

PERFORMANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY MEETING

DATE: 22 October 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)
Temporary Assistant Chief Constable – Jayne Dando (JD)

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

REASSURANCE TO SUSSEX COMMUNITIES – SARAH EVERARD

Last month, former Metropolitan Police officer Wayne Couzens was given a whole-life sentence for the kidnap, rape and murder of Sarah Everard.

A. It has been widely reported that public trust and confidence in the police service has been damaged by this case, bringing the leadership, legitimacy and reputation of the service into question. How are you seeking to rebuild the public trust and confidence of those affected in Sussex?

B. What do the vetting arrangements look like for police officers and staff – both before and during employment with Sussex Police?

C. What measures are in place to monitor any abuse of power by serving officers and staff or potential warning signs of any such behaviour? And how is activity in this important area monitored and scrutinised by the Force?

The Chief Constable began by reiterating that her thoughts remained with the family and friends of Sarah Everard following her tragic murder [in March 2021] and the life sentence given to Wayne Couzens on 30 September 2021.

Sussex Police recognise that this case has undermined public trust and confidence in the police service to protect them, particularly amongst women and girls within local communities. The Force is seeking to rebuild this trust and confidence in policing by engaging with, listening to, acting on and prioritising the response provided in respect of VAWG to understand where this can be improved and enhanced further still.

The Force has sought to increase efforts to maximise the delivery of criminal justice outcomes for victims [including greater collaborative work with partner agencies] and through the continued investment in a range of different initiatives to tackle VAWG. Sussex Police is seeking to use police data and the information and intelligence received from communities to inform patrol plans and preventative strategies in respect of the night-time economy (NTE) and cases of domestic and sexual violence in both public spaces and behind closed doors.

The Chief Constable recognised that more can always be done to continuously improve the policing services and response provided, the prevention and detection of offences against women and girls and the positive outcomes delivered for victims. KB again expressed her thanks to all frontline police officers and staff for their continued effort and support.

Sussex and Surrey Police have a Joint Force Vetting Unit (JFVU) which “fully complies” with the Vetting Code of Practice and Authorised Professional Practice (APP) developed by the College of Policing. There are several mandatory basic checks that are undertaken for all officers, staff and volunteers before they commence employment with the Force.

These consist of extensive checks on application including crime system and crime report allegation checks, credit reference checks [to consider any potential vulnerability from a financial perspective], opensource enquiries [on search engines and social media sites], review of voting registers, checks with the Ministry of Defence and Criminal Records Office, checks into other professional standards and vetting databases, and employment checks [with previous police force areas, where appropriate]. Further checks are also undertaken on the Police National Computer, Police National Database and by the Counter Terrorism Unit in respect of the partners, family, associates and co-habitants [aged 10 years old and over] of all individual applicants.

Many of these checks are repeated and/or additional vetting is undertaken should any changes be made to a role an individual is performing as part of any internal movement in respect of access to vulnerable individuals, systems and/or sensitive information. It was emphasised that the level of vetting required should remain proportionate to the role that an individual is performing and the information that they have access to. KB was reassured to note that this vetting is continuously appraised on a regular basis.

The Chief Constable confirmed that a national review into the vetting arrangements for police officers and staff is currently ongoing. Sussex Police will support this review by submitting a response about the arrangements in Sussex. KB asked for further clarification in respect of the timescales for this review.

JS explained that the monitoring of any abuse of power by serving police officers and staff and/or potential warning signs of any such behaviour is considered by the Force across the three areas of people, processes and publicity.

People – *Individuals [both internally and externally] need to highlight and share any potential concerns about unusual, strange and/or corrupt behaviour which may compromise integrity.*

Processes – *The workforce has been provided with suitable processes and systems to highlight any unusual, strange and/or corrupt behaviour and/or transactions.*

Publicity – *The Chief Constable has made it clear that these behaviours are not acceptable and continues to promote a culture where corruption is not tolerated in Sussex Police, against the highest professional standards and behaviour expected.*

This work is supported by the provision of a well-established and anonymous reporting platform – 'Break the Silence' – which is regularly publicised and promoted internally throughout the Force. The Anti-Corruption Unit (ACU) is responsible for assessing, investigating and managing any reports received through the system, including those relating to corruption and/or abuse of authority. Internal oversight around the range of tactics used and the investigations undertaken in this respect is provided by Chief Officers, with additional external oversight provided by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Service (HMICFRS) and the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC).

