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DYFED-POWYS
POLICE AND CRIME
COMMISSIONER

PURPOSE: Report to the Police and Crime Panel (October 2020)

Title: Progress report following the Deep Dive Scrutiny Review into Victim Withdrawal within Dyfed- Powys Police

Executive Summary:

In December 2019, the PCC presented to the Chief Constable his recommendations following a deep dive into the levels of victim withdrawal in Dyfed Powys. The report identified some key successes and recognised the Force's commitment to victims, with some good examples of investigations and empathy being shown towards victims. However, it also highlighted some vital gaps in the Force's performance data, application of outcomes, awareness of victim support services and strategic oversight of victim issues. The review recommends a number of areas where improvements could be made to ensure delivery of the best possible service to victims and to ensure that the Force are truly victim centred.

Recommendations included a centralised resource to apply and quality assure crime outcomes, clarity on data and its presentation, auditing of investigatory procedures, ensuring clear support pathways for victims, seeking feedback from victims who withdraw and utilising this to inform service delivery and ensuring clear strategic oversight of victim engagement.

The below report contains detailed responses to each of the recommendations.

Recommendation:

That the Police and Crime Panel note the contents of the report.

Police and Crime Commissioner for Dyfed-Powys

I confirm I have considered whether or not I have any personal or prejudicial interest in this matter and take the proposed decision in compliance with the NOLAN Principles for Conduct in Public Life.

Signature:

Date:

**Report of the Police and Crime Commissioner to Members of the
Police and Crime Panel**

**Progress report following the Deep Dive Scrutiny Review into Victim
Withdrawal within Dyfed Powys Police**

1. Purpose of Report

In light of the responsibility of the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) to act as the voice of victims and to scrutinise the effectiveness of Dyfed-Powys Police (the 'Force'), the apparent rise in utilisation of Outcome 14 and 16 for domestic and sexual crimes and individual cases highlighted to the PCC, the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) undertook a deep dive scrutiny review into victim withdrawal and the utilisation of Outcomes 14 and 16 in particular within Dyfed-Powys Police. The report was provided to the Chief Constable in December 2019, who endorsed each of the recommendations.

The purpose of this report is to review the progress made by Dyfed-Powys Police against the recommendations of the report in the subsequent 9 months.

2. Outcome

The review, concluding in December 2019, found:

- Victims are a clear priority for the Chief Constable and for Dyfed-Powys Police as a whole with some good examples of officers giving significant time to investigating incidents and empathy being shown towards victims. However, the review recommends a number of areas where improvements could be made to ensure delivery of the best possible service to victims and to ensure that the Force are truly victim centred.
- Issues regarding the clarity of Force policy and the consistency and accuracy of the application of Outcomes bring into question the reliability of the data provided. The report recommended that the scope of the current demand work within the Force should include a review of the application of Outcomes, with consideration given to a centralised resource to apply and quality assure crime Outcomes.
- It is difficult to achieve clarity regarding the performance data surrounding victim withdrawal. The Force should provide clarity on the data produced and its effectiveness and should ensure that the reasons behind performance trends and potential variance from national averages are fully understood and documented. There are further complexities regarding the data sharing arrangements that accompany this information, which makes scrutiny from the OPCC particularly challenging and does not allow for transparency in demonstrating Force performance. This needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency.
- The Force has recognised the impact of lengthy investigations upon victim engagement and has made significant progress in reducing the number of open investigations in excess of 12 months. Further work is required to

maintain investigation standards not just with regards to the length of time taken but also in ensuring all procedural best practice is followed and appropriate evidence secured.

- Victims engage well with specialist support services. Where withdrawals happen, they are predominantly for very personal reasons rather than being linked to any activity or inactivity by the Force. This data should be utilised by the Force to ensure that the best support pathway is in place for victims across their criminal justice journey.
- Lack of awareness of the support services on offer was repeatedly identified during this review. One of the most significant gaps is in relation to mental health, which has been demonstrated to be a significant factor in almost all victims who withdraw from the investigation. The Force needs to ensure that both officers and victim services are signposting victims to the appropriate support to ensure that mental health issues do not impact negatively on the progress of their criminal justice journey.
- Numerous reviews and events have already been undertaken within the Force in an attempt to understand the various issues underpinning victim withdrawal. There are some key trends that emerge over the chronology of the recommendations. These do not translate into informed priorities across departmental work plans at a strategic level: there is no central governance, no system by which the various action owners are held to account and no strategic oversight to inform service improvement.

