

AVON & SOMERSET POLICE & CRIME PLAN 2024-2029

SAFE AND SECURE COMMUNITIES



**AVON &
SOMERSET**
POLICE & CRIME
COMMISSIONER



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Avon and Somerset Police and Crime Commissioner



As your Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) for Avon and Somerset I know I have four years to make a difference on your behalf.

Avon and Somerset is a richly varied area from vibrant, densely populated and busy cities to beautiful scenic countryside and market towns in Somerset.

We have a growing and diverse population, so it is an exciting place to live and work and, of course, I must acknowledge a challenging area to police.

That is why I want the police service to focus on doing things that will make a positive difference to the issues that impact you.

I want to ensure that Avon and Somerset Police deliver an efficient and effective service to all our residents. I will also work with partners across local authorities, community safety partnerships, prosecution services, courts, prisons and probation to name a few, to prevent crime and address the many challenges in the criminal justice system.

The priorities I have outlined in my Plan reflect the priorities you have raised with me throughout my time campaigning and since being elected to office in May 2024.

You told me your policing priorities are:

- **Strengthening neighbourhood policing** (tackling anti-social behaviour)
- **Reducing Violent Crime** (male violence against women and girls and serious youth violence)
- **Prevention**
- **Supporting victims**
- **Improving policing standards**

Writing a Police and Crime Plan is a legal duty, which must be created in consultation with the Chief Constable of Avon and Somerset Police (ASP), our partner agencies and the public.

However, for me this is more than a legal document, it is a means to deliver change.

We all know that nationally the police service in England and Wales is facing huge challenges, particularly when it comes to resources. The thin blue line is stretched, officers are fatigued and funding has to go further. That is no different here, in Avon and Somerset.

I publicly highlighted, during the consultation for this Plan, how Avon and Somerset is under-funded for its population of around 1.8 million people, when compared to the national average.

Additional challenge is presented when we look at the national landscape with regard to confidence and legitimacy in policing.

I truly believe that trust and confidence are the backbone of our model of policing by consent. Good policing requires the support of all of our communities and an effective and fair criminal justice system requires procedural justice to be at its beating heart.

To build and keep true trust and confidence requires an ongoing and consistent dialogue with people from all of our communities sitting alongside the delivery a fair and effective police service as a way to gain trust, approval and respect.



All the reasons I outline above, is why I believe focus is the key to meaningful change.

Focus on what we can do here locally in Avon and Somerset to see a real difference.

Focus on how we can work with regional leaders and national government to deliver for our area.

Focus on the priorities you have already identified and continue to listen to, and talk with, our communities about how the police and partners can deliver the aims and priorities of this Plan.

Consultation is a critical part of that consistent dialogue I mentioned. As part of the process of shaping this plan more than 1,140 people shared their ideas for how the priorities can be delivered. My promise to you is you will see a plan of action that I will continue to discuss, revisit and review with you throughout my time in office.

The consultation was a huge ask of the public and I want to personally thank all of you that took the time to take part. As well as all the responses through our online survey I ensured my team reached out to our communities in lots of ways, through a postal survey, public forums across the area and numerous focus groups to hear the quiet and under-represented voices so often missing from policing.

This Plan is not about me making unrealistic promises. We all know that it isn't possible for me or the police to solve all the problems we face as a society in the coming three and a half years.

I do promise that this Plan is about improving the way we work together, the collective impact we can have, about setting the conditions for success and laying the foundations for safer and more resilient communities now and for future generations to come.

Delivery of my plan will require all the relevant partners, not just the police, to come together and work better together to focus on prevention, intervention, diversion, engagement, education and opportunity to have a bigger impact – improving our services and outcomes for all our communities.

As part of that journey, it is imperative for me that I understand what is within my gift to change during my time in office, so that I can ensure I use all of my scrutiny, commissioning and convening powers to bring the right partners around the table with the collective courage to effect the change we need.

For me, being in politics is about making a difference and that is what I will strive to do for you during my time in office.

Clare Moody

**Avon and Somerset Police
and Crime Commissioner**

Chief Constable of Avon and Somerset Constabulary



It is an honour to introduce the Avon and Somerset Police and Crime Plan for 2024–2029.

This document represents not only our collective ambition to create safer and more secure communities, but also the commitment of Avon and Somerset Constabulary to uphold the trust placed in us by the public. We are dedicated to delivering a policing service that is transparent, effective, and inspires the confidence of our diverse communities.

This plan comes at a time of both significant opportunity and challenge for policing. We are working in an era where public expectations have evolved, and the complexity of the demands we face – ranging from serious violence to policing online hate speech and countering misinformation – continues to grow. At the same time, our commitment to neighbourhood policing and engaging directly with the communities we serve remains as critical as ever. We know that visible, proactive policing not only helps prevent crime but also builds trust in the communities we protect.