The ACU has also delivered a series of presentations to partner agencies around abuse of authority and position to highlight the threat and warning signs of any such behaviour and/or relationships entered, and the most appropriate way to report any concerns in confidence. The Force continues to develop, enhance and learn based on the national outcomes delivered in this important area to improve public trust, confidence and legitimacy in policing.

Members of the public with any concerns about police corruption were encouraged to report these to the ACU. Further information can be viewed through the following link:
<https://www.sussex.police.uk/ro/report/fo/v2/report-fraud-bribery-corruption/>

KB was pleased to learn that Sussex Police has extensive campaigns in place around spiked drinks and date rape drugs. The Force is currently developing some additional communications around 'needle spiking' to complement this existing material following the increase in recorded activity in this area. Further information about these campaigns can be viewed through the following link:

<https://www.sussex.police.uk/cp/crime-prevention/protect-yourself-from-crime/spiked-drinks-date-rape-drugs/>

The Chief Constable concluded by stating that Sussex Police continue to take any reports received about this subject area extremely seriously and will investigate all allegations that are made. Members of the public were also reminded about the importance of reporting any instances of these offences to assist the Force with developing the most comprehensive assessment to assist them with delivering proactive and preventative policing activity and maximising the number of successful prosecutions.

ACTION: KB requested a copy of the timescales for the national review into the vetting arrangements for police officers and staff.

HMICFRS – VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS

Last month [17 September], HMICFRS released their final inspection report into the police response to violence against women and girls (VAWG). The report recognised that “a whole-system approach is required to end the epidemic of violence against women and girls.”

A. The report found that “all forces [we inspected] understood the importance of tackling VAWG”. The identification of some “excellent processes, pilots and practice” was recognised but there is “little connectivity between them.” What are Sussex Police doing to manage this? And how is the Force working with health and education partners to deliver a whole-system approach to VAWG?

B. HMICFRS found “considerable inconsistencies” around what data is collected [in relation to VAWG offences] and how it is used. How does the Force ensure that information is used to direct resources and identify areas of need?

C. What is the Force doing to ensure that survey data is meaningful and can be used to inform and change practices [where identified]?

D. The report highlighted a need for a whole-system approach to data. How is the Force working with partners to enhance the information held and shared?

E. How can Sussex Police be confident that an inclusive service is being provided if information is not readily available about the protected characteristics of victims?

F. HMICFRS recognised that prevention activity in relation to VAWG is a “mixed picture” with much of this focussed on the NTE. What targeted prevention activity takes place in Sussex?

G. The inspection report identified a “significant” increase in the recorded levels of online VAWG [including harassment and grooming offences] and a gap in the police response to this. What are Sussex Police doing to manage and address online VAWG?

H. The report found that the responses provided to some requests under the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme were taking too long in some areas and that decisions about releasing information did not always involve the other relevant partner agencies. What assurances can you provide me about the effectiveness of the scheme in Sussex? And when was it last reviewed?

I. The identification and management of serial perpetrators of VAWG offences was found to have “limited consistency” by HMICFRS. Do you know who the high-harm serial offenders [of VAWG] are in Sussex? And how are these individuals managed?

J. The use of protective powers against perpetrators of VAWG was found to be “inconsistent” and “unexplained” in some areas. Is there any such inconsistency in Sussex? And what proactive action is taken by the Force when these orders are breached in Sussex?

K. Are you satisfied that the Force is doing everything possible to prevent any further harm to victims?

L. The report identified five recommendations for the police service and partner agencies. What plans are in place to ensure that each of these is progressed within the prescribed timescales?

M. What training is provided to frontline officers in respect of VAWG? What proportion of the workforce have completed the ‘Domestic Abuse Still Matters’ training package? And is this package mandatory for all frontline officers?

JD began by explaining that Sussex Police has worked closely with HMICFRS to produce this inspection report and welcomed the increased national focus that is evident around VAWG. The report was recognised to provide all police force areas with the opportunity to reflect on what work is already being delivered in this area and to consider where any gaps exist, or improvements could be realised in terms of the policing and partner response.