3. Situation

The review contributed to the Commissioner's Police and Crime Plan by supporting the following priorities:

- Improve public confidence in Dyfed-Powys Police (Priority 1 – Keeping our communities safe)
- Identify those who are at risk of victimisation or repeat victimisation... through better information sharing between agencies (Priority 2 – Safeguarding the Vulnerable)
- Commission victim support services that offer emotional and practical help to victims of domestic and sexual abuse to help them cope and recover from their experience and to support them to achieve the best possible outcome through the criminal justice system (Priority 2 – Safeguarding the Vulnerable)
- Support victims of the most serious crimes to cope with and recover from their experience (Priority 3 – Protecting our communities from serious threats)
- Ensure that the public receive an accessible and responsive service (Priority 4 - Connecting with communities)

The review aimed to identify:

1. Whether the Force's utilisation of Outcomes 14 and 16 for domestic and sexual crimes is in line with national trends and whether the rationale for any performance deviations is understood and accepted

2. Whether the application of the above Outcomes identifies any issues with Force practice or the wider criminal justice journey
3. Whether the Force are utilising all opportunities to ensure timely and effective prosecutions
4. The Force's effectiveness in retaining the engagement of victim support for investigations
5. The extent to which recommendations from reviews commissioned within Force are monitored and governed
6. The extent to which continuous improvement outcomes drive improvement in service delivery

Through:

1. Identifying the current Force policy for utilisation of Outcomes 14 and 16
2. Identifying the trends in performance regarding application of Outcomes, both local and national
3. Undertaking a literature review of existing reports and continuous improvement events and the extent to which recommendations have been actioned
4. Presenting the views of victims and the Force's effectiveness in addressing them
5. Highlighting areas of good practice and any areas where improvements could be made.

4. Choices and Consequences

Performance

It is difficult to achieve clarity regarding the performance data surrounding victim withdrawal. Without confidence in the data, it cannot be used as a reliable source on which to base actions and recommendations. It also leads to wasted resources in attempting to provide an understanding and justification for apparent performance trends or variances from the national picture.

Process, policy and guidance

It is imperative that internal Force policy provides an accurate, consistent guide for officers in line with the guidance provided by the Home Office. If officers are unclear on definitions Outcomes will not be correctly or consistently applied. This not only creates an issue in terms of compliance but also raises significant questions regarding the integrity of the data on which operational decisions and recommendations are based.

Victim contact

It is evident that there are concerning levels of duplication between departments and services with regards to who is supporting and updating victims. This leads to two equally unpalatable scenarios; either a victim who is left with no support and no information or a victim who is bombarded with confusing phone calls from a host of agencies or individuals with no clarity regarding roles and responsibilities.

Support services

The Commissioner has a duty to provide services to ensure that victims are appropriately supported from point of report throughout their criminal justice journey. Victims are more likely to remain engaged with investigations if their needs are met in terms of assisting them to cope and recover from the impact of the crime. It is vital therefore that frontline officers are aware of all available services in order to ensure that the offer of service to victims is timely and accurate. Victims need to feel informed about the services on offer and be able to access them not just at point of report but also at any future time if they so wish. The Force also need to be clear on the support pathway being offered to victims at all stages of their criminal justice journey.

Mental Health

Mental Health features within the top 2 reasons for all victim withdrawals. Whilst training for Sexual Offences Investigative Trained Officers includes an input on both mental health and the role of Independent Sexual Violence Advisors, there is a significant gap for victims with mental health issues that are undiagnosed and fall below any clinical thresholds regarding where they can be signposted for support.

Despite investment by the Police and Crime Commissioner into the provision of a comprehensive victims' directory, this is no longer available on the Goleudy website. This has resulted in a significant gap for either victims or officers to locate appropriate support services that can offer mental health advocacy. Provision of this support would not only help victims to better cope with the impact of a crime but would also increase the likelihood of them remaining engaged with the criminal justice system.

