

BEING SAFE, FEELING SAFE

Police and Crime Plan for 2021-2024



Police and Crime Plan 2021-2024

(Updated June 2021)



INTRODUCTION

In 2020, the Coronavirus changed everything. It had a major impact on the way we all lived and worked. The police had to enforce the emergency legislation restricting gatherings and travel while continuing with normal business. Crime fell. Then as we came out of lockdown we had to envisage what the 'new normal' might look like. How would people behave when the night time economy resumed? What would be the new patterns of working and travelling? How would crime change? At the same time, police numbers began to increase substantially.

In addition, in May 2021, there were other changes that affected settled patterns for policing in South Yorkshire.

What had been a relatively stable senior command team faced significant disruption in a fairly short period of time. The Deputy Chief Constable left to become Chief Constable of Cheshire Constabulary. The Chief Constable moved to take command of Greater Manchester Police. Between these two moves, Police and Crime Commissioner Elections took place, creating further uncertainty by holding out the possibility of a different Commissioner with different priorities and approach.

These were trying and testing times, but also occasions for taking stock and seeing the new challenges and opportunities that the unfolding future would bring.

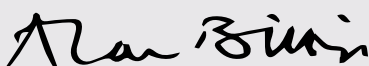
For all these reasons, this Police and Crime Plan has a more interim feel to it than others I have produced. It must serve us for the period leading up to the start of the financial year 2022/23 when the way ahead should look clearer.

I propose to keep the same overarching priorities as I have had in the past. They still encapsulate the main areas of concern that the people of South Yorkshire have expressed to me in recent months. If we can do these things we shall both keep people safe and help them to feel safe:

- Protecting vulnerable people
- Tackling crime and anti-social behaviour
- Treating people fairly

One thing that has struck me most forcefully in these past few years, and especially last year when the Coronavirus struck, is the way individual people have made such a difference to our collective endeavour by their personal commitment and careful work. This has been true in so many areas – among police officers and staff, in the public services more generally, in the voluntary and faith sectors, and in my own office. I think George Eliot was right when she wrote that *'the growing good of the world is partly dependent on un-historic acts'*. *'(T)hat things are not so ill with you and me as they might have been, is half owing to the number who lived faithfully a hidden life.'* It is this personal daily commitment, unseen and unsung, that makes the difference.

Our task is to help people be safe and feel safe, and all our small but faithful un-historic acts will enable that objective to be fulfilled.



Dr Alan Billings
South Yorkshire Police and Crime Commissioner



Chief Constable's Message



I am incredibly proud to be able to contribute to the Police and Crime Plan as the new Chief Constable for South Yorkshire. Each day I see the passion and commitment of our officers and staff in protecting vulnerable people, tackling crime and anti-social behaviour and treating people fairly.

Over the last year, this has been against an incredibly challenging backdrop. The pandemic has meant that we have had to review many of the ways in which we work to ensure we can do so safely, to adapt to the different needs of our communities and to help them thrive in what have been extraordinary times for all of us.

We have adapted to all of this with commitment, passion and drive and in doing so, we have developed some new ways of working which bring new benefits.

As the priorities of the Police and Crime Plan remain stable I feel this provides us the opportunity to consolidate our successes; to bring resilience to our plans, deeper benefits to our communities and further improve the service to our victims and witnesses.

I look forward to leading the Force through the next chapter of progress and supporting every element of the Police and Crime Plan.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'L. Poultney'.

Lauren Poultney
Chief Constable, South Yorkshire Police

The Priorities of the Police and Crime Plan

Although a Police and Crime Plan is in place for the term of office of a Police and Crime Commissioner, it is my intention that this is a transitional Plan that will take us from the immediate post-election period of May 2021 until March 2022. I will then produce a refreshed plan from April 2022 until the end of my term of office in March 2024. By then, our new Chief Constable, Lauren Poultney, and her Senior Command Team (SCT) will be firmly established and we shall have a clearer idea of what the changing landscape of the criminal justice world looks like post-Coronavirus. We can then have a more detailed Plan.

Changes in that bigger arena of criminal justice are at least as great as those affecting the police service. To take just two examples. During the lockdowns, the courts found new ways of working remotely and some of those changes may become permanent. In June 2021, the Probation Service, which had been split into two, was brought together again as one service. These and other changes will take time to work through and become embedded in practice, all of which gives a sense of transition to this year, and for this Plan.

In the meantime, I believe the priorities for policing South Yorkshire should remain the same:

- Protecting vulnerable people**
- Tackling crime and antisocial behaviour**
- Treating people fairly**

In setting these priorities, it is important that I can monitor the progress of the police and partners in achieving them. I do this through a Performance Framework which uses a range of measures linked directly to the priorities in this Plan, and to certain national priorities I am required to publish information about.

