

## **Commissioner's response to Staffordshire Police latest Performance Report (incorporating Specified Information Order Statement on National Crime & Policing Measures)**

Staffordshire Commissioner for Police, Fire & Rescue and Crime Ben Adams remains keen that key measures demonstrate the progress made against delivering the service-level ambitions in his Police & Crime Plan, the Staffordshire Policing Plan, and the National Crime & Policing Measures (NCPM). A summary of key measures is reviewed at each quarterly Strategic Governance Board and bi-annually at Public Performance Meetings, including local priorities and the NCPM that form the national Digital Crime Performance Pack (DCPP). This formal response is designed to satisfy the statutory requirement to comment on Staffordshire's contribution to national measures. The Commissioner is satisfied that, where appropriate, Staffordshire Police use local data to demonstrate their current position, and we await guidance on the new government's intentions regarding the existing NCPM measures.

### **1. Emerging Challenges**

#### **1.1. Chief Constable's Foreword and His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) Inspections update (Child Protection Inspection)**

The Commissioner welcomed Acting Chief Constable Becky Riggs, Assistant CC Paul Talbot, and ACO John Bloomer. The meeting began with an update on the recent HMICFRS Child Protection Inspection and the national Operation Beacon review.

In May, HMICFRS carried out a child protection inspection in Staffordshire. The force was praised for strong partnership working and harm reduction hubs, with continued improvements noted. Areas for development include responses to domestic abuse and missing children, and action plans are in place.

CC Riggs addressed concerns following misinformation circulated on social media earlier this year. This led to the Casey Review and 12 national recommendations, including a review of non-recent child sexual exploitation investigations. Operation Beacon, led by the National Crime Agency, is reviewing 1,200 cases nationally. Where new lines of enquiry are identified, cases will return to local forces for further investigation. Phase One focuses on cases involving multiple victims and perpetrators, with Phase Two expanding the scope.

The Commissioner assured the public that updates will be shared as Operation Beacon progresses and its impact on Staffordshire becomes clear.

**Staffordshire Priorities** including NCPM

### **2. Key Headlines**

Reported crime in Staffordshire fell by 1% over the past year, reflecting a focus on tackling issues at their root cause with local communities. Neighbourhood crime dropped by 13%, supported by the Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee and government Action Fund, while home burglaries fell by 24%, with officers continuing to attend every incident unless there's a compelling reason not to. Improvements in 999 call handling were noted, alongside rises in drug offences (+50%) and robbery (+26%) due to proactive enforcement and the inclusion of aggravated shoplifting in robbery figures. Sexual offences increased by 3%, mainly due to the reclassification of image-sharing offences. Victim satisfaction improved significantly, with positive feedback after contact up 11%. Anti-social behaviour (ASB) has reduced long-term from 31,000 incidents in 2019/20 to 17,000 this year, though a 12% rise compared to last year reflects seasonal factors. The Commissioner noted he was discouraged with the disconnect between recorded crime and public confidence which means that police need to improve how they share activity and impact. The Commissioner welcomed these results but highlighted the need to improve public confidence by better sharing the impact of policing activity.

### **3. An outstanding local Police Service: Local Crime Priorities**

#### **3.1. Rural Crime**

Crime recording statistics have contributed to a 4% increase in drug crimes in rural areas. Fast drugs parcels couriered to Staffordshire locations used to be recorded as intelligence locally and a crime nationally, but ethical recording now allocates them to Staffordshire, their intended destination.

#### **3.2. Retail Crime**

The force is second out of eight in Most Similar Forces for retail crime, a significant improvement, and is increasing at a lower rate than is seen nationally. CC Riggs reiterated the force's commitment to foot patrols in town centres and building relationships with workers in businesses, shops and stalls to increase confidence in reporting. CC Riggs is starting to see the highest outcome rates in retail crime in the past 5 years, and we hope to be able to share these improvements in future reports.

#### **3.3. Vehicle Crime**

The Commissioner noted less correspondence had been received around vehicle crime recently, but organised vehicle crime is becoming more sophisticated, and concerns remain about car key burglary and associated risks to the public. There has been a reduction in all vehicle offences across the force area, but increases have been seen in Newcastle, Tamworth and Cannock due to criminals visiting from metropolitan force areas. The Road Crime Team and technology assisted intelligence is integral to disrupting these crime types and criminals using the road network.