Strategic Oversight

The report identifies a clear gap in strategic oversight of victims' experiences. Whilst many of the recommendations arising from previous reviews and events are fed into action plans at the tactical or operational level, this does not appear to translate easily into strategic planning. Whilst victim issues are discussed both at the Victims and Witness Board and the Strategic Vulnerability Board, these Boards are not structured in a way that enables them to inform the priorities of departments such as Corporate Communications, Learning and Development etc. which are vital to delivering what is required.

5. Actions and Review

The review recommendations were included in the Terms of Reference for a Victim Implementation Project commenced by Dyfed Powys Police in March 2020. This was led by the Superintendent and Chief Inspector with the Victims and Witnesses remit. The project sought to consider the service that Dyfed-Powys Police provides to victims of crime and anti-social behaviour as well as implementing a number of recommendations carried out via previous reviews. The project initiated a number of subgroups that reported into a strategic Gold group with the actions in this deep dive falling under both the Performance Management and Reviews and Operational and Investigatory Approach subgroup headings.

The Force were required to provide a formal update to the Commissioner on the progress made since the publication of the deep dive. The Victim Implementation Project has recently concluded and delivered an update against the intended aims and objectives to the Assistant Chief Constable (the Sponsor for the project) and subsequently to Policing Board. At the meeting of the Policing Board on 18th September 2020 the Force provided the below update.

	Recommendation	Position as of September 2020
1	<i>Consider a centralised resource to apply and quality assure crime Outcomes in order to deliver consistent practice aligned to national policy</i>	<p>The Victims Project Performance and Management Review Action 1 was <i>To better, understand 'Outcomes' including victim withdrawals.</i></p> <p>The deep dive report concluded that Dyfed-Powys Police was consistently above the national average for the application of Outcomes 14 and 16 with Q1 for 2019/20 showing this discrepancy to be around 12.5%.</p> <p>Work has been undertaken by an Inspector with assistance from a Performance Analyst and the Force Crime and Incident Registrar (FCIR). The findings suggest that although the Force does have above average use of Outcome 16 (Named suspect identified) this must be viewed alongside the fact that the Force records around 20% less Outcome 18's (where there is no suspect identified) than the national average. Put simply, this balance indicates that the Force</p>

are much more successful in identifying a suspect however still face evidential difficulties where the victim does not or withdraws support.

At present, Dyfed-Powys is the only Welsh Force that does not have a specialist, centralised team for applying outcomes. In 2019/20 Dyfed-Powys recorded 32,157 crimes. Of these BCU Sergeants were responsible for applying the outcome to 25,505 with only around 6,000 being applied by the specialist Crime Recording Bureau.

The current Data Quality Assurance Model document is a 64 page guide from which a simpler guide is produced where officers must record the correct outcome for each of their cases. This is a complicated process for operational officers who are expected to have such a wide aspect of knowledge in a range of numerous areas and we cannot be confident that our recording compliance of Outcomes is wholly accurate.

By way of a further example, a report was published in April 2020 with respect to Outcomes finalised under 22 (Diversionary, education or intervention activity). This report concludes that of the 265 crimes examined only 103 were correctly recorded. This gives a compliance rate of 38.87%, which is short of the required 95%.

Whilst there may be arguments for more training and awareness for officers, the preferred suggestion is for **all** of the outcomes to be applied by a specialist central team thus ensuring greater accuracy of the statistics produced.

Potential resource requirements have been discussed with the FCIR and the briefing note (15/05/2020) for proposed end-to-end crime recording also seeks to recommend a centralised disposal and outcome format. The establishment of a centralised team to deal with all crime Outcomes will be progressed by the 'end to end' process team.

2 Provide clarity regarding the data produced and how it can be utilised, in particular how it can be shared with the OPCC and wider audiences

At present the Crime Management System has a Crime Closure Checklist when applying a crime outcome that is primary suspect-centric.

