crime outcomes:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **ASAIT** | Q3 2017/18 | Q3 2018/19 |
| Rape | 4 (0)[[1]](#footnote-1) | 5(2) |
| Other Sexual Offences | 5(0) | 2(0) |
| Other Offences | 8(1) | 16(2) |
|  |  |  |
| **CAIT** | Q3 2017/18 | Q3 2018/19 |
| Rape | 5(6) | 1(2) |
| Other Sexual Offences | 8(24) | 14(36) |
| Other Offences | 26(132) | 28(161) |

Key achievements:

Operation Finland was an investigation led by the South PPIU relating to a Head Teacher of a primary school in South Essex. Following an investigation, declared as a ‘Complex and Organised Abuse’ case under the SET procedures, authority to charge the suspect with eight offences against pupils, who were 4 and 5 years old were authorised by the CPS. The trial is set to commence in July 2019.

In November 2018 the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for rape investigations was revised. The revised guidance to officers provides clear guidance on which investigations will be assessed as investigative priorities and which will be managed as safeguarding priorities. The updated guidance reflects the need for lead investigators to make difficult, early decisions to on how to reasonably and effectively manage rape and other serious sexual investigations.

Where certain criteria are not met such as victim support, forensic evidence, witnesses’ evidence or communications data the likelihood of securing charges in that case are minimal. Therefore the right decision is to quickly and compassionately finalise that investigation, make the appropriate safeguarding referrals and prioritise those investigations where professional insight and the evidence suggests we have a better chance of securing charges against the perpetrator.

A proposal to dedicate eight CAIT officers to investigate non-recent child abuse investigations was agreed. This will enable the team to build specialist skills to deal with this type of offence, providing timely progression to these investigations by removing the demand of more recent investigations that may have time limits in respect of golden hour and forensic opportunities. A team, led by a PIP 3 investigator overseeing a Detective Sergeant and six constables will be created from existing CAIT resources with responsibility for non-recent offences, referrals that are received from the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA), and investigations identified as meeting the criteria for inclusion in Operation Hydrant which are subject of national oversight.

Training to improve the use of Police Protection Powers in relation to children at risk is being rolled out across the force, delivered by DI Caroline Williams from the West PPIU. The inputs began in October 2018 and are being offered to all uniform sergeants and inspectors across the Force.

West PPIU have engaged with hard to reach communities. Officers and staff have established strong links with key leaders in the African Community to provide education about sexual offences, female genital mutilation and child chastisement. They have worked with the Girls Empowerment Initiative who provide women and girls in the African community a voice to help them succeed and have promoted the Voluntary Police Cadet programme to the community.

**MOSOVO**

Core Performance:

In December 2018 the MOSOVO team were managing 1546 Registered Sex Offenders in the community, 385 of which were subject of Intelligence Led Management. There were only 37 active / overdue visits. Each of these can be accounted for. By contrast, in mid-2017 there were over 600 active / overdue visits. This impressive improvement has been achieved as a result of the intelligence led management of low risk offenders.

Crime Reporting:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **MOSOVO** | Q3 2017/18 | Q3 2018/19 |
| Other Sexual Offences | 0 | 4 |
| Other Offences | 110 | 135 |
| Non-Crimes | 60 | 41 |

Outcomes:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **MOSOVO outcomes** | Q3 2017/18 | Q3 2018/19 |
| Other Sexual Offences | 0 | 0 |
| Other Offences | 27(1) | 33 |

Achievements:

The tolerance for active / overdue visits is set at 75. This level has been set based on the regional average of 100 active visits. The force is consistently operating well within these limits.

The Disclosure and Barring Team obtained an outstanding grading from the Disclosure and Barring Service Standards and Compliance Unit, this is the first outstanding grading we have received in this area.

**POLIT**

Core Performance:

Crime Reporting:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **POLIT** | Q3 2017/18 | Q3 2018/19 |
| Other Sexual Offences | 3 | 24 |
| Other Offences | 40 | 43 |
| Non-Crimes | 4 | 3 |

Outcomes:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **POLIT Outcomes** | Q3 2017/18 | Q3 2018/19 |
| Other Sexual Offences | 13 | 2 |
| Other Offences | 25 | 20 |

Achievements:

In November 2018 the POLIT started making full use of the pro-active monitoring systems available to identify offenders using the internet to access child abuse images. Additional resources were identified from with the command to allow this increase in productively and will mean more offenders to be targeted and will lead to further children being safeguarded as a result of Essex Police’s proactivity.

