

Violence Against Women & Girls (VAWG)

November 2021

T/ACC Davison



1.0 Context

1.1 Whilst the murder of Sarah Everard in March 2021 shone a spotlight onto the issue of Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG), there is a disproportionate number of female victims in a number of violence offences, including Domestic Abuse (DA), Rape & Serious Sexual Offences (RASSO) and Stalking and Harassment (S&H). While a huge amount of work has been undertaken by the Police and other partners, the focus on the VAWG agenda has meant that it is an apt time to ensure that our efforts are properly planned, coordinated, and having maximum impact.

1.2 Our aim is to ensure that Lincolnshire is the safest place to live in, work and visit. It is paramount that we address serious criminality that effects the safety and perceptions of safety amongst women and girls within Lincolnshire.

1.3 This paper sets out the work undertaken and planned within Lincolnshire to address VAWG.

2.0 National Approach

2.1 The National approach is as follows:

2.2 Firstly, to increase support for victims and survivors, through ensuring they have access to quality support appropriate to their needs

2.3 Secondly, building on increases we have seen in reporting to the police for some of these crimes, we want an increase in the number of perpetrators brought to justice. This will be measured via police recorded crime and court data. In addition, given the under-reporting of these crimes, we want to see an increase in reporting to the police and increased victim engagement with the police and wider public service response. We specifically want to reduce the proportion of victims of these crimes withdrawing from criminal justice proceedings and increase public confidence in the system.

2.4 Thirdly, the long-term fundamental ambition must be nothing less than to reduce the prevalence of violence against women and girls. We will achieve this by preventing more of these crimes in the first place and by identifying more of the crimes that we do not prevent. In the long term, we want to see a decrease in the number of victims experiencing these crimes in each year.

3.0 NPCC Approach

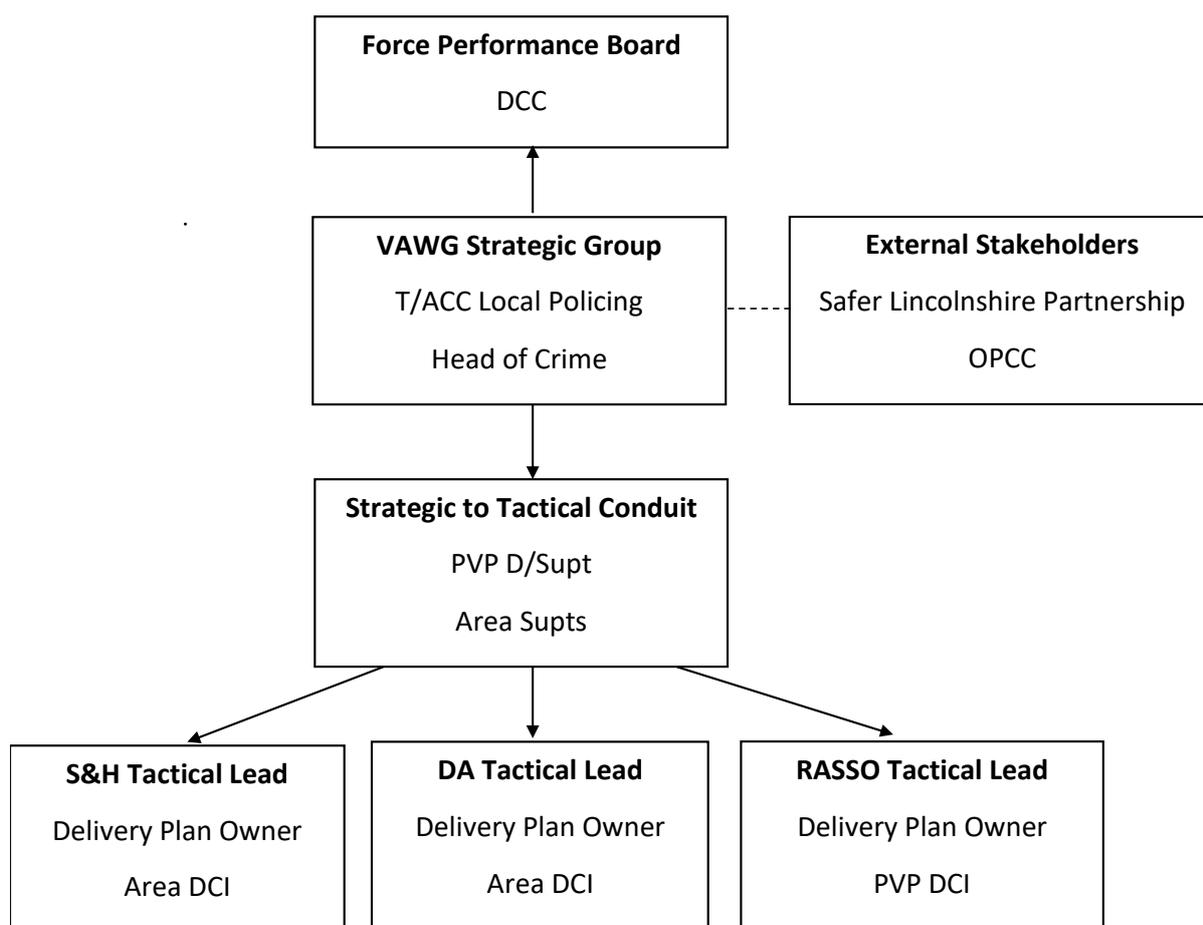
- 3.1 The National Police Chief's Council (NPCC) is the collective organisation of Chief Constables within England and Wales. It has recognised the importance of the VAWG agenda and has taken steps to coordinate efforts nationally.
- 3.2 DCC Maggie Blythe has been appointed as the national lead for VAWG. Each force has now nominated a VAWG lead, who feeds into the national NPCC VAWG workstream.
- 3.3 A new NPCC national strategy for VAWG has been produced. This is currently in draft and therefore cannot be shared publicly, but it aligns with the work of the government agenda.
- 3.4 The VAWG lead for Lincolnshire is T/ACC Chris Davison, who is the Assistant Chief Constable who leads on local policing and partnerships.