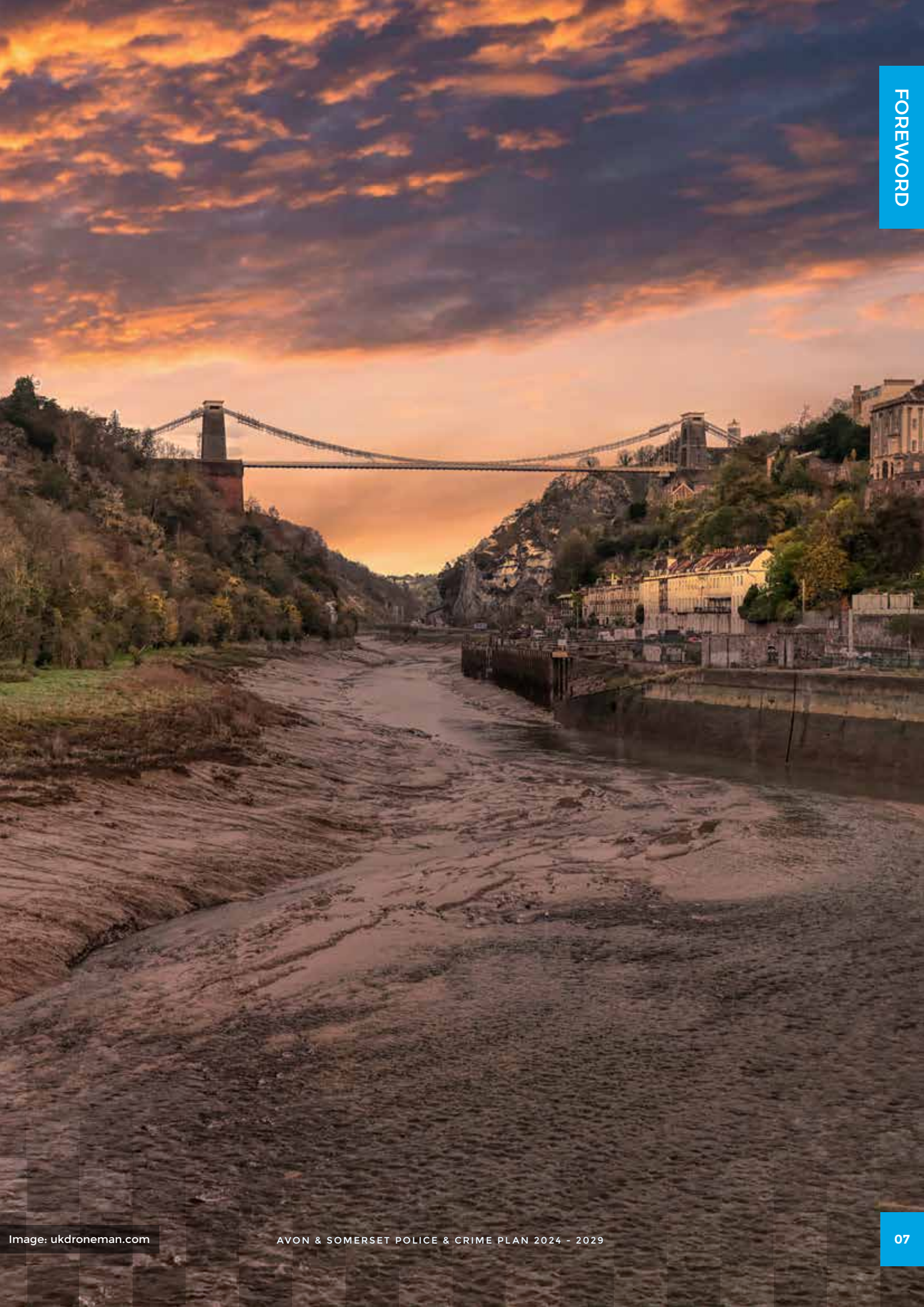
The five strategic priorities in this plan set a clear direction for our force. From reducing violent crime, particularly male violence against women and girls, to preventing crime by working in partnership with other agencies, each priority directs our unwavering focus on making our communities safer. Equally, we are committed to supporting victims, ensuring they receive the right services when they need them, and to improving the overall standards of policing to deliver a fair and effective service to all.

As we strive to improve our service, I recognise the work we must continue to do to ensure our officers and staff are equipped to meet the highest standards of professional conduct. We have acknowledged the institutional challenges, including racism and misogyny, that have eroded trust within parts of our community. Confronting these issues head-on is essential if we are to build a police service that is truly representative of, and trusted by, the people we serve.

I am immensely proud of the dedication and professionalism of our officers and staff, who show resilience and courage in the face of increasingly complex challenges. This plan will guide us in delivering a policing service that truly reflects our values of Courage, Caring, Inclusive and Learning and helps us in our quest to deliver Outstanding Policing for Everyone.

I call on our communities to work with us, as we cannot achieve these ambitious goals alone. By fostering strong relationships with local partners, engaging openly with the public, and committing ourselves to continuous improvement, we can realise our shared vision of a safer Avon and Somerset for all.

Sarah Crew
Chief Constable of Avon
and Somerset Constabulary





PRIORITY 1

Strengthen neighbourhood policing to provide a visible police presence, engage with communities, and tackle ASB

Neighbourhood policing is essential to provide a visible police presence, to engage with communities and to work with individuals and organisations to help prevent crime and anti-social behaviour (ASB).