Sussex Police acknowledge the tangible benefits of working together and tackling shared priorities to improve the service provided to victims. The Force has developed a range of different prevention activities in partnership with statutory and non-statutory partners around this important area, with a collective focus around the NTE and young people.

The newly formed Sussex Domestic Abuse Partnership Board, comprising representation from the Force, statutory partners and third-sector organisations [who provide domestic abuse support services], was considered to represent a good example of a collaborative approach to coordinate and deliver services and safeguarding arrangements for victims, whilst simultaneously demonstrating effective offender management through a whole system approach.

KB was provided with other examples of embedded partnership working in Sussex, including a multi-agency Stalking Perpetrator Programme [providing a collective approach to address stalking behaviour], a Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Programme [working with the offenders who pose the greatest risk of harm to victims of domestic abuse] to develop a bespoke approach to understanding and addressing the root causes of offending behaviour], and through the training and briefings delivered to licensed premises, door staff, volunteer street pastors [and other professionals] working in this area to support the NTE.

Another strand of prevention activity in this area involves providing educational input to pupils in Year 8 [those students aged 12 to 13 years old] in schools and other educational establishments. These sessions look at healthy relationships and offending behaviour, covering areas including harassment, toxic masculinity and misogyny. Bespoke information is also shared with educational providers through Operation Encompass – an initiative where the police notify and share information with schools and other educational establishments when a child has been involved in or present during a domestic incident.

Each of the strands of work that tackle VAWG and support education, awareness and behaviour change programmes across Sussex will be assisted by the funding of nearly £1million [£976,782] secured from the Government's latest Safer Streets Fund. Further information about this funding award can be viewed through the following link:

<https://www.sussex-pcc.gov.uk/about/news/pcc-welcomes-safer-streets-funding/>

The "considerable inconsistencies" identified by HMICFRS around what data is collected by police forces in England and Wales [and how it is used] was attributed to the lack of a national definition in respect of VAWG offences, and the associated challenges to create a comprehensive data set. A VAWG Strategy – including a definition of these offences – is still awaited from the National Police Chiefs' Council but, in the interim, KB was reassured to understand that Sussex Police has developed its own strategy, taking a common-sense approach to the data collected by incorporating all crimes where there is any violence against women and girls involved.

It was also highlighted that data collection is far more complex than simply quantitative crime data sets and should include qualitative data about the experiences of victims, survivors and partner agencies too. This information is collected through a range of comprehensive surveys in Sussex which provide rich feedback around areas such as reporting, confidence in the police [and partners] and safeguarding arrangements.

Temporary Assistant Chief Constable Dando further explained that a Victim Hub has been established in Sussex – comprising police and other support services – to provide a multi-agency response to domestic abuse and stalking through the development of bespoke safeguarding support packages for each victim.

The Force has also undertaken a strategic analysis around VAWG to identify where these offences are most prevalent in public spaces, which has been used to direct and target resources and patrol activity, particularly around the NTE. In addition, this information and intelligence has been used to understand better where further policing support is required and any gaps that may exist in terms of service delivery.

Sussex Police has invested in technological solutions [Power BI] which can collate information and data from a range of different systems to develop a clearer understanding of those individuals who are most at risk from harm and to target those perpetrators who pose the greatest risk of harm to victims.

JD explained that the Force is continuing to work with partners to enhance the information held and shared locally. This activity is delivered through Partnership Managers, working collaboratively with Neighbourhood Intelligence Analysts, to ensure that a consistent approach is delivered to provide analytical products to support VAWG. This information is then shared through the Tactical Tasking and Co-ordination Group on a weekly basis to assess the threat, harm and risk of offending behaviour in Sussex.

