

NOTES - SCRUTINY MEETING (STALKING) - 3 DECEMBER 2024

Question	Brief Summary of Evidence	Decision of PCC
<p>1. In terms of Stalking Protection Orders per 1000 stalking offences, how is the Force performing? Does the Force ensure that an SPO is considered for every stalking offence? If not, why not?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In terms of Stalking Protection Orders (SPOs) per 1000 stalking crimes, for the 12 months ending March 2024, Cleveland's rates had improved and although they remained lower than the England and Wales average, they were higher than the Most Similar Group (MSG). • The Force considers SPOs for every stalking offence, however, other protective orders or measures may be deemed more appropriate to help protect from further stalking or harassment. • There is a need for SPOs to be proportionate, appropriate and necessary. • Consideration of an SPO is linked to the Force's 'whole system approach'. • Guidance on completing SPOs is available on the Force intranet. • The Force has a Domestic Abuse Safeguarding Team (DAST), team members are subject matter experts and offer specialist support to police officers on applying for protection orders. • The barriers encountered by the Force when progressing SPOs include knowledge (investigation and legislation), culture (awareness and understanding) and demand (resource intensive). • The process of applying for an SPO is similar to that of a criminal trial, in that it involves collating evidence across incidents and completing impact assessments. The application process also requires involvement from the Force's Legal Team. • To increase the use of SPOs, the Force has effective plans, activities, training approaches and governance structures in place. • The Force has a Stalking Action Plan, which has multiple workstreams to support and progress usage of SPOs. • Enabling activity to improve rates is driven by the Force Lead, who has conducted a thorough review of SPOs, Sexual Risk Orders (SROs) and other civil orders. • Training has been provided to officers and supervisors in relation to the completion of SPOs. • Previously, there had been challenges with the capacity to support SPO applications in a timely way. However, the Legal Team is able to provide more proactive support. • In early 2025, the Force will be taking part in a pilot of Domestic Abuse Protective Orders (DAPOs) and Domestic Abuse Protection Notices (DAPNs). 	<p style="text-align: center;">Assured</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Given that, in Cleveland, a high percentage of stalking cases are DA-related, DAPOs and DAPNs will offer a quick and effective way for police to intervene in situations where there is a risk of harm. They also help to prevent further incidents, even when there is not enough evidence for a criminal charge. It is envisaged that the pilot will offer more flexibility, reduce impact and provide a proactive and reactive offer of offender management. 	
<p>2. How can the PCC be assured that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the Force understands the scale and type of stalking behaviour within the Cleveland area? non-DA related stalking offences are given sufficient strategic consideration? each OIC will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> take robust action and a consistent approach; correctly categorise cases; and ensure all connected incidents are linked to recognise the wider pattern of behaviour? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In terms of stalking and harassment per 1000 population, in the 12 months prior to June 2024, Cleveland had the highest rate across England and Wales. The Force has appropriate mechanisms in place to fully understand the scale and types of crime in the Cleveland area. The Force has a programme of regular audits and review activity, and this enables high levels of National Crime Recording Standard (NCRS) compliance for violent crime and domestic-related crime. In terms of the knowledge and understanding, the Force has a Strategic Threat and Risk Assessment and Strategic Problem Profiles. The Force has a robust Strategic Threat and Risk Assessment (STRA), VAWG will be a key feature of this assessment. Strategic Problem Profiles have been developed by the Force using police data, intelligence and other sources of information. In terms of detailed Strategic Problem Profiles, the Force has developed profiles for Stalking and Harassment (2021) and Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) (2022). In addition, the Force is in the process of developing profiles for Rape and Serious Sexual Offences (2024 - work in progress) and Child Sexual Exploitation and Child Sexual Abuse (scheduled for early 2025). The annual Force Management Statement (FMS) provides an in-depth understanding of current and future demand from stalking and harassment offences. The most recent FMS predicts an increase in DA-related stalking and a decrease in non-DA related stalking. From data analysis, it is evident that there is a high proportion of stalking crimes where the victim declined to prosecute and supported no further action (Outcome 16). In terms of Outcome 16, the Force is improving reporting systems so that police officers will be required to identify a reason for applying Outcome 16. This will be made mandatory and will enable the Force to determine patterns, trends and insights. Teesside University has been commissioned to help the Force develop a more detailed understanding of motive and the profiling of offenders. 	