#### **3.4. Roads Policing**

The Road Crime Team is tackling dangerous driving through enforcement and education programmes like Bike Safe, alongside proactive drink and drug driving campaigns ahead of Christmas. Social media updates highlight their efforts, with increases in detections for no insurance, no MOT, careless driving and drug driving reflecting strong results. Fatal collision figures have risen slightly, but some cases may later be reclassified as medical episodes. Commissioner Adams welcomed progress but noted that the fall in mobile phone offences is partly due to last year's national AI camera pilot. The force continues to explore technology to keep Staffordshire's roads safe and is considering recommendations to make these tools part of everyday policing.

### **4. An outstanding local Police Service: Public Confidence and Victim Surveys**

#### **4.1. Public Perception Surveys**

Public confidence remains stable at 64%, but concerns persist around ASB. The Commissioner again pointed to the disconnect between actual crime levels and people's perceptions, and requested reassurance and engagement from the force, noting the positive steps taken with compliance with the national Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee with named local police officers. CC Riggs commented that we can't underestimate the impact of local and national rioting last year.

#### **4.2. Improve satisfaction among victims & witnesses, (focus on Domestic Abuse (DA) victims (NCPM))**

Victim satisfaction with investigations exceeds 80%, and DA victims report higher satisfaction levels than the national average. ACC Talbot is keen to ensure that local policing teams understand local challenges and issues utilising diverse survey collection methods. The Commissioner encouraged residents to sign up to Smart Alert for regular and frequent local updates and commended the force in driving up these key satisfaction metrics.

#### **4.3. Local complaints, IOPC bulletins and complaint reviews (focus on organisational learning)**

Complaint handling timeliness is strong, with lessons learned embedded into practice. Inside Schedule 3 involve some form of misconduct which may involve the Independent Office for Police Conduct or a right of review. Outside Schedule 3 tend to be complaints containing no misconduct but dissatisfaction over service received. The Commissioner is comfortable we have the balance correct with transparency and action taken, and the force publishes details of officers who take advantage of their position.

### **5. An outstanding local Police Service: Contact and Local Policing:**

#### **5.1. Emergency and Non-Emergency Calls**

Technology has transformed how the force handles contact, with 87.4% of 999 calls answered within 10 seconds, faster non-emergency call handling, and a 10% rise in digital contact. A pilot AI scheme for non-emergency calls will launch in 8 weeks, making Staffordshire one of 3 forces trialling Agentforce to free up handlers and signpost callers to the right support, while ensuring vulnerable callers are immediately transferred to a person. To tackle long waits, the 'Your Call Matters' callback service now contacts the 8% of callers waiting over 60 minutes, improving confidence and gathering valuable intelligence. Recruitment is open for call handlers to strengthen the team in rewarding and challenging roles. The Victims' Portal has revolutionised communication, sending over 62,000 updates and enabling two-way engagement, with 22% of eligible victims using the service – well above the national average. The public can also access online reporting forms and local policing information via the Staffordshire website.

#### **5.2. Response: Grade 1 and Grade 2 including Enhanced Video Response**

Volume of incidents is up 2.5% and those resourced is down 5%. Not all policing requires an attendance, and this data shines a light on the improvements the force has made in assessing and grading risk and ensuring the right resource is available and prioritised to attend when it really matters.

Grade 1 increases in average attendance time within the ambition of 20 minutes is broken down into 3 specific areas for improvement: recording of the incident, identification of resource and despatch to arrival. There are now strategic resource managers working within the contact centre, with oversight of local assets across LPT boundaries targeting the timeliness of resourcing to identify improvements.

Technology for Enhanced Video Response and Grade 2 response has allowed the force to provide face-to-face support, improving confidence and outcomes for DA victims. The force would like to broaden this service out for additional crime types in the future.

#### **5.3. Reduce Neighbourhood Crime (NCPM)**

Neighbourhood crime is down everywhere, although static in Cannock, and attendance at residential burglaries is at 93%, reinforcing public confidence.

#### **5.4. Tackle ASB**

Targeted patrols in 19 hotspot areas have delivered strong results, including a 10% drop in overall crime, a 26% reduction in knife crime, and 90 arrests. Officers engaged with communities and businesses over 3,900 times, supported by £1 million from the national Action Fund.