The data captured through the StreetSafe tool – a pilot service for women and girls to anonymously tell the police about public places they have felt unsafe because of behaviours or environmental issues – will also be used by Sussex Police as part of this analytical work moving forward. The Force [and partners] have already received information from this tool about faulty street lighting and signage, requests for enhancements to existing CCTV and remedial attention required to overgrown hedges, shrubs and other wooded areas. Further information about the tool can be viewed through the following link: <https://www.police.uk/streetsafe>

The Temporary Assistant Chief Constable also explained that Sussex Police will provide ongoing support for the #MakeHerFeelSafe campaign – seeking to address the behaviour of men and boys – and challenging the current narrative to bring about change by delivering ‘bystander to upstander’ sessions throughout the county to empower individuals to become more confident at challenging unacceptable behaviour. Further investment to the infrastructure in several different areas with open spaces will be made too, including the provision of mobile and fixed CCTV units and lighting.

KB was reassured to understand the wide range of targeted prevention activity that takes place in Sussex in respect of VAWG. This work will be further supported by the Safer Streets funding [referred to on page 5] and will enable the Force to continue to deliver new initiatives and build on existing practice to deliver a lasting response to male violence against women and girls.

Sussex Police look at any potential gaps in the information recorded about the protected characteristics of victims through the Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVAs) and Independent Sexual Violence Advisors (ISVAs) to understand better whether there is any reticence to report and how trust and confidence in the police can be improved amongst these diverse communities through the provision of a more inclusive service.

JS recognised the “significant” increase in the recorded levels of online VAWG highlighted in the inspection report, including a greater number of offences that were acknowledged to have been committed through online platforms. Sussex Police are managing and addressing online VAWG through the more sophisticated use of digital devices, including an increase in the number of offender manager posts who specialise in the identification of digital offending and coordinating the Force response. These individuals have an enhanced knowledge and capability to identify online offending and gather evidence to support prosecutions.

Cyber-stalking is recognised to be a particular area of concern nationally. To address this, the Force has redesigned call handling and crime recording processes to improve the identification of offences that use the internet and to develop a range of accessible guidance and advice for frontline officers and staff to refer to in relation to online safety. A 'Stalking Clinic' is also in the process of being developed to enhance the ability of the police to tackle cyber-stalking effectively – this will include representation from the Digital Forensic Team and Cyber-Crime Team.

KB was reassured to note that Sussex Police has recently commissioned an "urgent review" into the processes in place to respond to any requests received for information as part of the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (DVDS) – better known as Clare's Law – with a view to providing a more efficient and effective response locally. This work will include assessing the contribution of relevant partner agencies in the process too.

On receipt of any 'Right to Know' or 'Right to Ask' application, some basic checks and a risk assessment are undertaken by the Force to identify and understand the potential victim and their partner. If any concerns are identified through the initial checks, these are shared with the Domestic Abuse Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) to assess the application and determine whether a disclosure would be lawful and proportionate to protect the potential victim from harm. If at any stage of the process the police identify that the potential victim is at an immediate risk of harm, the MARAC stage can be bypassed, and the disclosure made immediately. In all instances where a decision is taken to disclose the information, the police and partner agencies will ensure that the potential victim is offered guidance and support alongside the disclosure.

It was highlighted that Sussex Police received 445 applications for information under the DVDS between January and September 2021 – 32% of these requests were 'Right to Know' and 68% of these requests were 'Right to Ask'. Of the applications received, 173 disclosures were made to support these requests [with 45% of these disclosures made within 30 days and 38% taking 31 days or more to process]. No disclosures were made for 218 of the applications [with either the applicant withdrawing from the process or the application not meeting the criteria for the scheme] and a further 54 applications remain under investigation.

Part of the review will also include looking at where any delays exist in the process to streamline this and to improve the service that is provided to members of the public. Further information about the scheme can be viewed through the following link:

<https://www.sussex.police.uk/police-forces/sussex-police/areas/campaigns/campaigns/clares-law---domestic-violence-disclosure-scheme-dvds/>

KB was reassured to note that Sussex Police know who the high-harm serial offenders of VAWG offences are in Sussex. The Force was recognised to be in a much better position than it was previously around this area, including the development of an innovative and overarching database [comprising data from multiple sources] to look at offenders across a range of different offences. This platform provides the Force with a 'live time' list of all perpetrators of domestic abuse, sexual abuse and stalking, with and without arrests and/or criminal justice outcomes recorded on the systems.

