



## **New places of safety for mentally ill**

Increasing the number of health based places of safety is an issue which Sue Mountstevens has campaigned on since taking office.

It also supports her aspiration that no individual should be detained in police custody under the mental health act. Last week, this campaign saw its first major success with the opening of a new four-bed mental health unit based at Southmead Hospital in Bristol.

The unit replaces an existing single bed space covering the whole Avon area, and will be available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and will be supported by dedicated mental health staff.

Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) from across the Avon area have come together to commission the new unit, providing much needed services in appropriate health based settings for some of the most vulnerable members of our local communities.

## **Improving arrest referral services for addicts**

**From April Avon and Somerset will have the first single cross border arrest referral service in the country for drug and alcohol addicts.**

The aim of having a single service is to have more drug and alcohol related offenders in treatment and to reduce re-offending, breaking the cycle of addiction and crime.

Previously the service was commissioned by five different teams and resulted in very different service levels.

The new single drug and alcohol arrest referral service commissioned by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner will save £300,000 and will result in more offenders being referred into treatment and less reoffending.

## **Funding community safety**

**The Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) has increased the level of funding for community safety projects to £2.5 million, despite there no longer being a separate community safety grant allocation.**

Due to savings from the centrally commissioned services such as drug and alcohol arrest referrals an increased amount of funding will be provided to community safety partnerships.

With almost double the amount of funding available to each local authority area the PCC is reviewing some exciting projects to tackle crime and disorder. Funding will commence in April.



# Police and Crime Plans

This month the PCC will be consulting on the annual refresh of the Police and Crime Plan.

This year the PCC has also developed nine local police and crime plans, one for each district and unitary local authority area. Have your say at - [www.consultation.avonandsomerset.police.uk](http://www.consultation.avonandsomerset.police.uk)



## Police finances

The Police and Crime Panel has agreed with the PCC proposal for a rise in the policing part of the council tax of **£3.34 (1.99%) a year for the average (band D) household in Avon & Somerset.**

This rise was supported by nearly 75% of the 3186 views obtained either face-to-face, on-line and over the telephone.

In order to balance the budget for 2014/15 the PCC has agreed £12 million savings to be delivered from a new police operating model, from moving into new custody facilities and making further departmental cuts.

This takes the total savings since the start of the current comprehensive spending review in 2010 to £46 million by March 2015.

## Ambitious plans

The PCC is working with the Constabulary, Local Criminal Justice Board and wider partners to deliver an ambitious programme to transform services for victims.

The new approach is based on the shared principle that all organisations take ownership of victim care to improve the experience of victims.

The programme sees the creation of a team bringing together victim-focused roles across the Constabulary, partner agencies and support services so that victims experience seamless, high quality support that follows the victim through their journey.

Central to the new approach is the development of a common assessment to enable robust identification of need and referral to appropriate practical and emotional support. The creation of an online directory of services and commissioning of support services will ensure that victims have access to support regardless of whether they have reported to the police.

The PCC has submitted a bid to the Ministry of Justice to adopt this new approach from October 2014.

Further information can be found at:

<http://www.avonandsomerset-pcc.gov.uk/Partnerships/Victim-Commissioning.aspx>

## Custody services remain 'in-house'

Custody services will continue to be run by staff of Avon and Somerset Police following an extensive review.

Sue Mountstevens examined two detailed business cases including an in-house model run by police staff and an option to outsource parts of police custody to a private company.

This summer three new custody centres will open in Bridgwater, Patchway and Keynsham housing more cells in centralised locations.

This gave the Constabulary the unique opportunity to reshape its custody services. The business cases showed that if a private company was to run custody services within Avon and Somerset it would be £599,000 more expensive over four-years, than remaining with a model run by police staff.

The 'in-house' solution run by Avon and Somerset Police improves the current custody provision, includes detainee transport services and still delivers cashable savings over the current model in the existing facilities.



## Success in the Home Office Innovation Bid

### New council and police App

Avon and Somerset Police and North Somerset Council have been awarded a Home Office Innovation Fund for a new Citizen Portal.

The fund will enable an App, designed for mobile and tablet devices, to be created. This will allow residents in North Somerset to access local authority and police services in one place, without the need to visit each agency's online services separately.

The ambition is that all services available through the police website will also be accessible through the App, including online reporting and 'track my crime'. Council services such as reporting fly tipping, noise complaints and missed recycling and waste collections can also be accessed through the App.

The collaboration builds on the successful partnership between the two authorities which has brought together the customer services in Weston-super-Mare and Clevedon to provide a central hub for council and police services. This partnership has been upheld as national best practice.

The App is likely to launch at the end of 2014. This project will be piloted in North Somerset with the ambition that this will roll out across the force area.

## Developing restorative Justice

The PCC is a strong advocate of restorative approaches this forms an important part of her ambitious plans for transforming victims care.

Proposals include the development of Restorative Justice 'hubs' giving victims access to restorative justice at every stage of their journey.

The PCC is consulting partners on proposals, including funding for projects ranging from Neighbourhood Justice Panels to pre-sentence and post-conviction restorative justice conferencing to build capacity across the force area and inform development of future proposals.

## Innovation Fund regional success

As a region Police and Crime Commissioners in the South West received Home Office Innovation Funds totalling around £2m for projects.





## Regional forensic services collaboration

**This is the first five-force forensic collaboration in England and Wales.**

The aim is to maximise the use of mobile data technology to produce a streamlined state-of-the-art forensics service at a lower cost. It is estimated that phase one of the project will save the five partners £1.9m. The forecast for savings by 2018-19 is that they could exceed £6m.

The Home Office has agreed to contribute £880,000 towards the cost of managing the project.

Phase one will see fingerprint identification, submissions and a drugs analysis unit at Avon and Somerset, fingerprint identification, submissions and chemical enhancement laboratories at Devon and Cornwall and a chemical enhancement laboratory in Gloucestershire.



## Command and control software for tri-force specialist operations

Three of the constabularies - Wiltshire, Avon and Somerset, and Gloucestershire - will invest in a common software platform, called STORM, which will rationalise working practices, allowing the new merged firearms, dogs and policing units to be seamlessly deployed across all three areas. STORM will also provide the teams with much greater resilience.

The Home Office has approved £300,000 in 2013/14 and £150,000 in 2014/15.

## Transforming the use and storage of digital imaging evidence

This four-force bid will radically transform the way in which digital imagery is used by police, local authority and criminal justice partners in Wiltshire, Dorset, Devon and Cornwall and Avon and Somerset.

The intention is to enhance public confidence and reduce crime, anti-social behaviour and disorder.

The project is also designed to improve service to victims, increase time spent on patrol by reducing bureaucracy, and speed up the criminal justice process.

Digital evidence is a vital asset in tackling 21st Century crime. The project will encompass the recording of digital images (by mobile phone, video and stills cameras and CCTV) through to storage, management, sharing, retrieval and disposal of images.

The Home Office has awarded £994,000 in the current year, totalling around £2m for projects.



/AANDSPCC



@AANDSPCC