Crime Closure Checklist

Was a suspect arrested as part of this investigation?	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
If Yes, please enter Custody Record number. <small>Custody and Crime will be automatically linked, if not already</small>	<input type="text" value=""/> (e.g.CH-000123-2020)
Is the suspect linked to other crimes?	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
If Yes, are any of those crimes still live?	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
Has the suspect been RUI'd as part of this investigation?	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
Was biometric data obtained from the suspect?	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
Does suspect's biometric data need to be retained?	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
Has the offender been notified of this outcome?	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
Has the victim been notified of this outcome?	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No

Save Outcome

The Force Crime Registrar provided examples of Outcomes 14 and 16 being applied where victims had seemingly been supportive of the investigation to a point where, without explanation, they would withdraw with no rationale provided by the officer.

To rectify this specific additional questions are being added to the outcome finalisations as below:

Outcome 14

The below questions has been added as a requirement for officers to answer before the outcome submission is applied:

‘What is the reason for the victim declining / being unable to support action?’

The intention is that this will not only give the reason but may prompt officers to consider if this is the most appropriate outcome to be applied.

Outcome 16

In order to ascertain exactly why a victim has withdrawn support the following question is to be added to the set:

'What is the reason for victim not supporting or withdrawing support for the investigation?'

A free text box will then be required for officers to complete their response. This will ensure that Supervisors:

- Take in to consideration victim's needs, including their wishes in respect of the investigation and any prosecution, ensuring that a written record of those wishes are captured and uploaded to the crime report. If a written record cannot be obtained or the victim refused to provide one a drop down box explaining this can be added;
- Provide clear, accurate and documented decision making rationale in respect of closing the crime and application of a relevant crime outcome with consideration for a link to the Crime Outcomes Application policy or aide memoir to assist them in their decision making. This will ensure that there is a transparent record of the crime outcome;
- Link to the Solvability Matrix, ensuring that Supervisors consider all reasonable lines of enquiry.

Adopting a centralised resource will ensure a consistent, transparent recording and rationalisation of crime outcomes that will assist in dip sampling of crimes with the information and data available from a centralised and dedicated resource.

A supervisor from within the centralised resource / department will collate data and generate a monthly report outlining compliance with national and force policy that can be shared with the OPCC and wider audiences for discussion during monthly performance management meetings.

3	<p><i>Continue the work into reducing lengthy investigations which may impact upon victim engagement</i></p>	<p>Significant work has been undertaken to reduce lengthy investigations that may impact upon a Victim's confidence and engagement with the criminal justice system. This ongoing work has resulted in a marked reduction in lengthy investigations, in particular those that are over 12 months old.</p> <p>This has resulted in 'live' investigations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Between 6 – 12 months falling from 348 in September '19 to 289 in May '20 and continuing to fall to 254 in the latest August '20 figures. • Investigations +12 months falling from 229 in Sept '19 to 149 in May '20 and continuing the trend down to 136 as of August '20. <p>Force wide, Senior Management Teams are conducting regular crime reviews, scrutinising those that are over 3 Months, 6 Months and 12 Months respectively. As of the 2nd week of September, Inspectors are now emailed details of crimes over 1 month for their respective areas. In addition, these crimes are being discussed and scrutinised within force and divisional performance management meetings, ensuring that the appropriate level of support and resourcing is applied to them. Senior Management Teams are empowering supervisors, giving them the confidence to make efficient but defensible decision making in respect of crime investigation and progression.</p> <p>There continues to be a need to improve the effective and efficient investigation of crime with a more stringent application of THRIVES being utilised from initial call to the completion of an investigation.</p> <p>In addition to ensuring the introduction of specialist roles at an early stage officers should utilising the support available to them from commissioned services to maintain regular dialogue with the Victim to ensure their continued engagement and avoid disillusionment and withdrawal from the investigative process. This has been conveyed at the Criminal Investigation Department conference with the benefits outlined for both victims and officers themselves.</p>
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		<p>To assist Digital and Cyber Crime Unit and to reduce timescales in respect of electronic examinations there has been a rolling out of divisional examiners or champions in respect of completing electronic examinations. This has reduced potentially lengthy investigations, maintained victim confidence and maximised recovery.</p> <p>The outbreak of Covid has seen the Force utilising the services of divisional Response Enquiry Officers and by adopting the Desktop Investigation Guidance this has ensured the efficient and effective progression of suitable investigations.</p>
4	<p><i>Routinely audit the adherence to investigatory procedures likely to impact on victim engagement, including Video Recorded Interviews, Body Worn Video and Closed Circuit Television that the PCC has invested in throughout the Force area</i></p>	<p>To audit the use of Video Recorded Interviews, Body Worn Video (BWV) and Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) is difficult without specifically reviewing each investigation and their respective crime enquiry logs, with no indicator currently in place highlighting the specific use of these functions in a criminal investigation.</p> <p>Crimes are being discussed on a daily basis during divisional and force management meetings, ensuring appropriate allocation and progression. THRIVES is being adopted to determine the most appropriate resource to investigate a crime, ensuring that specialist resources are used to assist in investigations and insulating victims evidentially (i.e. deployment of Level 2 Specialist Interviewers during Video Recorded Interviews).</p> <p>Officers are encouraged to utilise appropriate teams (i.e. Neighbourhood Policing Teams to assist with house to house enquiries and CCTV in lower level offences or a house to house team or CCTV co-ordinator in serious and complex crime investigations.)</p> <p>Body Worn Video use can be audited and has been reported on during county performance events. An audit of Video Recorded Interviews is available via New Pathways who run the Sexual Abuse Referral Centres. A Force interview audit process is being developed.</p>