#### **5.5. Outcomes**

Staffordshire ranks **19th in the 42 forces** for charge and postal requisition rate to April 2025, and **fourth in its eight most similar forces** at 10.5 per cent. Commissioner Ben Adams noted that there may be some implications for local public protection and perhaps an increase in workload for the force following the recent Sentencing Review which may lead to shorter sentences and more out of court rehabilitation opportunities.

## **6. Preventing and protecting: NCPM**

### **6.1. Reduce murder and other homicide (NCPM)**

Domestic homicides reduced by **80%** year-on-year.

### **6.2. Reduce serious violence (NCPM): inc. DA and Violence against Women & Girls (VAWG)**

Knife crime fell by 26% in hotspot areas; VAWG increased slightly (+2%). Stalking has been fairly static in the last 12 months, but volumes remain high. The Commissioner's Office is involved in developing a specific stalking support package for victims and the Commissioner sought assurance from CC Riggs on the force's priorities for these types of crimes. The force takes them very seriously and has experts who deal with this specific crime type using civil orders, providing safe environments online and in person and allowing victims to move on with their lives.

### **6.3. Disrupt drugs supply and county lines (NCPM)**

The Commissioner commended the organised crime intensification week which led to 44 arrests, £103,880 cash seized, and 6 county lines dismantled. Cannabis cultivation and monkey dust remain priorities.

### **6.4. Tackle cybercrime & fraud (NCPM)**

Action Fraud cases show fraud and cybercrime remain significant threats; local initiatives focus on prevention and victim support.

## **7. Supporting Victims**

### **7.1. Victim's Code of Practice Compliance**

Compliance with the Victims' Code of Practice is strong, with 93% of victim-based crimes having a victim contract. Timeliness of referrals to support services remains a focus. Repeat victimisation is stable at 18%. There are some ongoing issues around the quality of automated data returns to the victim support service which are being worked through with the new service provider to ensure a seamless offering to those in need of support.

### **7.2. Criminal Justice – Timeliness**

Median investigation duration for victim-based crimes with a successful outcome is 65 days, unchanged from the previous year. National comparison places Staffordshire at 26th out of 42 forces, and 5th among its Most Similar Forces, with an average of 43 days to record a successful outcome in Q4 2024/25 versus 39 days nationally. More complex crime types take longer: domestic-related crimes average 113 days, compared to 56 days for non-domestic crimes.

While overall timeliness is stable, the force continues to prioritise improvements through:

- Enhanced case management processes
- Increased detective capacity via specialist recruitment
- Use of technology such as the Victims' Portal to streamline communication and reduce delays.

The force acknowledges that serious and complex investigations require thoroughness but remains committed to reducing delays wherever possible to improve victim experience and confidence in the criminal justice system.

## **8. An outstanding local Police Service: Enabling Services**

### **8.1. Workforce Update: Officer recruitment & Diversity**

Officer numbers have reached 2,003 FTE, keeping the force on track for its March 2026 target. Recruitment continues to improve diversity, with 10.7% of new officers from minority ethnic backgrounds and 42.7% female recruits. The Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee has funded an extra 53 officers, boosting engagement with local communities and supporting Staffordshire's 160 PCSOs. A review is underway to expand PCSO responsibilities, such as taking low-level statements, and optimise their shift patterns. Once all 53 officers are in post, neighbourhood teams will grow by 30%, though this will add pressure on investigation, custody and forensic services not covered by short-term funding. The Commissioner highlighted concerns about government dictating workforce mix and stressed the need for professional judgment to meet local priorities while managing financial risks.

### **8.2. Efficiency**

The force is forecasting an underspend of £0.785m and has delivered 87% of the £9m savings target, with two areas off track but offset by other efficiencies. Behind these figures are real pressures on officers, including cancelled rest days and leave, which the ACO Bloomer stressed must be recognised to protect workforce wellbeing.

### **8.3. Value for Money**

Staffordshire remains one of the lowest-funded forces nationally but invests heavily in PCSOs. Staffordshire is a safe place to live.

The Commissioner thanked the Chief Officer team for their candid responses and looked forward to the next public meeting.