The importance of neighbourhood policing is recognised nationally and it is why the government has a policy to recruit 13,000 more neighbourhood police officers, police community support officers (PCSOs) and special constables across the country.

The public tell me, in so many conversations, how important visible policing is to them. My Police and Crime Survey of local residents and academic research shows that people have greater confidence in the police when they have seen them more recently. Visible policing also plays an important part in making people feel safe.

Being visible is not enough though. It is important that Neighbourhood Police Teams get to know the communities in which they police. They need to talk to and listen to the people they serve; this communication is vital for confidence, giving assurance about the actions that the police are taking. These interactions need to happen on an ongoing basis and not just at times of crisis, when the police are responding to crimes. This proactive engagement builds trust in the police and allows neighbourhood policing to identify problems earlier and find solutions that work; preventing as well as responding to crimes.



The community engagement carried out by Neighbourhood Police Teams should be supported by other parts of Avon and Somerset Police to engage through traditional media, social media and events. When Neighbourhood Police Teams do this well, they help bring different people together, tackling hate crime, extremism and helping to support community cohesion.

Anti-social behaviour (ASB)

Anti-social behaviour causes distress to too many residents across our area. ASB is defined as behaviour that causes, or is likely to cause, harassment, alarm or distress to any person; or behaviour capable of causing nuisance or annoyance. ASB may also include criminal offences such as criminal damage and fly-tipping. There are many incidents where a crime has been committed in the context of wider ASB.

There are almost 72,000 ASB incidents recorded each year by Avon and Somerset Police. ASB can have a devastating impact on the lives of individuals and whole communities. It can make life difficult or scary on a daily basis. ASB should not be

seen or treated in isolation. It is important to recognise the links between ASB and crime more widely.

By being visible, engaging with people and adopting a problem-solving approach, Neighbourhood Police Teams are ideally positioned to be able to respond to and prevent ASB by tackling the perpetrators.



72,000
ASB INCIDENTS
recorded each year by
Avon and Somerset Police



The objectives of this plan are to **reduce crime and harm**, have **more confident communities** and **safer places** and **effective policing and partnerships**. Here is how we will achieve this:



Greater satisfaction with the service provided by the police.



More visible policing patrols.



More time for proactive policing.



Increased engagement with and from communities, both individuals and the business community.



Increased engagement with and from communities, especially those people who are disenfranchised.



Improved communication so people know who their local policing team are and understand what the police are doing to keep them safe.



Increased reporting of crimes to the police and increased 'intelligence' received from communities.



Fewer incidents of ASB.



Better understanding and identification of ASB.



Police working with statutory partners locally, to agree how they will prevent and respond to ASB together.



Victims of ASB receiving a better service from the police and partners.



PRIORITY 2

Reduce violent crime, with a specific focus on (a) male violence against women and girls and (b) serious youth violence

There were nearly 43,000 recorded violent offences in Avon and Somerset, in the year ending September 2024, over a quarter of all recorded crime. In this year it included 23 homicides. Violent crime can have a profound, long lasting and devastating impact on the victims, their families and local communities.

