



Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls

2021-2024



**Kent
Police**

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Foreword

The police service has come under much criticism in the past few months, following the sentencing of a serving police officer with the Metropolitan Police Service, for the murder of a young woman called Sarah Everard. This brutal and senseless act was carried out by someone whom the public were supposed to trust with their lives. His actions shamed us all as members of the policing family, and in my opinion, this is now a watershed moment for policing.

In Kent, we instigated an immediate focus on how we can maintain public trust and confidence in our communities, following this tragic murder, and key to this has been listening and engaging with the public as to how we can move forward.

First and foremost, I want to assure you that tackling violence against women and girls is not a recent priority for Kent Police – it has been an area of focus for many years. In 2017, we changed our policing model, which placed vulnerability at the heart of our service. We have continued to evolve as we are always seeking to improve our approach to ensure we provide the very best service to the public.

This is reflected in our Mission, Vision, Values and Priorities that provide the framework for everything we do and is defined as:

- delivering a first-class service
- placing Victims and Witnesses at the Heart of all we do
- doing the Right Thing

It is with this in mind, that we have developed this overarching strategy which seeks to draw together the activity being undertaken across the force. We will introduce an action plan to track our progress, and to demonstrate our commitment to tackling violence against women and girls.

Our approach underpins the principles of the government's Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy (published in September 2021) and is consistent with the National Policing Strategy and Delivery Framework, developed by the National Police Chiefs' Council lead for Violence Against Women and Girls, DCC Maggie Blythe, which states:

"The term 'violence against women and girls' refers to acts of violence or abuse that we know disproportionately affect women and girls. Crimes and behaviour covered by this term include rape and other sexual offences, domestic abuse, stalking, 'honour'-based abuse (including female genital mutilation forced marriage, and 'honour' killings), as well as many others, including offences committed online. While we use the term 'violence against women and girls', throughout this Strategy, this refers to all victims of any of these offences."

Most importantly, our objectives have been shaped by the public, by collating feedback from community engagements that took place across Kent through October and November 2021.

Whilst we are proud of our achievements, we recognise we can always do better and that is reflected in our plans. Our commitment is and has always been, that we will continue to work with our communities, to listen and shape our service to meet their needs.

Chief Constable Alan Pughsley QPM

Introduction

The term 'violence against women and girls' covers a range of crimes, with the common theme that they disproportionately affect women and girls.

The most recent national statistics* show that one in five women are victims of sexual assault (or attempted assault) in their lifetime (5% of victims are men), over 27% of women had experienced domestic abuse since the age of 16 (14% of men), and 20% of women aged 16-74 had experienced stalking since the age of 16 (10% of men).

When we look at prevalence of the most serious and complex crimes the impact on women and girls increases.

The picture in Kent is similar, this is reflected in the table below – the data was collated between October 2020 and September 2021.

Kent statistics

| | Women | Men |
|---------------------------|-------|------|
| Domestic abuse | 73% | 27% |
| Stalking | 77% | 23% |
| Honour based abuse | 90% | 9%* |
| Child sexual exploitation | 78% | 22% |
| Rape | 89% | 11% |
| Serious sexual offences | 79% | 20%* |

* where figures don't total 100% sex has not been specified

“This strategy defines Kent Police’s approach to tackling crime and behaviour that disproportionately affects women and girls”

Chief Constable Alan Pughsley QPM

Whilst this strategy focusses on violence against women and girls, we acknowledge that many of the crime types cross all social and demographic boundaries, and the impact is often as harmful, and we do not seek to diminish the impact by not referencing the different characteristics.

Therefore, whilst this strategy seeks to address the prevalence of crime against women and girls the benefit of our approach will be felt by all.

Our objectives

We seek to improve our service by:

- holding offenders to account for their actions ensuring that we effectively utilise the full range of preventative and protective measures in addition to seeking criminal justice outcomes
- working with partners to create safe spaces for women and girls to live, work and socialise, improving feelings of safety
- ensuring women and girls receive a quality service in line with our Mission Vision Values and Priorities by embedding the Victim Code and Witness Charter
- raising standards of professional behaviour, addressing poor conduct of officers and staff and challenging attitudes that have no place in policing – conduct issues are managed by our Professional Standards Department, detailed in our Counter Corruption Strategy
- ensuring the effectiveness of our response by developing an evidence base on 'what works' and working in partnership to tackle the underlying causes that drive offences against women and girls
- supporting and delivering education programmes that address behaviours that feed negative attitudes. We will raise awareness of the experiences of women and girls and create an early intervention programme when young people are identified as presenting a risk
- raising awareness throughout the organisation to ensure our attitudes and behaviours are in line with organisational expectations to enhance our culture and ensure that issues that affect women and girls are understood by all
- deliver an effective communication strategy that encourages and maintains positive engagement internally and externally; keeping people informed of progress. We will achieve this by focusing on **five key areas**:



Holding Offenders to Account

Criminal Justice, Offender Management, Training and Development



Support Victims

Service Provision, Practice Review, Engagement and Safeguarding



Keeping you Safe

Education, Early Intervention, Problem Solving and Crime Prevention



Our Culture

Educating, Encouraging, Empowering



Strengthening the System

Governance, Scrutiny, Technology and Partnerships

Holding offenders to account



1 We will work with partners to develop an effective offender management framework building on existing processes for community and prison-based offenders that is easy to access and clear for all agencies to use.

2 We will strengthen our Detective workforce at every rank to work towards our perfect profile, ensuring we have the right staff with the right skills relentlessly pursuing those that target women and girls.

3 We will work with commissioned services to ensure that appropriate offenders are educated and given the opportunity to amend their offending behaviour and use their experience to inform our practice to improve outcomes for victims.