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Force has tiered governance arrangements to enhance accountability.• In terms of strategic considerations, the Force has a Vulnerability Tactical Performance Group.• One of the key features of the Vulnerability Tactical Performance Group is stalking and the information considered and discussed at these meetings is fed into the Safeguarding Governance Group and then the Force IMPACT Board.• In terms of activity, there is a Force-wide Vulnerability Action Plan and a Stalking Action Plan, which ensure that both Domestic Abuse (DA) related stalking offences and non-DA stalking offences receive sufficient strategic consideration.• Governance and accountability arrangements demonstrate that the Force is committed to improving how it supports the victims and tackles the perpetrators of stalking.• The Force has robust performance management processes in place, which involve daily management of issues, regular and consistent supervisory review and targeted audit activity. These activities aim to ensure stalking crimes are correctly identified, recorded and appropriately investigated.• The Force has formal screening and checking processes in place for DA-related stalking. For non-DA related stalking, this is completed by Local Policing through daily management meetings, which involve partners.• The Force uses crime closing codes that allow the identification of crimes where stalking and harassment is involved but it does not form the principal (most serious graded) crime.• A number of reviews take place to check the correct codes have been entered to ensure that stalking and harassment has been recognised and recorded. Officers are provided with training and feedback if codes have not been applied correctly.• To improve its crime investigations, the Force supports and develops its investigators by providing training and development opportunities, tools and technology and specialist support.• Management of stalking offences in terms of instructions and improvements are being driven through 'Achieving Investigative Excellence', which is the Force's response to ensure it continually improves its standard and quality of crime investigations. The 8-point plan increases oversight and scrutiny of crime investigations.• Suzy Lamplugh Advocates are embedded in the Force and undertake an advisory, support and co-ordination role across all commands and provide victim support. In | |
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	<p>addition, other support agencies within the domestic abuse arena provide the Force with stalking specialists.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Force is planning to change its existing Victim Survey to gain additional insight and more informative feedback. • The Force is undertaking work to improve the recording and quality of Victim Needs Assessments for stalking and harassment crimes. A number of Force actions have been created to improve performance in this area. • The Force has a rigorous risk assessment process, to target highest harm offenders. 	
<p>3. Given that the OPCC has invested £61,528.57 to provide the Force with stalking training, how many officers have completed this training and how has the training assisted in helping the police identify stalking more effectively?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Force has benefitted from the Suzy Lamplugh Trust delivering face-to-face training and an e-learning modular package to over 1,000 officers and staff. • In terms of training and development: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stalking Awareness Workshops are delivered face-to-face and via Teams. • Lifeline Stalking Training is delivered via an e-learning modular package. • Response Training Days involve bespoke input, including guidance on the completion of SPOs. • The Sergeant Development Course focuses on how to recognise the difference between stalking and harassment and the SPO application process. • Domestic Abuse (DA) Matters Training is mandatory training for all officers and staff and includes the DA stalking element. • The training available upskills first responders and investigators on how to effectively and robustly respond to reports of stalking. Training and development opportunities have also increased knowledge, experience and capacity to apply for SPOs. 	
<p>4. How will the Force respond to the recommendations of the Super Complaint and monitor progress to ensure timely implementation?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Suzy Lamplugh Trust, on behalf of the National Stalking Consortium, raised serious concerns about the police response to stalking in its super-complaint. A comprehensive joint investigation was undertaken, to explore these issues, by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS), the College of Policing and the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC). The investigation found problems persist with the police response to stalking. A series of recommendations were proposed and published in September 2024 to address these findings. • The Force has published an action plan, outlining the work it will undertake to respond to each of the recommendations. A copy of the action plan, can be accessed here: response-to-stalking-super-complaint.pdf • The Force's governance arrangements will monitor the implementation of the recommendations, both tactically and strategically. 	

Action

1	That the topic of Stalking be re-visited at a future Scrutiny Meeting, in a year's time, to ensure continuous oversight of the Force's improvement work.
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