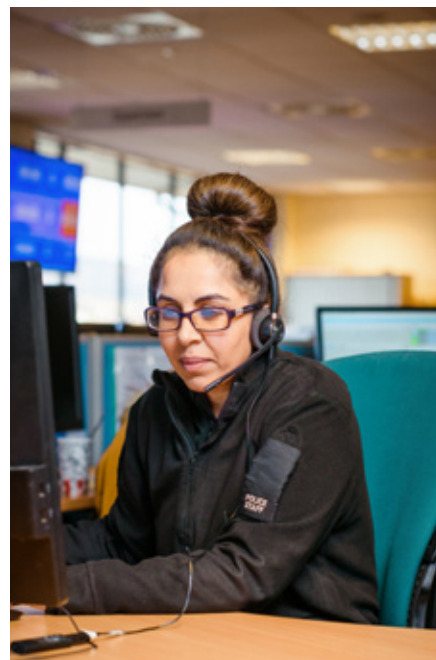
I use the high level measures within this Performance Framework to report publicly each quarter. But there is much more information and activity in the background that allows me to closely monitor progress, and to raise issues and any concerns quickly with the police and partners, should that be necessary.

Chief Constable Poultney takes leadership of a police force that has come a long way during my time in office. It is unrecognisable from the force it was in 2016 when morale was low and public trust and confidence had been shaken. The operating model has fundamentally changed. Neighbourhood Policing Teams (NPTs) are established in all four districts of Barnsley, Doncaster, Rotherham and Sheffield. They use a problem solving approach, working with partners to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour. Major improvements have been made to call-handling and other services in force communications at Atlas Court. And overall, the force has been judged 'Good' by Her Majesty's Inspectors and 'Outstanding' in the area of ethical leadership.

The task of the new Chief Constable and SCT is to maintain these changes and improve upon them, through a clear workforce strategy that can adapt to the changing nature of crime by efficiently and effectively matching resources to demand.

Increasingly, however, we look to the police not only to enforce the law but also – with partners - to prevent people becoming victims of crime in the first place.

We need to help the public be better at protecting themselves from criminality through raising awareness and education. We need to help parents understand how they can steer their children away from situations of danger. We need to disrupt the gangs and intervene before they can impact on communities. We need to support those organisations and individuals that seek to provide worthwhile and realistic alternatives to the criminal life. We need to reassure communities through a consistent and visible police presence.





PRIORITY 1

Protecting Vulnerable People

Any one of us might become a victim of crime. In the event that a member of the public becomes a victim or needs to report a crime, they need to know how to contact the police for help and have confidence that they will receive a timely and supportive response. Victim vulnerability needs to be recognised at the earliest opportunity so that the response can be tailored to meet their needs. Having become a victim of crime, people want reassurance that what has happened to them is taken seriously, properly recorded and investigated, and they are kept in touch with developments. Each of these steps increases public confidence in the police. It is important that we seek feedback from victims if we are to deliver an effective victim led service.

Victims may need support and part of my task is to ensure we have in place services to victims – such as those provided through the Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC).

The services that I commission or co-commission have a role in helping victims of crime in South Yorkshire cope and recover from their experiences. This should support them through the criminal justice process. To fund victims' services, I use a grant from the Ministry of Justice and supplement that from my own budget. My office then uses a range of activities and measures to capture victims' views, and to check whether services are delivering what they need.

In the past year, during the time of lock-downs, we have been aware that Domestic Abuse (DA) victims were more likely to be hidden from us behind closed doors. Domestic Abuse can take many forms including emotional, psychological, physical, sexual, and financial abuse. And, we have also come to recognise that children can be caught up in these situations, something that can have a lasting and damaging effect on their lives and relationships. I want to see us getting better at our DA interventions and support.

I also want to continue to give support to those (principally men) who recognise they have a problem with their relationship and want to change – by addressing their anger, coercive and controlling behaviour, use of alcohol or drugs, and so on.

In 2021 we were shocked by a number of incidents of violence against women and girls. The murder of Sarah Everard was perhaps the most shocking, but more local incidents also led women in South Yorkshire to contact me. Rape and sexual offences are amongst some of the most serious and high impact crimes against a person and victims need to have the confidence to come forward and report to the police. The government have published a National Strategy aimed at tackling Violence against Women and Girls (published July 21) which highlights four key areas namely: Prioritising Prevention, Supporting Victims, Pursuing Perpetrators and Strengthening the System.