4 We will work with a range of stakeholders to educate our investigative staff to improve risk identification and management, ensuring they maximise the latest investigative techniques, improve our case management and ensure the full range of protective measures are utilised to manage offender's behaviour to reduce the risk of further harm.

5 We will review our policies and procedures to ensure they are clear and fit for purpose, driving the right activity to improve our response to risk identification and management. This will include cyber enabled offences committed by offenders who seek to exploit women and girls online.

6 We will enhance our response by developing a new approach to investigating domestic abuse to provide a proactive capability that tackles the most chronic and persistent offenders through an Achilles heel approach.

Supporting victims



1 We will work with the public, service providers and our partners to better understand the issues faced by women and girls, in different communities to provide a tailored response to victims and witnesses that empowers them and supports their individual needs. Regardless of whether they choose the Criminal Justice route or not.

2 We will work with victims and victim support services to understand issues affecting women and girls to improve our practice and invite scrutiny of our service through Independent Advisory Groups and Community Forums to ensure we improve access to our services and hear voices from communities who may not have a voice to enhance our response.

3 We will raise awareness internally and externally regarding the available protective measures and multi-agency arrangements that are in place to safeguard victims to build on the good practice developed around MARAC, MASIP and MATAAC* and to maximise the safeguarding opportunities these present.

4 We will develop our practice to ensure that there is a multi-agency focus on issues that affect women and girls. We will develop a shared understanding and cross partnership arrangements to reduce threat, risk, and harm. We will promote what is available through a single portal to ensure support is accessible to all.

5 We will continue to develop our investigative response by capturing the victims experience through satisfaction surveys and case reviews to ensure that those with responsibility for investigating cases, are skilled in trauma informed practice, thereby, securing the best evidence from victims and witnesses to increase the chance of successful outcomes.

6 We will continue to develop new and innovative ways of working to identify threats and address hidden harm in partnership with national and local stakeholders. This will include tackling cyber enabled crime to reduce the harm caused to victims targeted online.

*Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Committee, Multi-Agency Stalking Intervention Programme, Multi-Agency Tasking and Co-ordination Committee

Keeping you safe



1 Partnerships Command Team will work with internal and external stakeholders to develop a comprehensive understanding of our communities to identify harm and ensure that preventative measures are tailored to support different community's needs. With a particular focus on early intervention to stop the escalation of risk.

2 Our Crime Prevention and Problem-Solving Taskforce will be focussed on addressing persistent crime and anti-social behaviour that affects quality of life, by utilising the latest methods in line with the College of Policing 'What Works' programme. To make positive long-term improvements to strengthen our communities.

3 We will increase visibility in our community by ensuring we are in the right places at the right times to tackle violence against women and girls and work with partners to create safer spaces, with a particular focus on the night-time economy.

4 Our Community Safety Units (CSU) will work with local authorities to tackle issues raised by the public. Ranging from anti-social behaviour to serious crime in public spaces. The CSU work with a wide range of stakeholders to maximise the use of available powers to prioritise community safety and create safer spaces.

5 Our Schools Officers and Youth Engagement PCSOs will work closely with education providers and young people to; give young women and children a voice, listen to their concerns and ideas, challenge unwanted behaviours. We will intervene early to prevent young people choosing a life of crime. We will act on feedback to increase safety and lessen the fear of violence.

6 We will engage our communities in different ways including through '*My Community Voice*' a two-way engagement platform that will transform how we reach and engage different communities. This will improve access to our service and enable us to respond to our communities' concerns.



1 We will review our Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and training delivery in line with national requirements to ensure that violence against women and girls and the culture that feeds inequality is addressed at every opportunity, at every rank and grade in the organisation.

2 We will create the right environment for cultural issues to be raised and addressed, ensuring that the individuals views are considered when making decisions on how to deliver services and tackle prejudice.

3 We will review and develop training products for all staff at all ranks and grades within the organisation to embed lessons learned from enquiries, grievances, complaints, reviews, and misconduct investigations & hearings to inform practice. We will raise awareness and enable leaders to confidently lead the conversation within their teams.

4 We will work with support groups and associations to promote unity of message and ensure they are confident in their role and have mechanisms in place to assess and address issues raised with them in line with cultural expectations.

5 We will survey our communities to seek and understand different views. We will work with a range of stakeholders to test our approach and measure our progress. We will share lessons and continue to enhance our culture and service.

6 We will continue to build confidence and empower our staff through promotion of initiatives such as White Ribbon and 'He for She' to raise awareness of issues that affect women and girls and empower our staff to identify and challenge behaviours that do not promote equality and inclusion.

Strengthening the system



1 We will strengthen our approach by introducing a force lead for violence against women and girls and develop a new performance framework to ensure we identify and respond to risk and to provide greater accountability in relation to violence against women and girls.

2 We will invest in our internal culture by raising awareness of issues that affect trust and confidence. Ensuring that officers and staff understand what is expected of them, so they become skilled in identifying and appropriately responding to issues that affect women and girls.

3 We will review our policing response to ensure we are structured to effectively respond to the issues highlighted within this strategy, thereby strengthening our response.

4 We will work with the public, partners and stakeholders to improve our practice by inviting scrutiny, inspections and seeking feedback to enhance our collective service. Being open and transparent about what worked well and areas for improvement.

5 We will work with industry leads to maximise the use of technology to support victims, improve our service and ensure that victims and witnesses receive a prompt and effective response, in line with national requirements set by the government, HMICFRS and College of Policing.

6 We will work with the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner following the enquiry into violence against women and Girls, to capture the learning and work with stakeholders to build safer, stronger communities as a result.