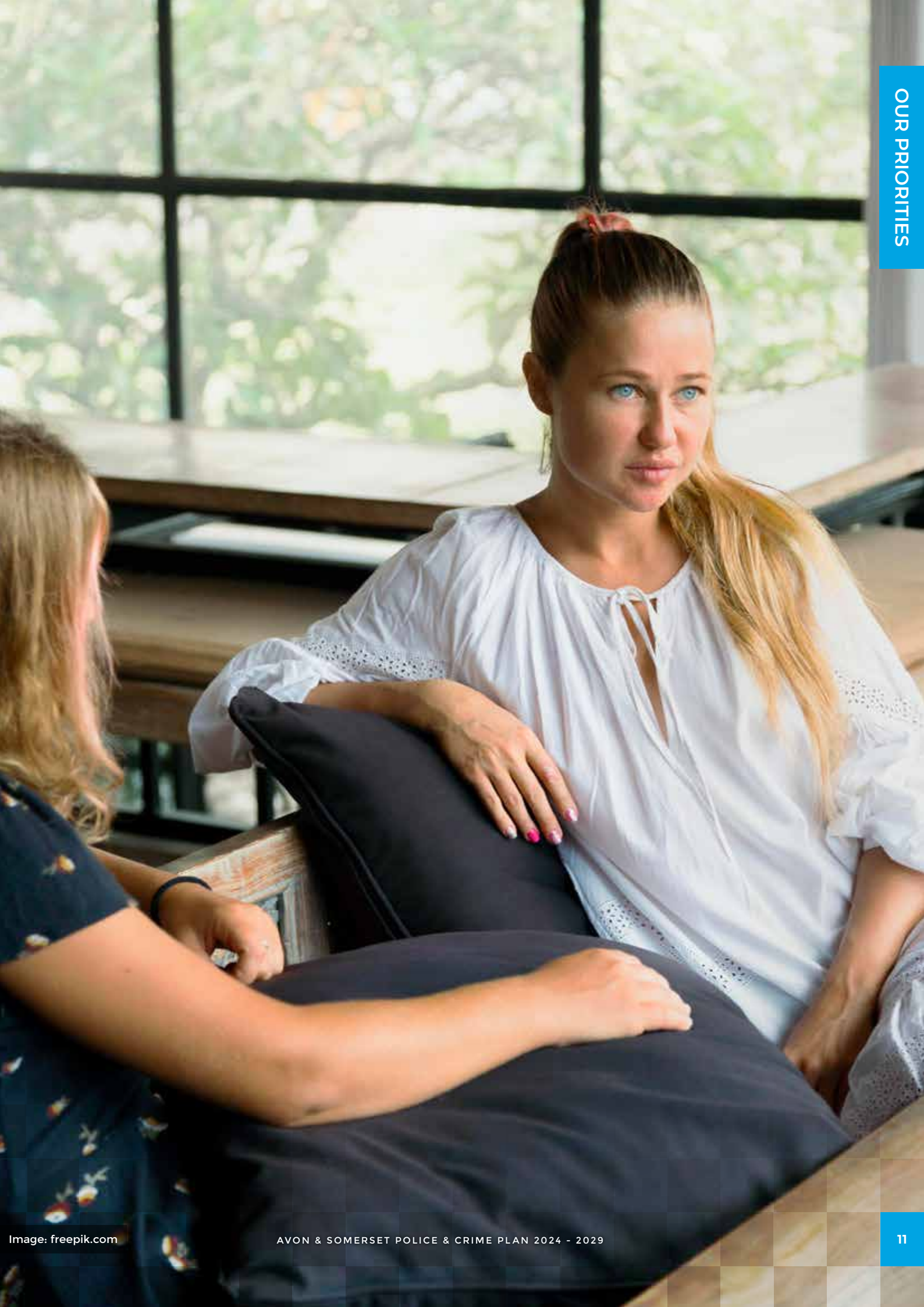
These offences need to be addressed in general but I am focusing on two areas here which can overlap, and can also be quite different in the context in which they happen.

Male violence against women and girls refers to acts of violence or abuse that disproportionately affect women and girls. This includes rape and other sexual offences, domestic abuse, stalking, 'honour'-based abuse (including female genital mutilation, forced marriage, and 'honour' killings), revenge porn and upskirting, as well as offences of this nature committed online¹. This type of violence can often be hidden and happening in private spaces, and in all sections of society.

Focussing on male violence against women and girls does not in any way detract from the fact that people of any sex or gender can be an offender or a victim, nor does it minimise anybody's experience as a victim; everybody should receive the same quality of service. However, these crimes do not happen in isolation and are part of the gender inequality and misogyny

that still exists in our society, starting from childhood and in schools. Given that the police are the public and the public are the police, this misogyny also exists within policing. Offences are perpetrated by and against people who work in policing. There is also systemic misogyny, which is less visible, that exists within the police culture that can undermine the service provided.

Domestic abuse makes up a significant proportion of male violence against women and girls. This is where a person is abusive to somebody they are, or have been, in an intimate personal relationship with; or their relatives. This includes physical or sexual violence; threatening, controlling or coercive behaviour; economic abuse; psychological and emotional abuse. Moreover, the impact of domestic abuse upon children is recognised in the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 which classes any child witnessing domestic abuse, as a victim.

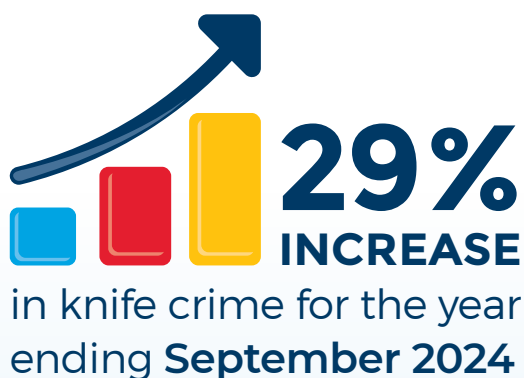




In Avon and Somerset, there were 26,000 domestic abuse crimes recorded in the year to September 2024: about 16% of all recorded crime. In the same year there were nearly 7,200 recorded sexual offences, of which nearly 3,200 were rapes. This only shows a small part of the problem. It is estimated that only about one in five victims of domestic abuse report it to the police, and that one in five women are victims of sexual assault (or attempted assault) in their lifetime.

Serious youth violence, particularly involving knife crime, has become an increasingly concerning issue in Avon and Somerset. The rise in incidents where children and young people are either victims or perpetrators of knife-related offences highlights a troubling trend that demands urgent attention. Knife crime not only endangers lives but also instills fear and insecurity within our communities. Victims are more often male and the crimes can be more visible, happening in public spaces, and offences include robbery. Addressing this complex issue requires a coordinated effort to prevent further violence, support for those affected, and ensuring that our children and young people have safe and positive pathways for their future. The Serious Violence Duty is a legal requirement for agencies to work together to prevent and reduce serious violence². The Police and Crime Commissioner brings together a wide range of partners and statutory agencies to understand and address the root causes in support of this duty.