4.0 Lincolnshire Police Approach

- 4.1 While the national Police structures work towards a national definition of VAWG, Lincolnshire Police has chosen to adopt the following as their own definition:
- “Violence Against Women and Girls refers to a range of actions that disproportionately harm, or cause suffering and indignity to, women and girls. These include but are not limited to: physical, sexual and psychological violence in the family, general community or institutions. This includes domestic abuse (including Female Genital Mutilation and so-called “Honour-based” Abused), rape, sexual abuse, stalking and harassment (including online).”*
- 4.2 According to work undertaken by the Safer Lincolnshire Partnership, 70% of victims of domestic abuse are female, and 84% of victims of sexual offences are women. This represents a disproportionality of victims in these areas being female.
- 4.3 The same research shows that 93% of sexual offenders in Lincolnshire are male and 78% of domestic abuse offenders in Lincolnshire are male.
- 4.4 Accordingly, our work needs to concentrate on relentlessly pursuing male offenders of VAWG as well as safeguarding and preventing females being victims of violence.

4.5 In order to administer the VAWG work within Lincolnshire Police, the ACC Local Policing and Partnerships has established a VAWG Strategic delivery group. This will coordinate our efforts as a force and feed into the wider Partnership structures of the County which delivers against this agenda – principally the Safer Lincolnshire Partnership and work of the Office of Police & Crime Commissioner (OPCC)

4.6 The structure for this board is as below:



4.7 The strategic VAWG board will be constituted with members of the force, staff associations, representatives of the OPCC as well as groups representing Women and Girls from Lincolnshire.

4.8 Learning and reviews will be shared between Lincolnshire Police and the NPCC lead for VAWG.

4.9 Our priorities will be themed around: Relentlessly Pursuing Offenders, Creating Safer Spaces and Improving Trust and Confidence in Policing.

4.10 Relentlessly Pursuing Offenders work can be summarised as:

- ✓ Better use of protection order and breach identification
- ✓ Improved perpetrator programs
- ✓ Improved crime investigation
- ✓ Improved focus on perpetrator identification
- ✓ Training of staff
- ✓ Maximising funding opportunities
- ✓ Evidence based approach to what works
- ✓ Benchmarking current position

4.11 Creating Safer Spaces work can be summarised as:

- ✓ Obtaining communities view of the fear of violence
- ✓ Improving online prevention capabilities
- ✓ Shared partnership data
- ✓ Working with support and community groups to identify concerns
- ✓ Maximising funding opportunities
- ✓ Evidence based approach to what works
- ✓ Benchmarking current position
- ✓ Sexual harassment training of door staff

4.12 Improving Trust and Confidence in Policing can be summarised as:

- ✓ VAWG internal standards review
- ✓ Victim focused commissioned services
- ✓ Maximising positive media opportunities (media strategy)
- ✓ Introduction of VAWG victim survey
- ✓ Maximising funding opportunities
- ✓ Impact of alcohol on VAWG
- ✓ Identification of potential hidden groups

5.0 Current Work

5.1 There is a host of current work in the VAWG space being undertaken, including:

- ✓ **Joint Serious Sexual Offences Action Plan** – improving quality of prosecutions
- ✓ **‘Duty to Protect’ action plan** – 7 recommendations (1 already completed)
- ✓ **HMICFRS – Police Response to VAWG** – 5 recommendations being undertaken

- ✓ **Rape Scrutiny panel** – Quarterly review of rape cases by an independent panel – going live in November
- ✓ **Safer Streets** - £400,000 awarded for education, awareness campaigns, safety night charter, CCTV and mobile apps
- ✓ **Uplift in staff** – 6 additional caseworkers in Protecting Vulnerable People (PVP) unit and 2 additional staff to proactively manage Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (DVDS) & Domestic Violence Protection Notices (DVPN) – awaiting approval through our internal capabilities board
- ✓ **Review of outcomes on rape cases**
- ✓ **Realigning our portfolio responsibilities**
- ✓ **Specialist Sexual offences training for staff** – currently 24 places allocated, 66 planned
- ✓ **“DA matters” training** – planned roll out 2022
- ✓ **Joint CPS / Police training regarding thresholds** – case study exercise for all PVP/CID supervisors
- ✓ **Regional Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) review**
- ✓ **Recruitment of an officer at the University of Lincoln**
- ✓ **Uplift in Child Independent Sexual Violence Advocacy (CHISVA), Independent Sexual Violence Advisor (ISVA) and Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) staff**

6.0 Future Work

- 6.1 We have a host of future work either planned or in the scoping phases to support our drive against VAWG.
- 6.2 One of these pieces of work is in partnership with the OPCC and Public Health (Lincolnshire), utilising expert advice to produce a plan for a Violence Reduction Unit for Lincolnshire. This planning work is due to be completed end of April 2022.
- 6.3 A summary of other work is as follows:
- ✓ National benchmarking of best practice
 - ✓ Partnership research work with Lincoln University regarding sexual offences
 - ✓ Transforming how we respond to standard grade Domestic Abuse (use of technology and specialist team)
 - ✓ Uplift of staff to create a pro-active arm to the Offender Management Unit
 - ✓ Community surveying

- ✓ Improved perpetrator programs
- ✓ Consideration of Multi-Agency Tasking and Co-ordinating (MATAC) to target perpetrators
- ✓ Review of what our early prevention offerings look like