In this area of focus I want to convene a round table with partners this year to ensure that everything we can do locally is being done. I strongly believe that women and girls in South Yorkshire have the right to feel safe in our public spaces and in their own homes. Our children and young people should also feel safe in schools and educational settings. I want the police and partners to focus their activity in this area on preventative action, education and safety messages to potential victims as well as work with the perpetrators of violence. I have applied for Home Office funding through the Safer Streets Fund to achieve some of these things. But, I also want my office and the Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) to lead work with the police and partners to influence attitudinal and societal change, especially around attitudes of men and boys in South Yorkshire to women and girls, their notions of masculinity and who they look to as role models.

We are faced with the developing crime that is cyber related or that related to online offending. This crime type can be complex and varied including offences such as indecent images, fraud, and cyber-attacks on both individuals and business alike. Cyber criminals often see the vulnerable and elderly as easy targets for their offending, but this type of crime can happen to any of us at any time, and can leave victims feeling embarrassed and reluctant to report or tell others.

Some of our most vulnerable people are children. They can become victims of crime – including sexual exploitation, on-line or on the streets – or drawn into criminality – by gangs seeking to exploit them, through ‘County Lines’ for example. ‘County Lines’ is the term used for the trafficking of illegal drugs across geographic boundaries, often into smaller towns and rural areas. Criminal gangs ‘recruit’ vulnerable people, many of them children, and coerce them into dealing illegal drugs. The ‘County Line’ is the phone used to take the order for drugs.

We also see the recruitment and exploitation of people, particularly the most vulnerable, through crimes such as Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking. As well as being coerced and deceived, the victims can be subject to threats, abuse and violence at the hands of criminals seeking to profit from their victims.

Children and young people’s exposure to risk and vulnerability is likely to have increased during lockdown. I have maintained funding which contributes to the work of the Youth Offending Services in each Local Authority to support their work in engaging with young people who have committed crime, or are on the cusp of offending.

I will continue to give full support to the VRU which brings together a wide range of partners in seeking, among other things, to prevent children and young people being harmed and exploited in the first place.





PRIORITY 2

Tackling Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour

During the lock-downs crime fell in some cases quite dramatically. It also changed as more people spent more time on the internet. The police were expected to enforce the restrictions while managing normal business – which they did extremely well. But as we emerge from this period, we need to understand how demand on the force has changed. I will be looking to see how the police understand what has happened and how they are responding to it. As Chair of the Local Criminal Justice Board I will also be looking to support the wider criminal justice partners in areas such as probation reform and courts recovery.

The nature of crime continues to evolve. We see crimes such as retail crime having an impact, not just on the retailers, but on the staff subjected to violent attacks which in some instances can then be directed towards emergency workers responding to incidents.

I have asked the police to have an increased focus on those crimes that have caused most anxiety in our communities. They include such neighbourhood crimes as residential and commercial burglary, vehicle crime, robbery, theft, hate crime and serious violence. I am particularly anxious that police understand why some crimes – such as burglary – are so prevalent in South Yorkshire and what we have to do to reduce them. We must also acknowledge crimes of homicide, some of which are domestic related. Such crimes, whilst thankfully few in number, are nonetheless devastating for the victims' families and friends, and impact on the wider community.

To enable this, I will remain a firm supporter of the force's desire to improve its analytic capabilities and its attempts to learn from research and to take, where possible, an evidence based approach.

Many parish councils expressed their thanks for the renewed commitment to understand and tackle rural crime. News of the expansion in 2021 of the rural crime team, based at Ring Farm, the Mounted Section, was greatly appreciated.

In the past year there were also increased concerns around certain types of anti-social behaviour. Fly-tipping was raised many times, though that is principally a matter for local authorities rather than the police. But nuisance off-road and quad bikes was an issue that involved many partners. These complaints came from every part of the county and from urban and rural areas. I had several meetings with farmers who told me about damaged crops and terrified animals, and with residents in urban settings who spoke of noise and danger on residential streets. The work of the roads police and especially the biking teams was particularly appreciated.

In fact, issues around road safety and speeding began to dominate many conversations at town and parish council meetings. I will give support to the Road Safety Partnership's work in seeking to improve safety in towns and villages and will convene a meeting with partners with the aim of sharing information and understanding the work being undertaken in this area.