Serious youth violence, in particular knife crime, can be connected to the criminal exploitation of our children and young people, who have been drawn into wider criminality such as drug supply. Knife crime is often a symptom of other problems in that person's life. They may have been, or continue to be, a victim themselves. Being a victim and being an offender are not mutually exclusive. These crimes often involve children and young people at a critical stage of their development and at cross-roads in their life, which means the impact can ruin the life chances of all the people involved.



There were over 1,700 violent offences involving a knife in Avon and Somerset for the year ending September 2024, with perpetrators and victims of all ages, not just young people. This has gone up by 29% since the previous year. There were also over 650 offences of knife possession.

Something that these crimes have in common is that the perpetrators of this violence are predominantly male. Males were responsible for almost three quarters of recorded domestic abuse and sexual offences, and four in every five knife violence offences in Avon and Somerset.

As well as the types of violent crime focussed on here, there are other areas of violence which should be tackled such as those related to serious and organised crime, violence in the

night-time economy, violence against emergency workers, and violence against retail workers.

It is important to recognise that both the victims and perpetrators of these offences can have multiple and complex needs such as poverty, mental ill health, learning disabilities, substance abuse, trauma and homelessness. These factors must be considered in the service we provide to people and will need to be addressed in order to help prevent crime.



The objectives of this plan are to **reduce crime and harm**, have **more confident communities** and **safer places** and **effective policing and partnerships**. Here is how we will achieve this:



More trust and confidence in the police, especially among women and girls.



More trust and confidence in the police, especially among children.



Reduction in the carrying and use of knives to commit crime.



Better protection of children and vulnerable adults from criminal exploitation.



A night-time economy which is safer for people to enjoy.



A reduction in misogyny within the policing culture.



Quicker investigations and more positive outcomes for violent crime.



Increased awareness and reporting of crime, especially hidden crimes.



Identify and stop the most harmful and prolific male offenders of violence against women and girls.



We will work together with police, local authorities, health, education and other partners and with communities, children and young people to implement solutions which address the root causes of knife crime.



Improving how agencies identify children and young people who are at risk of being harmed or causing harm and work together, and with partners in our communities, to keep them safe and divert them away from criminal activity and harm.



Recognising the importance of access to education and employment in helping young people to secure a future free from crime. We will champion working with education services, partners and communities to address the barriers to keeping young people at risk of violence and exploitation in education.



Develop a deeper evidence base for the social and economic causes of violent crime and then a plan which addresses these.



PRIORITY 3

Prevent crime by working together with other organisations and the public to build safer communities

“Prevention is better than cure”, and this is particularly true when it comes to crime. I want Avon and Somerset to be a safe place to live, work and visit.

The best way to achieve this is by preventing crime, not just responding to it; this means addressing the root causes of crime. There is a strong connection between this priority and the first two priorities of this plan. Neighbourhood policing is essential to be able to prevent crime; many of the ways of working and issues described in this priority will apply equally to Priority 2.

The National Policing Prevention Strategy³ identifies three levels of prevention:

- **Primary** – preventing or minimising the risk of harm to individuals through a focus on large populations e.g. a public health approach⁴.
- **Secondary** – targeting those individuals at high risk of offending, to divert them from involvement, e.g. an early intervention approach.
- **Tertiary** – reducing or preventing existing reoccurring problems by tackling the vulnerability of the victim or location, or reducing the motivation of the offender to readdress the situation, e.g. problem solving and community engagement.

We work with partners to reduce reoffending and the ‘revolving door’ of crime, but it is also hugely important to get up-stream and address the root causes of crime. This is a complex and deep problem to try and solve. There are societal level issues of poverty, economic change, individual experiences of trauma, as well as some rooted in historical events. There is no one way to address these things and it can take years to see a change. However, partners need to continue to work together to understand the vulnerabilities and needs within our local communities and identify where and how these societal issues are having the greatest negative and disproportionate impact. In doing so, we must continue to identify the most vulnerable and target the right support at the right time. Addressing these root causes, and improving people’s life chances, requires the services and support of many organisations and people across the public sector, including education, social care and health; the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector; and communities themselves.



The police, and broader criminal justice system, primarily operate in the tertiary level of prevention because their powers and duties come into action when a person has, or is suspected to have, already committed a crime.

As PCC, I chair the Avon and Somerset Criminal Justice Board, which brings together senior leaders from across the system – including the police, the Crown Prosecution Service, courts, youth justice services, prisons and probation services – to help prevent reoffending and improve the experience of victims of crime. This Board plays a key role in coordinating and improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the end-to-end criminal justice system within the region.

Reducing reoffending is about preventing those, who have committed crimes already, from going on to commit further crimes. About 80% of all crime is committed by those reoffending⁵. The national cost of this is estimated to be £18.1 billion.

5% of offenders commit about half of all crime, therefore rehabilitating this small cohort would have a significant impact on making our communities safer. Integrated Offender Management is important in this respect as this is

where the police work with probation and other agencies to manage the most harmful or prolific offenders to help stop them reoffending.