		<p>With respect to CCTV there is now a specific question set on each crime record to prompt officers to record details of any CCTV evidence. The CCTV Coordinator is currently in the process of producing a performance framework for the CCTV department but has been delayed due to the current Covid restrictions. It is difficult to quantify the value that CCTV provides, as there are incidents that have been downgraded, incidents where we have sent additional or less resources or not attended at all due to CCTV assistance.</p> <p>The graphs at Appendix 1 provide an indication of the effective use that is being made of the system which also allows Gold and Silver commanders to actively monitor incidents around the Force area via the Hikcentral Control Client app.</p> <p>Graphs 1 – 2 show the number of downloads requested in order to support evidential investigations with Graph 3 showing the number of incidents that are monitored by the controllers. Graph 4 is specific to the use of the system in respect of missing persons. The availability of CCTV evidence is often crucial in establishing the movements of those who are missing which then allows for the effective deployment of resources to locate them.</p>
5	<p><i>Ensure that the support pathway for victims is clear, with consent gained at the first point of contact for all future referrals. To include within this:</i></p> <p><i>a. Ensuring that a victims' directory is maintained, with up to date accurate information to signpost victims to agencies providing</i></p>	<p>The Force will utilise the Dewis Cymru website which provides details of all support services available throughout Wales.</p> <p>https://www.dewis.wales/</p> <p>The directory will also be available to access via the new Victim Information Pack.</p> <p>The redesign of Victim Information Packs will ensure that all victims of crime, in all categories, are supplied with up to date, relevant information including comprehensive advice on support</p>

	<p><i>mental health support and advocacy within our communities</i></p> <p><i>b. Improved awareness for victims, offenders and officers of the support services available</i></p>	<p>services. This has been problematic in the past as service providers will often change and Force websites have not been updated accordingly.</p> <p>The packs will also contain comprehensive details of Goleudy support services which will increase awareness for victims as well as provide refresher information for officers.</p> <p>Recent victim feedback suggested that 58% of victims were provided with information about support services. The packs will ensure that a 100% outcome is achieved.</p>
6	<p><i>Proactively seek feedback from those victims who have withdrawn from investigations in order to inform service delivery</i></p>	<p>The new question set on the Crime Management System will mandate officers to obtain an explanation from victims as to why they are withdrawing support for investigations. This will allow supervisors and auditors the opportunity to identify and rectify any possible reasons, which police may be able to influence, and ensure that all is done to maintain the trust and support of victims during the investigation.</p> <p>There will be additional opportunities to obtain feedback from victims via a questionnaire that will be sent at set periods (one month after the commencement of the investigation and when the outcome is applied). This work is currently ongoing and is an action for the Victims and Witness subgroup.</p>
7	<p><i>Review all recommendations and actions arising from existing victim engagement work and provide updates accordingly.</i></p>	<p>The reports listed in the appendix of the deep dive review listed 147 previous recommendations from work streams dating back a number of years. This work was incorporated within other Investigative and Operations group forums but it was difficult to trace a finalised result in all cases.</p> <p>The actions that have been identified from this project have been allocated to the relevant sub groups under the new Criminal Justice and Investigations Strategic group.</p>