**Operations Centre**

Core Performance:

Over the quarter the team provided safeguarding to 539 victims High Risk victims of Domestic Abuse and five Honour Based Abuse cases.

Across the quarter Essex MARAC heard 456 cases, of which 364 cases were referred by police.

Child Triage had a 97% attendance rate at strategy meetings following 823 referrals from partners and 826 police tagged incidents.

For CSE Triage over the quarter there have been 841 partner referrals and the team have achieved 100% attendance at strategy meetings

The Adult Triage received 549 partner referrals and achieved 91% attendance at strategy meetings.

The Assessment team handed an average of 185 calls per day across the team.

Achievements:

CRU were subject to a demand analysis review the result of which saw a change in working hours to maximise the staffing available at times of peak demand.

Following increases in demand across the summer Essex MARAC changed and embedded a new process to hear cases within 14 days. Further training was rolled out across partners to increase the pool of chairs, and this work continues.

A business case was submitted and approved in principle to re-locate the CRU into Essex County Hall to work with the MARAT team which seeks to provide greater resilience, increase efficiency and provide an even better safeguarding service to victims of Domestic Abuse and Honour Based Abuse

Child Triage undertook a similar review of demand leading to amended working practices and hours, increasing availability for strategy meetings. A significant increase in demand led to a joint working group with Children’s Social Care to seek solutions and ensure appropriate referrals. This piece of work has seen changes in working practices, ensuring streamlined information sharing.

CSE Triage have seen an increase in demand involving wider exploitation. The team also undertook a demand analysis piece of work and amended their hours in order to achieve the above success.

The Assessment Team, Disclosure Team and Administration Team within the Operations Centre each underwent demand reviews and achieved efficiency savings across 2018, independently reported as cash equivalent savings of £100,000.

**6.0 Implications (Issues)**

**PPIU**

Officer vacancy rates within the PPIUs continue to be monitored closely with short, medium and long terms plans in place to ensure vacancies are minimised.

**POLIT**

The POLIT team are currently based at Tilbury Police Station which is impacting on access to appropriate IT systems, meaning manual transfers of data is required. Options are being explored to find a more appropriate location.

There are current demand issues within the Digital Forensics Unit (DFU) extending the timescales for devices to be examined which can cause delay in investigations. A remedial action plan is in place and it is envisaged that with the actions already agreed relating to both hardware and software improvements there is potential for significant improvements in Q4.

**Operations Centre**

Demand for Disclosure services in Domestic Abuse History checks has increased from an average of 499 checks per month in Q3 2017 to 663 checks per month in Q3 2018/19.

**6.1 Links to Police and Crime Plan Priorities**

The work of the Public Protection Command links to the following priorities in the Police and Crime Plan:

Priority 3 – Breaking the Cycle of Domestic Abuse

Priority 4 – Reverse the Trend in Serious Violence

Priority 5 – Tackle Gangs and Organised Crime

Priority 6 – Protecting Children and Vulnerable People from Harm

**6.2 Demand**

ASAIT have seen an increase of 18.4% (66 offences) in the number of investigations compared to Q3 of 2017/18.

CAIT have seen a decrease of 4.9% (38 offences) in the number of investigations compared to Q3 2017/18.

MOSOVO have seen an increase of 5.9% (10 offences) in the number of investigations compared to Q3 2017/18. Demand in relation to active visits has reduced significantly following the introduction and development of Intelligence Led Management.

POLIT have seen an increase of 48.9% (23 offences) in the number of investigations compared to Q3 2017/18.

There has been a 12.1% increase (81 offences) in the number of High Risk Domestic Abuse investigations compared to Q3 2017/18.

**6.3 Risks/Mitigation**

There are 2 key risks being managed in relation to Crime and Public Protection Command.