There are seven recognised pathways to reduce reoffending behaviour^{6, 7 & 8}, which help address some of the root causes of crime:

- Accommodation
- Education, skills and employment
- Health
- Drugs and alcohol
- Finance, benefit and debt
- Children and families
- Attitudes, thinking and behaviour





Of these pathways drugs are a particular focus for the police and partners. As well as being illegal, they are harmful to the users and those around them. There is a very dangerous drugs market involving serious and organised crime that is violent and exploitative.

“Half of all homicides and half of acquisitive [theft] crimes are linked to drugs. People with serious drug addiction occupy one in 3 prison places.”⁹

It is important to recognise that Avon and Somerset is a very diverse area with a number of large cities and towns, but also significant stretches of countryside. While urban areas suffer more crime, we must ensure that the benefits of prevention work extend to rural areas and include preventing rural crime¹⁰.

When considering diversity, we know that a person's ethnicity has an impact on their life. This is especially true when it comes to policing and crime. Black and ethnic minority groups are over-represented in going through the criminal justice system and they can receive different treatment and worse outcomes as a result. In Priority 5, I talk about the police needing to provide a fair service, but tackling disproportionality is wider than the police and the criminal justice system as a whole. It is about looking at people's lives, and their life course,

to try and understand what makes people more likely to come into contact with the criminal justice system and working collaboratively with partners to address those societal and structural issues. Ultimately, reducing disproportionality is about improving people's life chances and therefore helping to prevent crime.

Road related crimes should not be overlooked when we think of crime prevention. The harm caused on our roads is considerable: in Avon and Somerset, one person is killed or seriously injured on our roads every day. The 'fatal five' are the five most common factors that contribute to fatal and serious injury collisions in this country:

- Drink and drug driving
- Not wearing a seatbelt
- Driver distraction, including use of mobile phones
- Inappropriate and excess speed
- Careless and inconsiderate driving

These factors are criminal offences which we must also try to prevent, which in turn will reduce the lives lost and harmed on our roads.



The objectives of this plan are to **reduce crime and harm**, have **more confident communities** and **safer places** and **effective policing and partnerships**. Here is how we will achieve this:



Less reoffending.



Reduction of harm caused to and by users of illegal drugs.



Improved life chances, especially for children, that make communities safer.



Working with Community Safety Partnerships, and the criminal justice system to ensure that our approaches are evidence-led and effective and are focused on the prevention of crime and harm.



The police working with local authorities and health partners to ensure the legal safeguarding arrangements for children and adults are efficient, effective and focused on the right priorities.



Fewer traffic collisions – especially those that result in death and serious injury.



Better detection of and action against the 'fatal five' offences.



Successful diversion of people away from court.



Earlier identification and support to vulnerable individuals and families



Strengthened Integrated Offender Management.



Reduce disproportionality in the criminal justice system.



PRIORITY 4

Support victims to ensure they get the help they need when they need it

There were 92,500 victims of crime recorded by Avon and Somerset Police in 2023/24. In the same year the Crime Survey for England and Wales estimated that 16.1% of people aged 16 and over were victims of crime (including fraud and computer misuse); this would equate to 230,000 victims in Avon and Somerset that year.

It is well documented that the impact of crime on victims can be far reaching, including physical and emotional injury, long-term psychological and mental health effects, the ability to trust, a sense of fear and feelings of being unsafe. All of these can impact on various aspects of a victim's life, such as housing, employment, finance, and relationships¹¹.

Research has found that over half of victims report substantial psychological harm, with nearly a quarter describing having to change their daily routine, and 10% indicating negative repercussions on their family. Unsurprisingly, victimisation is

more likely to have a detrimental impact for individuals who already experience existing mental or physical health problems⁹. Following a violent crime, between 21%–33% of victims developed post-traumatic stress symptoms¹². The service provided to victims needs to be trauma-informed.

The Victims' Code of Practice¹³ is a national code that sets out a minimum standard of service that must be provided to victims of crime by the police and the criminal justice system. Victims have the following rights:

- 1 To be able to understand and to be understood.
- 2 To have the details of the crime recorded without unjustified delay.
- 3 To be provided with information when reporting the crime.
- 4 To be referred to services that support victims and have services and support tailored to their needs.
- 5 To be provided with information about compensation.
- 6 To be provided with information about the investigation and prosecution.
- 7 To make a Victim Personal Statement.
- 8 To be given information about the trial, trial process and their role as a witness.
- 9 To be given information about the outcome of the case and any appeals.
- 10 To be paid expenses and have property returned.
- 11 To be given information about the offender following a conviction.
- 12 To make a complaint about their rights not being met.

The Victims' Code is the minimum victims should expect. Victims should also have access to expert support from specialist organisations. Supporting victims of crime is a crucial part of the Police and Crime Commissioner's role, alongside local criminal justice agencies and local authorities. PCCs are responsible for ensuring that the voices of victims are heard and that their needs are prioritised within policing and criminal justice strategies. My role also enables me to convene partners locally to address crime and community safety issues. I am also responsible for commissioning services, allocating funding to victim support services and working to improve the overall response to victims. Complementing this, local authority and health partner organisations provide and commission vital services, including housing, counselling, and advocacy, that can help victims recover and rebuild their lives after experiencing crime.