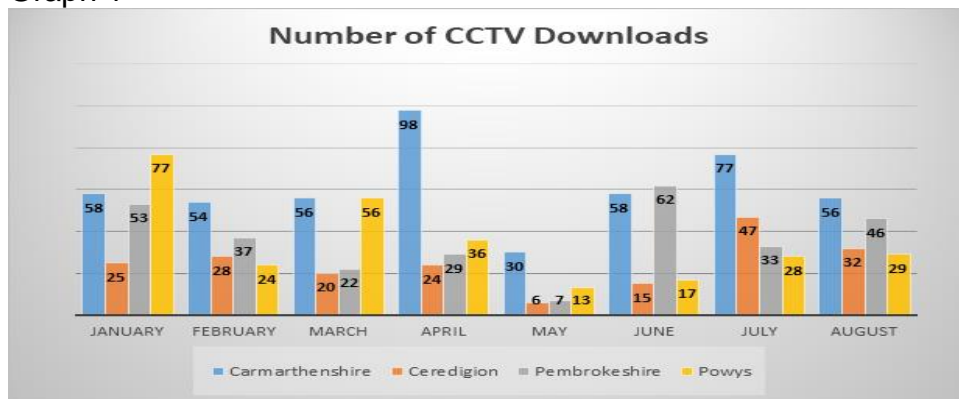
		In addition, actions from the continuous improvement event undertaken as part of the Victim Implementation Project are currently being progressed and implemented.
8	<i>Ensure that Continuous Improvement within the Force is strategically driven to support the control strategy and the Police and Crime Plan. This should include a central repository of information to identify trends and inform service delivery, along with clear guidelines regarding responsibility and accountability for emerging recommendations</i>	<p>Decisions to adopt an event or issue is decided upon by the Business Improvement Senior Management Team and is aligned to the Force Management Statement, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary actions, Force Control strategy and Police and Crime Plan.</p> <p>Actions raised at individual events will be monitored through the relevant groups and reported to the respective Board if appropriate.</p>
9	<i>Ensure clear strategic oversight of victim engagement issues, driving forward the cross departmental work required to place victims at the centre of service delivery</i>	The new governance structure below ensures that service to victims and witnesses remains a key priority for the Force.

	<pre> graph TD AWCCJB[All Wales Criminal Justice Board] --- LCCJB[Local criminal Justice Board - PCC] LCCJB --- ACC[Performance and Outcomes board ACC] LCCJB --- VWG_OPCC[Victim and Witnesses Group - OPCC] ACC --- CJISG[Criminal Justice and Investigations strategic Group D/C/Supt] CJISG --- INV_D[Supt] CJISG --- CJ_A[Director CJD] CJISG --- VWG_S[Victim and Witnesses Group Supt] VEGF[Victim Engagement Forum] --- ACC VEGF --- CJISG VEGF --- VWG_S VWG_S -.- VWG_OPCC </pre> <p>The new Victim Engagement Forum will seek to give victims a clear voice from their perspective and will be able to influence the Force's strategic priorities as well as give feedback and suggestions for any planned initiatives.</p>
<p>10 <i>Provide consistent senior representation at local level on Domestic Homicide Review panels and ensure resulting actions are embedded into the appropriate governance and scrutiny structure.</i></p>	<p>Representation on the Domestic Homicide Review (DHR) panels will be directed by the Criminal Investigative Department Senior Leadership Team with mechanisms already in place specific to individual review panels. The appointed officer must be one who has not been involved in the investigation therefore each case has to be considered with this requirement in mind.</p> <p>Once the DHR has been completed it must be signed off by an officer of at least the rank of Superintendent who is satisfied with the content provided by police and is aware of the</p>

