



Lincolnshire Police Crime Commissioners Officer – Independent Assurance Panel
Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG)- Annual Summary Report October 2023

Introduction

In October 2023 the Independent Assurance Panel submitted the annual summary report to the PCC, which provided an update on actions to date, initial findings, and recommendations. This paper serves as an update around activity undertaken and planned to address the recommendations in the report.

The Force has welcomed and embraced the objective scrutiny provided by the Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Independent Assurance Panel over the last twelve months. Lincolnshire Police continue to prioritise VAWG and appointed a dedicated force lead, Superintendent Suzanne Davies, in April 2022. We are also supporting the national VAWG work with the secondment of Sarah Norburn to the national taskforce for the last two years.

Assurance Panel Recommendations

In the annual report, the Independent Assurance Panel made several recommendations, and the current progress against these are detailed below.

The panel recommends that senior strategic commitment is gained to reintroducing such a service (Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Programme) across Lincolnshire and cross sector/statutory partner support/funding is garnered.

Lincolnshire Police are committed to securing a Domestic Abuse Perpetrator programme that is right for the county and this forms part of the Lincolnshire Domestic Abuse Partnership delivery plan.

The Panel recommends Lincolnshire Police explores other methods of benchmarking progress and impact against other forces.

Our performance team can compare our performance with our most similar forces and this will be considered by the Force.

It is our understanding that the Force internal performance board reviewed an external performance document which has also been shared with VAWG Voices. This document has not yet been shared publicly. The Panel recommends that consideration be given to this as it adds a level of transparency.

This has been discussed with our VAWGVoces group who did not want to see statistics and said they preferred seeing the focus on the pursuit of perpetrators, including charges and breach of protective orders, including domestic violence protection orders. The force is working with VAWGVoces to develop this.

The Panel recommends that significant thought is given to ensuring any survey commissioned identifies any geographical, age and cultural differences in levels of public trust, which may be due to differences in policing decisions, social challenges and/or historical relationships.

In April 2023, as part of ongoing work to understand public trust and confidence in Lincolnshire Police, a single question "Taking everything into account, how good a job is Lincolnshire Police doing?" has been asked of the people of Lincolnshire.

In the summer of 2023, Lincolnshire Police and the OPCC commissioned a VAWG and serious violence survey which received nearly 3,000 responses, and the responses in relation to VAWG are being considered and analysed by the VAWG delivery group and activities are already in motion. We intend to take a "you said, we did approach".

In relation to the STRA it was unclear whether the force was likely to communicate this important piece of work more widely internally.

The Force are satisfied that the whole workforce understands the importance of VAWG and this is embedded within our regular communications.

The Panel recommends a wholesale programme of Unconscious Bias training be implemented across Lincolnshire Police.

We deliver unconscious bias training within our initial training and have previously run workshops with all first- and second-line supervisors. Within our work supporting the Police Race Action Plan, the force is exploring other national training opportunities to reduce bias across all sectors.

The Panel recommends that consideration be given to some external third party analysis of victim disengagement be considered.

The force is working with the OPCC who have secured funding to commission an independent specialist organisation to undertake research with adult victim/survivors of rape and sexual abuse. This research will secure their feedback about their experiences of the criminal justice system and the service provision they have accessed. Since June 2023 Lincolnshire Police have also introduced an extra level of scrutiny at Inspector rank for all rape and high-risk domestic abuse offences where the victim supports police action, but evidential difficulties prevent further action, or where the victim does not support or has withdrawn police action. We have carried out our own audits and do not feel that third party analysis would enhance our knowledge.

Consideration to specialist trauma informed care training.

The force delivers trauma informed training and is currently working with a specialist service to redesign our initial investigation process for victims of rape and serious sexual assaults.

The Panel recommends that more strategic partnerships are established with the NHS and other Statutory/Not for Profit partners to develop a County wide VAWG Partnership Strategy.

There is a new national framework for delivery for VAWG for 2024/27 and this will be considered as part of this work.

The Panel suggests a phase transition from existing plans to new model is adopted to ensure a 'stop/start' approach is avoided.

The new VAWG framework was approved in December 2023 and the Force are confident they have the infrastructure in place which will allow them to consider the new framework in conjunction with the existing work streams.

The Panel's overall recommendation is for Lincolnshire Police to streamline actions, focus on a smaller range of initiatives and be much clearer on what success looks like.

The force is confident with the work carried out by the VAWG lead and this is reviewed regularly within the VAWG delivery board, VAWG Voices and performance meetings.

Overview

VAWGVoices has been established since February 2023 and meet bimonthly online. A year on review will take place in 2024 to consider whose voice is missing from the group and then we will proactively recruit women to widen our membership.

Lincolnshire Police have a dedicated VAWG education coordinator who is delivering age-appropriate workshops within schools and have recently secured funding for a second coordinator from April 2024.

We can confirm that Detective Inspector Lee Nixon is our dedicated Rape and Serious Sexual Offences lead and is delivering our force response to these very serious crimes.

Lincolnshire Police have a VAWG communications strategy and since feedback from the panel in March 2023 have been taken a more local approach to our communications. This includes our recent campaign on 16 days of action for Domestic Abuse and the "You're Right, That's Wrong" campaign which is aimed at young men encouraging them to be upstanders, not bystanders. We have commissioned work with a local radio station to target a different demographic and those who may not see our work on social media. In February 2024 we will launch our Crimestoppers campaign aimed at encouraging reports of domestic abuse from our Eastern European community, based on research within the Polish community. This will include leaflets at pharmacies and other public places, bus stops ads as well as social media campaigns in six different languages.

The force is grateful for the comprehensive report and will consider all the recommendations and will continue to engage with women and girls across the county and work with partners to deliver the VAWG priorities.

December 2023