The Avon and Somerset Criminal Justice Board (described in Priority 3) works to create a coordinated and victim-centred approach to justice and support. However, changes in crime reporting, needs relating to mental health, post-COVID challenges, including the cost of living crisis, and delays in the criminal justice system are all impacting services' ability to meet the demand they face.



Image: ukdroneman.com



The objectives of this plan are to **reduce crime and harm**, have **more confident communities** and **safer places** and **effective policing and partnerships**. Here is how we will achieve this:



Victims understand their rights, including the Victims' Right to Review^{14 & 15}



Victims will have their needs considered and met taking into account their protected characteristics or individual circumstances.



Increased victim satisfaction with the police and criminal justice system.



Compliance with the service standards set out in the Victims' Code.



A police and criminal justice system that puts the needs of the victim at the heart of their response, from the first point of contact throughout the life of the case.



Adequate provision of specialist and effective support services to meet the needs of victims across Avon and Somerset.



Efficient and effective services that work collaboratively to identify and meet the needs of victims who report to the police - as well as those who don't - ensuring a coordinated response that keeps the experience of the victim at the heart of any processes or functions.



PRIORITY 5

Improve standards of policing so that people receive a fair and effective service

Providing an effective police service and doing core elements of policing well – such as responding to calls and investigating crime – are essential in maintaining and improving public confidence in the police. The service provided needs to be effective for all the people they serve and it is especially important that the police protect and help people who are vulnerable.

Responding to calls for service and investigating crime

Helping people when they need it and responding to and investigating crime are at the heart of what the police do. To do their job, police officers are given specific legal powers that other people and organisations do not have.

Inevitably, people contact the police because a harmful or dangerous situation is occurring or is about to occur, either to them or to someone else. Calls to the police often come during moments of crisis for individuals and communities. It is essential that people are able to make contact with the police when they need to.

In 2023/24, Avon and Somerset Police received nearly one million calls on 999 and 101. Compared to 2019, 101 calls have reduced by 13% but 999 calls have increased by 44%. This resulted in 410,000 recorded incidents.

In 2023/24, Avon and Somerset Police recorded 150,000 crimes. Offenders will not be brought to justice unless the police conduct effective investigations,

that are perpetrator focused, and prepare high quality files to support successful conviction. The police are the start of the criminal justice process and their work is essential to secure justice both for victims of crime and for society more broadly.

In the same year, 31% of recorded crimes were theft offences such as burglary, vehicle crime, theft from the person and retail crime like shoplifting. These offences are high in volume, affecting a lot of people in our communities and are often very visible. The public need to understand how the police are responding to these types of crime as well.

31%
OF RECORDED
CRIMES
were theft offences
such as burglary





Image: ukdroneman.com

Strategic Policing Requirement (SPR)¹⁶

The SPR defines seven national threats that require a cross-boundary policing response. This is either because the threat itself crosses force boundaries or because the response required to a local incident can exceed the capacity of a local force, and resources from other forces need to be deployed.

The seven national threats are:

- Violence Against Women and Girls
- Terrorism
- Serious and organised crime
- National cyber security incident
- Child sexual abuse
- Public disorder
- Civil emergencies

The SPR sets out the outcomes, capabilities, capacity, consistency and standards, collaboration and connectivity with partners that are needed to respond to these national threats. Key to responding to these threats is planning and preparation, and testing and exercising these plans to ensure they are fit for purpose. In order to be able to address these threats, the SPR recognises the importance of different police organisations working together and with other partners.

Of the national threats, it's important to highlight serious and organised crime (SOC). This is not something that 'happens elsewhere', or exists in isolation. SOC causes a significant amount of harm in our communities and links to the other priorities in this plan. SOC is well recognised as being the backbone of the illegal drugs market, but it also exploits people and causes violence in our communities. It is connected to shoplifting and rural crime, and people involved in SOC also use our roads, causing harm there as well. Tackling SOC plays a big role in making our communities safer.

The police workforce

Policing is all about people. This Plan is rightly focussed on the people receiving the service, but we must not overlook the people delivering the service. The police are a service that never stops and their work is often incredibly difficult. Police officers suffer a significant amount of trauma throughout their careers; they are the people who run towards danger.

Therefore, we need to ensure that the police workforce are looked after and supported to deliver the best service they can.



Fair and professional police service

All the people of Avon and Somerset have a right to be treated fairly, regardless of who they are. The police must recognise, understand and respond to disproportionality whenever it occurs. Disproportionality is when a group of people with a shared characteristic are over or underrepresented in a particular set of data or outcomes, when compared to the make-up of the population as a whole.

Equality covers all different people and identities and a common way to define this is by the legally 'protected characteristics'¹⁷. These are race, including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin; sex; gender reassignment; disability; sexual orientation; religion or belief; age; being married or in a civil partnership; being pregnant or on maternity leave. We must also acknowledge that people's characteristics do not exist in isolation from each other. Intersectionality recognises how a person's multiple and differing characteristics combine together to impact on their opportunities in life, and that people may face multiple disadvantages as a result of several characteristics.