Risk 1635

C& PP Command Recruitment Challenges: Crime and Public Protection are currently suffering from recruitment challenges including:

1. The inability to attract the appropriate staff/officers with the required skill sets,

2. Inability to retain skilled staff/officers,

3. A low number of transferees from other forces

4. Delays within the recruitment process

Mitigating actions are on-going:

1. Command team work to identify and encourage officers to join the command,
2. The introduction of mentoring for those identified officers,
3. Command team engagement across the command to acknowledge the good work of officers and the challenges faced with the types of investigations,
4. A continued recruitment campaign for transferees from other forces.
5. Use of agency staff to fill vacancies in the short term.
6. Working with HR to better project future vacancies.

Risk 1823

Insufficient rape investigations result in injustice for victims. The quality and consistency of rape investigations and the development of the relationship with the CPS need to be improved to address the relatively low levels of charges for rape.

Mitigating actions are on-going:

1. Develop a revised performance management framework to identify barriers to performance.
2. Establish consistent application of investigation prioritisation using the SOP across all three PPIUs.
3. Progress PPIU- Police Staff business case to maximise deployment of resources.
4. Develop escalation process to raise cases that require additional support to CPS.
5. Maintain and develop effective CPD to support investigative standards.
6. Implement and independent multi-agency rape scrutiny panel to identify barriers to improved performance across agencies.

**6.4 Equality and/or Human Rights Implications**

There are no identified issues in relation to Equality of Human Rights.

**6.5 Health and Safety Implications**

There are no identified issues in relation to Health and Safety.

**7.0 Consultation/Engagement**

This report was written in consultation with the Crime and Public Protection Command Team and with data provided by the Performance Information Unit.

**8.0 Actions for Improvement**

**PPIU**

DI Mark Barber leads the Drink Aware project; working with Night Time Economy venues to deliver Vulnerability Awareness Training to their staff and implement Drink Aware Crews in identified licences premises. Part funding has been secured and further funding is being sought to maximise the roll out programme.

Operation Goldcrest will be piloted in Thurrock from April 2019. This will enable young people who are victims of Child Sexual Exploitation to anonymously report abuse and enable police to gather intelligence from these reports even if the victim doesn’t wish to directly engage with police.

Following a Post Implementation Review of the Public Protection Project the Strategic Change Coordination Board has authorised a business case that has been issued to staff to consult on changes to the role of police staff within the investigations units. The proposals aim to increase the role fulfilled by police staff investigators and better align duty patterns with operational demands. These changes are cost neutral.

The short term use of agency staff to help progress workloads and reduce vacancies within the Investigations Hubs has been authorised and will start in Q4. Longer terms plans to review the offence types investigated by the two teams, making the CAIT role more focus on “Child Abuse” and assessing the resources impact of this as well as the impact of geography and role type on the recruitment challenges and is being completed.

A scheme to provide the support of an Independent Sexual Violence Advisor to victims of rape at the earliest opportunity is being progressed with the ambition that funding and processes will be secured in Q4.

**MOSOVO**

The MOSOVO team are exploring technological options to assist them in their role of monitoring offenders and triaging of devices for criminal behaviour before completing a digital forensic examinations.

**POLIT**

Work with the Department for Education (DfE) continues to progress the Dot.Com initiative, which was started by the previous DI from POLIT and has been adopted by the DfE as a national programme. The DfE are currently seeking a commercial provider for the scheme.

There is a desire for Crime and Public Protection Command to conduct all grooming and incitement offences, which are currently investigated by Local Policing Area (LPA) officers. This transition will improve quality and timeliness of these investigation types as they will be moved away from the demand faced by LPA officers. A proposal to transition grooming offences has been scoped and once implemented a review will be conducted to consider the requirements to adopt incitement offences also.

**Operations Centre**

The relocation of the CRU will be progressed along with consideration to co-locate other teams with partner agencies to improve information sharing and response.

**9.0 Future Work/Development and Expected Outcome**

Please see section 8.

**10.0 Decisions Required by the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner**

There are no decisions sought in relation to this report.

1. The numbers in brackets are offences that were assigned outcomes 9, 11 or 20 and are therefore considered resolved. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)