These high-harm individuals are then proactively targeted and managed by sharing information with local policing teams who build and develop management plans around them through local intelligence meetings. This approach includes looking at the whole range of criminal offending and proactively arresting these individuals for other offences [rather than domestic or sexual violence] to remove them from the communities of Sussex faster. The highest harm offenders are also subject to a multi-agency screening process which selects those suitable for the Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Intervention Project which seeks to positively impact offending behaviour by reducing the harm caused to victims through the delivery of interventions to address some of the factors which contribute to their offending [i.e. drugs and alcohol].

The Violent Offender and Sex Offender Register (ViSOR) – a national multi-agency database recognised to be a key tool in the effective management of offenders and other persons posing a risk of harm to the public – is used by the Force to proactively manage those serial perpetrators on the register, including any ancillary orders issued [such as Non-Molestation Orders, Domestic Violence Protection Orders and Stalking Protection Orders]. Sussex Police is also enhancing the resources within the Complex Domestic Abuse Unit to improve the ability of the Force to manage better stalking offenders in the county.

Following the publication of the HMICFRS report, an internal review by Sussex Police has found that the use of protective powers against perpetrators of VAWG could be improved. This was recognised to include addressing the gap that exists between each of the police force areas in England and Wales not being automatically notified by the courts when any ancillary orders are granted. KB was pleased to learn that proactive action is taken by the Force whenever any of these orders are breached in Sussex and this action is treated as a priority, utilising Single Points of Contacts (SPOCs) from across the police force area.

Temporary Assistant Chief Constable Dando was satisfied that Sussex Police is doing everything within its powers to prevent further harm to victims, address offender behaviour and to maximise opportunities to secure criminal justice outcomes, wherever possible. This includes obtaining ancillary orders at the earliest possible opportunity and prioritising any breaches [on a daily basis] until an arrest is made.

KB was reassured to note that plans are in place to ensure that each of the five recommendations set out in the inspection report for the police service are progressed within the prescribed timescales.

JD stated that 94% of all frontline officers and staff have completed the mandatory 'Domestic Abuse Still Matters' training package. The Force is seeking to improve this completion rate further still and remains committed to providing the workforce with the necessary knowledge and skills required to improve the policing response delivered to tackle VAWG.

The Chief Constable concluded by providing members of public with assurances that any reports of misogyny or allegations of offences that involve misogynistic tendencies would be listened to, considered and investigated by the Force. It was highlighted that whilst misogyny is not yet a criminal offence, Sussex Police would respond to any allegations received within the framework of the existing legislation available to them.

It was also emphasised that Sussex Police is part of the current debate with other police forces areas, the College of Policing and central Government regarding any potential decision to change the legislation in this area, and any impact that would be apparent in terms of the crime recording practices and policing response should misogyny become a criminal offence.

As it currently stands, if a victim reports a crime or an incident with a misogynistic motivator to Sussex Police, this will be incorporated into an existing crime report by the Force. However, due to the lack of a specific crime, the processes used by Sussex Police are not automatically set up to reflect this and is something that continues to be discussed internally.

When recording misogyny as a hate crime or incident, the Force is currently utilising the Hate and Anti-Social Behaviour Risk Assessment (HARA) to consider the impact on the victim, the response delivered and the requirements for any safeguarding and/or signposting to other support services [for that individual]. Temporary Assistant Chief Constable Dando concluded by stating that Sussex Police remains committed to providing an empathetic response to any reports of misogyny received.

PREDICTIVE 'MICRO-HOTSPOT' POLICING

Sussex Police use predictive 'micro-hotspot' policing to tackle crime across the county.

- A. For the benefit of the viewers, what is predictive policing and how is this used by the Force to tackle micro-hotspots in Sussex?**
- B. Is this a new approach, a pilot initiative or a permanent feature that will be embedded into local Neighbourhood Policing? Is there any evidence available to support this approach?**
- C. How are the different hotspot areas selected? And which crimes and offences do these apply to?**
- D. Are you confident that you understand where all the hotspots are in Sussex?**
- E. What engagement and interaction takes place during these deployments? And with whom? And how long do the police officers spend at each location?**
- F. How do you measure performance in this area?**
- G. What metrics are used to monitor the effectiveness of this approach? [i.e. number of arrests, interactions and intelligence reports submitted]**
- H. Can you provide some examples of success in this area? And are there any other benefits [both tangible and intangible] from targeting micro-hotspots?**
- I. What feedback, if any, has been sought from local communities about this approach? How supportive are the workforce at engaging in this methodology?**

JD confirmed that predictive 'micro-hotspot' policing involves using patterns of previous crime data to determine where there is a likelihood of further crime or harm being caused, unless there is an intervention.

