

Homicide prevention: An inspection of the police contribution to the prevention of homicide (August 2023)

Response from: Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, Hampshire and Isle of Wight

The loss of any life is a tragedy, but this becomes even more so when the death was preventable. Violent acts in our communities are a real threat, and while the policing response to such unlawful killing is key, the partnership approach to this is essential. The introduction of the Serious Violence Duty, first published in 2022, is a vital stepping stone for agencies to work together to share information and target interventions to prevent and reduce serious violence, however, this is only one piece of the ever complex picture. As Police and Crime Commissioner, I host our Violence Reduction Unit across HIOW, and chair the Violent Reduction Core group as well as new boards I have created to support this area of work, which include: HIOW Homicide prevention Board; Drug Partnership Board. These partnership led areas of business set the foundation to homicide prevention.

Taking stock of what we have learnt from such tragedies, whilst overlaying this with the known evidence base provides us with an opportunity to embed preventative practice. Locally, I have tasked my office to undertake a strategic analysis of all domestic homicides reviews that have been undertaken in the force area since DHRs were first legislated back in 2011. By bringing this learning to a partnership level across the force area, we will be in a stronger position to prevent future deaths through domestic homicide.

Locally I have invested in stalking advocacy and support services for victims across the force area. Stalking is one of the most impactful crimes a victim can be subjected to. In the most serious cases, it can lead to serious violence, harm and homicides. Again, we are using a known evidence base to put in preventative measures and mechanisms to mitigate such risk. As chair of the Association of Police and Crime Commissioner's I am committed both locally and nationally, to drive positive change, taking a 'what works' approach from across the 43 force areas to put the safety of the public first.

Stalking is a unique crime, driven by the fixation and obsession of the stalker and each stalking incident is different. Here in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight perpetrators are predominantly male (89%), commonly aged between 18-32 years and are almost entirely ex-partners demonstrating a significant link to domestic abuse. Locally I have invested in a new Stalking Advocacy and Support Service which includes providing Psychologist Led Stalking Interventions (PLSI) to reduce the risk of reoffending amongst stalking perpetrators as well as providing support and advocacy to the victim/survivor.

The safety of our residents, of our communities must be our primary focus. Together with my Chief Constable, we will work together to ensure that all available resources utilised to protect those at risk.

Donna Jones
Police and Crime Commissioner

Recommendations

Recommendation 2

By 31 August 2024, chief constables in England and Wales should devise an approach to make sure their force can, on a sufficiently frequent basis, produce an analytical report concerning its death investigations. This will help the force to:

- better understand the pattern of death reports across the force area, drawing on force data and information gathered by other organisations, including the NHS and local authorities; and
- identify any linked series of death reports

OPCC Response:

I will work alongside my Chief Constable to ensure that such an analytical report is made available to better understand the landscape and emerging trends within the homicide space.

Recommendation 3

By 1 December 2023, chief constables should make sure their force can quickly identify lessons from homicides and serious violence incidents. The process should be capable of involving partner organisations when appropriate, so that lessons can be learned more widely.

OPCC Response:

As a part of my oversight and scrutiny role over the force, I will seek assurances that the force can and are quickly identifying lessons from homicides and serious violence incidents, and these lessons are learnt quickly and shared across the partnership for wider learning.