



VERA BAIRD^{QC}
POLICE & CRIME COMMISSIONER

POLICE AND CRIME PANEL

30 July 2019

**REPORT OF TEMPORARY ASSISTANT CHIEF CONSTABLE DAVID FELTON
RAISING INVESTIGATIVE STANDARDS**

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update to Panel members about the Raising Investigative Standards (RIS) Programme, including why the RIS work was initiated, an overview of the main activity undertaken within the programme and progress to date.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 As a result of internal reviews and the findings of the 2017 PEEL 'Effectiveness' inspection by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS), which identified the following Area for Improvement (AFI):

'The force should ensure that all investigations are completed to a consistently good standard and that victims' receive regular, meaningful contact.'

- 2.2 There is an ongoing drive to improve Investigative Standards. Below are the issues that have been identified as contributory factors impacting on improving investigative standards under the RIS Programme.

AREAS OF FOCUSED ACTIVITY

THRIVE Training

- 2.3 THRIVE, is a nationally recognised risk assessment process, which considers **T**hreat, **H**arm, **R**isk, **I**ntelligence, **V**ulnerability and **E**ngagement. There was an identified requirement for THRIVE training for Communications staff in order to improve the recognition of vulnerability. The associated training was subsequently delivered to all Communications and Front Office staff during 2018 and information around THRIVE was included within issue 1 of the RIS magazine.
- 2.4 **Outcome:** As a result of the THRIVE activity the identification of vulnerability has increased. Prior to improvements, incidents marked vulnerable were 4%. In March 2019, 30% of all Force incidents are marked as identifying vulnerability.

Supervisors Training Events

- 2.5 Comprehensive guidance in respect of best practice for crime recording and supervisory oversight was delivered during the supervisor launch events. The events were attended by over seven hundred supervisors. The content of the sessions was also covered within the subsequent RIS magazines.
- 2.6 **Outcome:** 92% of attendees confirmed they now know what is expected of them as a result of the Raising Investigative Standards Event.

The RIS Magazines

- 2.7 Training to all constables, sergeants, inspectors and relevant police staff roles, has been delivered via a series of bespoke, innovative and interactive electronic RIS magazines.
- 2.8 **Outcome:** The majority of officers have now completed the RIS magazine, either within a team or alone, supervisors and officers have been positive about the RIS magazine.

Domestic Abuse (DA)

- 2.9 Work continues between the Force and the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) to improve DA referral rates and to understand the reasons for any case failure post charge. The need to 'build the case for the victim' was covered in the RIS Magazine which included the use of Body Worn Video (BWV).
- 2.10 **Outcome:** As a result of focused activity, the use of **BWV** increased from 43% in the period April to November 2018 to 72% in the month of April 2019, the volume of arrests has increased (although this has not affected the charge rate) and victim satisfaction has improved.

Victims' Codes of Practice (VCOP)

- 2.11 This was again a specific feature of the supervisor launch events and has been strongly featured throughout the RIS magazines issued. VCOP is subject to specific performance management on an individual and team basis across the Force.
- 2.12 **Outcome:** A VCOP performance framework is in development to identify the Force's compliance to all aspects of it; however for follow up, improvements have only been seen in DA investigations.

Body Worn Video (BWV)

- 2.13 Body Worn Video equipment has now been rolled out on a personal issue basis across the Force. The national evidence base for such equipment demonstrates that it builds on the excellent service given to victims of crime (especially in cases of DA) whilst significantly enhancing the ability to bring more offenders to justice.

- 2.14 **Outcome:** An evaluation of the effectiveness of BWV is underway with findings due in 6 months; the timeline for evaluation provides sufficient time for BWV to be used by all officers for a minimum of six months to gain rich data.

Forensics

- 2.15 In order to increase understanding in respect of forensic preservation, recovery and advice to victims; a forensic trainer has been employed. A video has been developed in conjunction with the forensic trainer which contains basic advice for collecting forensic evidence (also covered in Issue 1 of the RIS Magazine). The forensic trainer continues to deliver essential training to all front line staff.
- 2.16 A Forensic Triage Process has been developed to enable officers attending crime scenes to contact a Crime Scene Investigator (CSI) to seek advice in respect of forensic considerations and to identify whether a CSI visit is required. This has seen a reduction in number of scenes attended by CSIs, however an increase in positive forensic recoveries i.e. a more effective and efficient service. The Forensic Triage Process has also featured in the RIS Magazine.
- 2.17 **Outcome:** The forensic triage has shown a reduction in crime scenes attended, but an increase in the numbers of fingerprints and DNA recoveries. In summary the triage system has made our delivery of forensic services more efficient and effective.

OUTCOMES

- 2.18 In summary the below outcomes have been identified following the Force's internal thematic crime investigation reviews as well as the initial feedback from recent external inspections. It is suggested that much of the improvement from the previous year's inspection findings is a result of the RIS programme.
- 2.19 **Good practice:**
- Incidents are generally graded correctly and the appropriate resource is allocated.
 - The initial response and investigation by officers at crime scenes is good.
 - Overall there is evidence of good early safeguarding and problem solving in relation to victims, with appropriate signposting for support.
 - There is good evidence of partnership work using Independent Sexual Violence Advisors (ISVA), Changing Lives and Adult Social Services within the rape and sexual offences we have reviewed and also within the reviews of Domestic Abuse.

2.20 **Common areas for improvement:**

- Supervisory oversight and scrutiny of the investigation beyond the initial response.
- Enhancing the standard of victim contracts and victim updates including defining what 'a significant event' is for the victim.
- Improving the quality of documentation evidencing what was captured from the victim at the initial disclosure (the initial call, BWV); and if the victim did not support a prosecution, what has been done to influence that decision.

2.21 The Raising Standards of Investigation programme continues to focus upon the challenges within the investigation process that adversely impacts on the quality of the investigation. Of particular note is the work ongoing in the following areas.

- The development of a sensitive disclosure unit.
- The delivery of disclosure training across the organisation with focus on volume crime.
- The design and delivery of a Sgts training course with particular focus upon raising the ability of supervisors to manage their officer's ongoing investigations.
- An internal review of the standard of investigations undertaken by the Primary Investigation Centre (PIC), the findings of this review are likely to shape a number of the RIS programmes priorities.

2.22 The Raising Standards of Investigation programme works closely with the team designing and delivering the new force operating model, ensuring that the standards of investigation are considered at every stage.