It was emphasised that this statistics-based approach to reduce offending is not a new initiative and that it has been used in policing previously. The latest pilot originates from Operation Safety – the Sussex Police response to reduce knife crime and serious violence in the county – following the Force's share [£1,340,000] of the £100million received from the Home Office Serious Violence Fund to deliver operational activity over a three-year period. The tactic seeks to use clear and structured parameters in a methodical way based on all available information and intelligence to reduce offending. This activity is baselined against the level of crimes previously recorded in each of the areas to enable accurate comparisons to be made and, hopefully, demonstrate reductions in harm.

Each of the hotspots throughout Sussex will comprise of an area of 150m², selected based on data recorded previously for the more serious offences involving knives, guns and serious violence, including offences of homicide, attempted murder, grievous bodily harm and wounding level assaults. It is anticipated that other less serious offences, such as anti-social behaviour and criminal damage, will also indirectly reduce because of this increased policing activity.

There are 23 hotspot areas identified in Sussex [9 in Brighton & Hove, 4 in East Sussex and 10 in West Sussex] where police officers and Police Community Support Officers will conduct short high visibility foot patrols for 15 minutes, every other day, between the hours of 15:00 and 22:00. This is recognised [by the data] to be the most prevalent time of the day for these offences to occur within. The data also highlights that there is a residual impact which lasts for a maximum of 48 hours and is a significant factor behind the decision to select this frequency for the patrols, whilst simultaneously maintaining any momentum generated.

The Force is working closely with the Violence Reduction Partnership in Sussex to look at more long-term and sustainable ways that this initiative can impact positively on local environments, including making improvements to street lighting, enhancements to existing CCTV and remedial attention to overgrown hedges, shrubs and other wooded areas.

Early indications suggest that this approach is starting to have a positive impact to reduce serious violence [and harm], with the impact of any potential displacement continuing to be closely monitored by the Force. To date, the Force has already recorded circa. 1,000 patrols, undertaken 103 stop and searches, made 61 arrests, conducted 47 knife sweeps and carried out 81 test purchase operations. With the support of the amnesty bins, a total of 1,696 knives and weapons have been removed from the streets of Sussex in 2021/22.

It was emphasised that Global Positioning System (GPS) technology is being used to monitor officer and PCSO compliance, together with tracking, validating and ratifying the data captured. Once collated, this data is shared with the Home Office to demonstrate the improvements made, successes achieved and to evidence value for money in the Problem Orientated Policing response delivered locally.

Performance in this area is monitored through a combination of measures. These include the number of foot patrols and arrests made; stop and searches undertaken; educational interactions [with the high-visibility engagement van]; knife sweeps and test purchase operations carried out and support for amnesty bins. Police data and partner metrics are also considered to understand the holistic picture of offending, including the number of assaults and robberies recorded and hospital admissions for assaults with knives and/or sharp objects.

KB was encouraged to learn that there had already been some tangible reductions in monthly crime figures for 'violence with injury' recorded for several of the hotspot areas. Intangible successes have also been realised through the positive feedback that has been received from residents, businesses, schools and other educational establishments about the impact of the 'micro hotspot' policing approach in local communities.

Sussex Police is continuing to prioritise the sharing of positive feedback, messages and results delivered through the operation amongst the workforce to maximise the potential for further reductions in demand that are anticipated to be realised through the continued delivery of this predictive policing activity. The Force is also seeking to use a similar 'light touch' approach based on the existing methodology to target other areas [and crime types] in Sussex that were not originally identified as one of the targeted hotspot areas.

MODERN SLAVERY

The Modern Slavery Act 2015 outlines the key requirements for contracting authorities to run due diligence checks on its own supply chain to ensure traces of modern slavery and human trafficking do not exist.