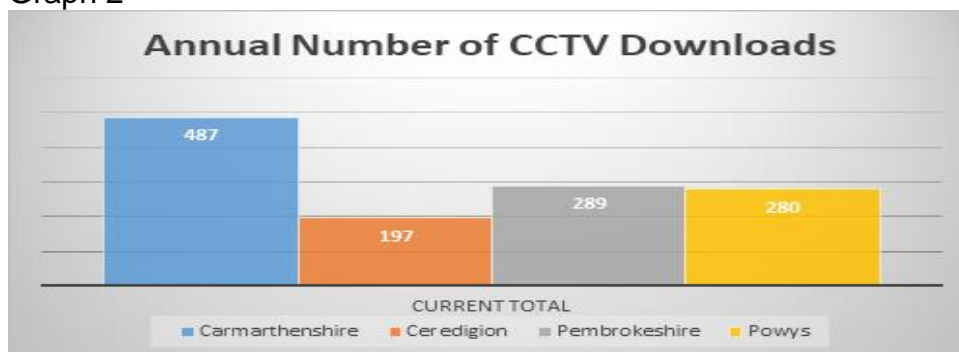
		recommendations. If there are recommendations for the Force then they will be considered by the appropriate portfolio holder for further action.
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6. Appendices

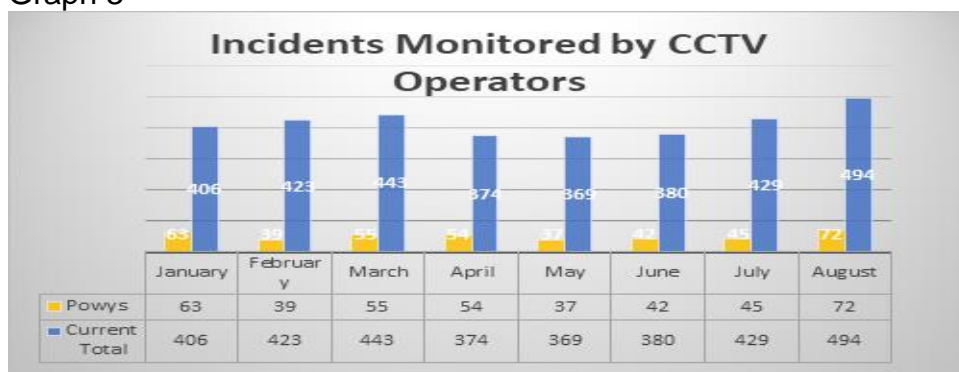
Graph 1



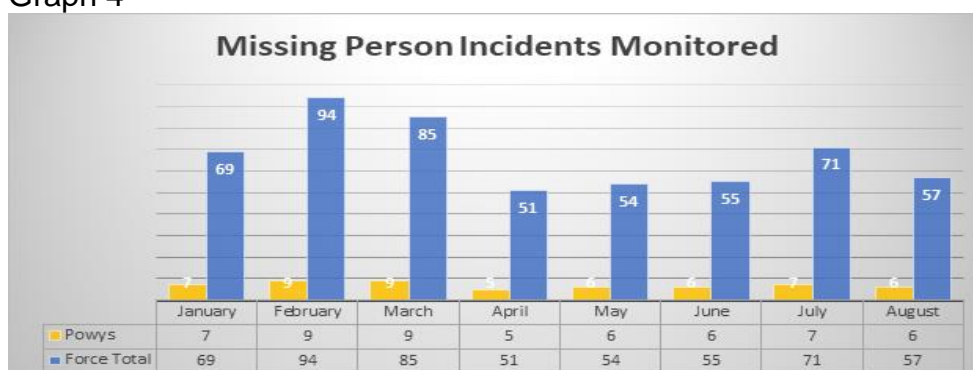
Graph 2



Graph 3



Graph 4



7. Background / Supporting papers

- Original report: <http://www.dyfedpowys-pcc.org.uk/media/9119/victims-deep-dive-fv.pdf>
- Chief Constable's response: <http://www.dyfedpowys-pcc.org.uk/media/9121/chief-response-re-deep-dive-review.pdf>