Given that the police are the public and the public are the police, the misogyny that exists in society also exists within policing. Male violence against women and girls is perpetrated by and against

people who work in policing. The less overt misogyny that exists in society also exists in the police culture and this impacts the service provided. The inequality faced by women and girls – and how we can help tackle this – is discussed in Priority 2 of this Plan.

In 2023, Chief Constable Sarah Crew publicly acknowledged that Avon and Somerset Police is institutionally racist¹⁸. The evidence demonstrates that some ethnic minority groups have police powers used against them at a much higher rate than White people. Also, the level of service and protection a person receives can vary based on their ethnicity. Black people, in particular, have been found to be over-policed and under-protected. This results in different ethnic minority groups often having lower levels of confidence in and engagement with the police. It is clear this situation has to be addressed.

An important aspect to help ensure equality of service is to have a workforce that is representative of the communities it serves. Aside from being uniquely important to policing – for the above reasons – there is also evidence that inclusive and diverse teams perform better overall, which is a benefit to policing and society as a whole.

We need to ensure that the right people join and serve in the police and that there is a positive culture, which has the values of being caring, courageous, learning and inclusive at its heart.

The police must uphold the highest standards, especially as they have the legal power to do things which are intrusive and coercive. Where standards are breached, officers and staff should be supported to improve their conduct and improve the service delivered; be disciplined, or where

the breach is sufficiently serious, the person should be dismissed from the service quickly.

It is only by upholding these high standards that we can maintain and improve trust and confidence in the police and preserve the British model of policing by consent.



The objectives of this plan are to **reduce crime and harm**, have **more confident communities** and **safer places** and **effective policing and partnerships**. Here is how we will achieve this:



More trust and confidence in the police.



Greater satisfaction with the service provided by the police.



Improved morale and wellbeing of the police workforce.



A police service that is equitable for all people.



An inclusive police workforce that is representative of the communities it serves and where all employees are treated fairly.



Respond to calls promptly and within the Service Level Agreements.



Deploy to calls and incidents in line with the defined policies and standards.



Increase positive outcomes from reported crime.



The police are able to respond to the national threats identified in the Strategic Policing Requirement.



A police workforce that is well trained to deliver against local and national priorities.



A trauma-informed police workforce that delivers a trauma-informed service.



An ethical police working culture that adheres to the standards of professional behaviour especially when using police powers.



Further information related to the plan

You can visit my website for more information about the following topics:

- [The Avon and Somerset area](#)
- [Resources and budget](#)
- [Performance](#)
- [Role and responsibilities](#)
- [The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner](#)
- [Grants and Commissioning](#)
- [Volunteering with the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner](#)
- [Volunteering with Avon and Somerset Police](#)
- [Community Schemes and Watches](#)



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Footnotes

- ¹ [HM Government – Tackling violence against women and girls: The safety of women and girls across the country is our priority.](#)
- ² [gov.uk – Serious Violence Duty \(2022\).](#)
- ³ [National Police Chiefs' Council – National Policing Prevention Strategy \(2021\).](#)
- ⁴ [Association of Police and Crime Commissioners – A Guide to Taking a Public Health Approach for Police & Crime Commissioners and their Offices \(2023\).](#)
- ⁵ [Home Office – Beating crime plan \(2021\).](#)
- ⁶ [Ministry of Justice – Strategic Plan for Reducing Re-offending 2008-11: Working in partnership to reduce re-offending and make communities safer: A Consultation \(2007\).](#)
- ⁷ [University of Bristol – Social Exclusion Unit – Reducing re-offending by ex-prisoners \(2002\).](#)
- ⁸ Some organisations recognise nine pathways to reduce reoffending for women. The two additional pathways are: support for women who have been abused, raped or who have experienced domestic violence; and support for women who have been involved in prostitution.
- ⁹ [gov.uk – Review of drugs part two: prevention, treatment, and recovery \(2021\).](#)
- ¹⁰ Avon and Somerset Police define rural crime as any offence occurring in a rural area which directly or indirectly affects a farming or rural business or the rural communities. Rural means a close association with or dependence upon the land within that location. Examples include theft of farming vehicles and machinery; theft of dogs and livestock; barn arsons; poaching and hare coursing.
- ¹¹ TONIC – Avon and Somerset Victims Needs Assessment (2023).
- ¹² [Victim Support – Understanding victims of crime, The impact of the crime and support needs \(2017\).](#)
- ¹³ [Ministry of Justice – Code of Practice for Victims of Crime in England and Wales \(2020\).](#)
- ¹⁴ [Avon & Somerset Police – Victims' Right to Review.](#)
- ¹⁵ [Crown Prosecution Service – Victims' Right to Review.](#)
- ¹⁶ [Home Office – The Strategic Policing Requirement \(2023\).](#)
- ¹⁷ [gov.uk – Discrimination: your rights.](#)
- ¹⁸ [Avon & Somerset Police – Action after words: One year since Avon and Somerset Police declared institutionally racist \(2024\).](#)



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