The Government plans to strengthen the legislation in this area by introducing new measures including asking all public bodies [with a budget of £36 million or more] to manage the risks of exposure via their own supply chains and a requirement to publish their own Modern Slavery Transparency Statement about the work they are doing around this.

A. How is Sussex Police preparing for the new legislation that is expected in this area? Are there any plans for the Force to publish a Modern Slavery Transparency Statement?

B. In advance of any legislation, what assessment has been carried out by Sussex Police regarding the procurement and contract management supply chains engaged with to ensure that all service providers are ethical?

C. What steps are being taken to voluntarily register the Force on the new Home Office modern slavery statement registry platform?

D. What are the challenges for the Force in terms of tackling modern slavery?

E. It is recognised that modern slavery offences are often 'hidden' and under-reported. What are Sussex Police doing to raise awareness and support victims to report these crimes?

F. What support has been received from local partners in this area?

The Chief Constable confirmed that Sussex Police will publish a Modern Slavery Transparency Statement in due course and that a copy of this statement would be registered on the dedicated Home Office platform.

The Executive Director for Commercial and Financial Services is responsible for preparing for the new legislation anticipated in this area, with ongoing work in place to identify all supply chains that may be relevant locally. Blue Light Commercial are in the process of developing a 'Social Value Toolkit' to ensure that good practice is embedded across all police force areas, practices are consistently applied, and that duplication of effort is minimised. This approach will include checks on all suppliers used by the Force [where they have a statutory requirement to publish a statement too] and due diligence around the practices used by all organisations [where collaborated contracts exist].

The Home Office Modern Slavery Unit and Joint Security and Resilience Centre released an eLearning package [this month] for all public sector commercial staff, with practical information and guidance provided around the recognition of modern slavery in supply chains, identifying this within procurement processes and critically interrogating the assurances provided by suppliers.

KB was provided with additional reassurance that the Procurement Team responsible for issuing contracts in Sussex are aware of and alert to the practices used around modern slavery. Further checks and balances [around modern slavery] are provided to the Force by the Joint Audit Committee and the Southern Internal Audit Partnership [the internal auditors used by Sussex Police].

The importance of avoiding complacency in this area was highlighted. Sussex Police is continuing to use a combination of training and workshops to raise awareness of modern slavery amongst officers and staff. The Chief Constable recognised that modern slavery remains an important and inherently complex area, with multiple instances of victims being used to commit offences by organised crime groups, instances where victims do not recognise themselves to be victims and/or an acceptance that this practice may be preferable to the treatment demonstrated by the authorities in the indigenous countries they have arrived from.

It was also acknowledged that many victims can be reluctant to report these offences to the police in the first instance because themselves or their families [overseas] may be under threat and/or they may have a distrust for the integrity of the police service [based on personal experiences and relationships with law agencies in other countries].

Sussex Police is continuing to work with partners to understand and establish the threat, risk and harm around modern slavery in the county, including a commitment to take joint action wherever possible. Last year [16 October 2020], an anti-slavery pledge was signed by local councils in Sussex to eradicate all forms of modern slavery, human trafficking and exploitation and become a slavery free community by 2030 [in line with the United Nations sustainable development goals]. Further information can be viewed through the following link:

<https://www.sussex-pcc.gov.uk/about/news/police-campaign-to-raise-awareness-of-modern-slavery/>

It was recognised that the response provided to modern slavery in Sussex should be timely, proportionate and absolute to disrupt organised criminality in this area. Members of the public with any information about an individual who may be the victim of modern slavery were encouraged to report this to Sussex Police, either by telephone to 101 or online through the Sussex Police website:

<https://www.sussex.police.uk/advice/advice-and-information/>

Alternatively, individuals can contact the Modern Slavery Helpline [confidentially] by telephone to 08000 121 700 or report this to Crime Stoppers [anonymously] on 0800 555 111. Each of these lines are open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Individuals with a hearing or speech impairment can also use the Force textphone service on 18001 101.

NEXT UP:

The next PAM is on Tuesday, 16 November 2021 at 14:00. Further information can be viewed on my website through the following link:

www.sussex-pcc.gov.uk/get-involved/watch-live/