The issue of drug dealing, serious violence and organised crime gangs, many of whom seek to exploit children and young people for criminal gain, is always a factor in any discussion about crime. I firmly believe that the loss of 20,000 police nationally and 500 or so in South Yorkshire after 2010, led to an expansion of the drugs markets and associated criminality, including child criminal exploitation, county lines, knife and gun crime. I welcome the government's commitment to restore the cuts and will go beyond that by providing an additional 220 police in South Yorkshire by 2024. I welcome also the creation of both the Armed Crime Team and Road Crime Team. Over the coming months, I am confident that the force will come down hard on gangs and criminals who are utilising the strategic road network. There are some parts of our county that have been blighted for too long by organised criminality.

But we need a two pronged approach. On the one hand there must be tough law enforcement, but on the other we need to take more preventive steps to keep people away from violence or to help them turn their lives round if they have been caught up





Priority 3

Treating People Fairly

As with the first priority of protecting vulnerable people, any of us may find ourselves victims of unfair treatment. This priority is about issues that concern the South Yorkshire Police (SYP) themselves as well as those that affect the public.

In the workforce I want to see better representation of women and those from minority ethnic groups. This is why I ask the Independent Ethics Panel to look at how SYP recruits, trains, promotes and retains officers and staff. I know there is already much work going on in this area, but I hope the force will continue to consider new ways of making positive interventions that help us to achieve a more representative and inclusive workforce at every level.

While female representation has improved markedly – one third of SYP is female and some of the most senior officers – much more work needs to be done to secure the greater representation of minority ethnic groups.

There are also implications in the priority of Treating People Fairly, for the way different groups are treated within communities. Stop and search, for example, impacts mainly on younger males and has a disproportionate effect on some minority ethnic groups. I will ask my Independent Ethics Panel to work with the police in understanding why this is and what the effects and implications of it can be on both individuals and communities. I will also consider the recommendations of Sheffield's Race Equality Commission due to be published later in 2021, and consider how we can support implementation of those recommendations.

I will monitor the progress of the force against the above priorities as well as the Use of Force and Policing Protests, and ensuring a fair Police Complaints System, receiving appropriate reports each month from the police and the independent panels. I will seek to understand disproportionality in the wider criminal justice system by holding a specially convened meeting of partners of the Local Criminal Justice Board with a focus on looking at the work which is being progressed in this area.

Issues of fairness are also raised by the public whenever I attend community meetings. People in rural or smaller urban areas often feel that they have less of a claim on police resources than those who live in the bigger towns or the city. They need reassurance through careful explanation of how resources are allocated but also, and perhaps more so, by seeing more of the police in their area. Local police and Community Support Officers (PCSOs) have often played a key role in maintaining confidence and this is something that the neighbourhood teams will need to address as they think about the need for greater visibility and engagement.



Value for Money Services

As the funding I receive is from government and local taxation, I must be able to demonstrate to local communities and taxpayers that the services provided are delivering value for money. This is even more important in times of financial constraint, when difficult choices have to be made about which services, activities or groups I should support.

I have a Value for Money Strategy identifying key principles and approaches to ensuring the most productive use of resources in delivering the priorities and the desired outcome of this Police and Crime Plan, and this is based around maximising economy, efficiency and effectiveness within the Force and my office.

Economy, efficiency and effectiveness are the core components of value for money (VFM), which the National Audit Office (NAO) defines as “the optimal use of resources to achieve intended outcomes”.

The Value for Money Strategy is currently being revised, and I am keen to develop processes further, not only so I can demonstrate where value for money is being achieved, but also to identify areas where improvements could be made. I will look at this through information around cost drivers and, where possible, links between finance and performance, as well as other sources of information.

The 2021/22 approved budget included a £2.6m saving plan, with £538,000 of this being re-invested into police officer recruitment. The majority of the savings have come from re-structuring the workforce to become more efficient and effective, and through the re-negotiation of tenders. Savings of around £500,000 have been identified locally in districts and departments.

Further savings will be required to balance the budget in future years, and I have asked that a co-ordinated savings programme be drawn up which aligns to our demands and priorities for the future.

I will continue to monitor the delivery of Value for Money services, and this will also be a key focus for the Joint Independent Audit Committee.



Conclusion

The responsibility for implementing the Police and Crime Plan falls to our new Chief Constable, Lauren Poultney.

My responsibility is to hold the Chief Constable to account against the priorities set out in the Plan, which I do both informally and privately week by week, and also formally and publicly each month at the Public Accountability Board. In consultation with the Chief Constable I also set the budget for the police and, in setting the precept each year, ensure that the force has the necessary resources to fulfil its various tasks.

South Yorkshire Police is now in a very strong position to meet the new challenges of the post-coronavirus world. I am determined that in my term of office 2021-2024 people in South Yorkshire will both be safe and also feel safe. This is the bedrock for cohesive and prosperous communities.

