

Thames Valley Police and Crime Commissioner's June Newsletter

Welcome to my June newsletter.

The situation over coronavirus changes almost on a weekly basis and, at the time of writing, the government is now looking to relax some of the restrictions that have been in place for the last three months.

The phased release from lockdown is conditional on the infection rate of coronavirus continuing to drop. It is up to all of us to continue to use our common sense and obey the rules. Likewise it is up to the police to ensure the rules are obeyed, but do so with politeness and judgement.

It is clearly less complicated going into a tight lockdown than it is coming out of it gradually, and there will be inevitable anomalies that the police will have to cope with.

The Chief Constable and I brief the Thames Valley MPs every week. All have been fulsome in their praise of the common sense and polite way TVP has enforced the rules.

These are unprecedented times and are a test for us all. I am proud of how our officers and staff have risen to the challenges that this pandemic has brought and I am confident that with Chief Constable John Campbell, and his leadership team at the helm, we will continue to provide a dedicated and highly regarded service to the public.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Anthony Stearsfield". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined with a single horizontal stroke.

Coronavirus updates

In response to the ongoing pandemic, we have created a dedicated webpage to collate updates, both from the PCC and Thames Valley Police, and provide useful links to support services available.

This page will be updated regularly with news including statements from the Police and Crime Commissioner for Thames Valley and the Chief Constable for Thames Valley Police.

You can find out more about the policing response to COVID-19 on the [PCC website here](#).

Victims First Specialist Service

The Victims First Specialist Service which provides specialist support for victims and witnesses of crime was launched on 1 April this year.

The service can support adult victims of any crime including rape and sexual abuse, exploitation and modern slavery as well as provide victims with Restorative Justice services.

The service is designed to help those with longer term or more complex needs and focuses on the individual and the impact the crime has had on them, regardless of the crime they have experienced.

Support is provided by specialist Independent Sexual Violence Advisers (ISVAs), Restorative Justice Practitioners, Exploitation Specialists and staff with other relevant specialist skills and knowledge. It includes trauma-informed interventions in individual or group settings, advocacy support including help to access mental health or drug and alcohol services, restorative justice conferencing, as well as practical and emotional support to navigate the criminal justice process.

Thames Valley Partnership are delivering the service across the Thames Valley, working in partnership with Oxford Sexual Abuse and Rape Crisis Centre (OSARCC) and Trust House Reading. During lockdown the team have adapted the service and been working closely with victims to support them remotely in a way that best meets their needs.

The Victims First Specialist Service is one of the services commissioned by the Police and Crime Commissioner under the overarching brand of Victims First. You can find out more about the support available to victims in the Thames Valley and make a referral into any of the services at www.victims-first.org.uk.

Organisations awarded £103,740 to support policing response to COVID-19

The Police and Crime Commissioner and Chief Constable have awarded voluntary and community organisations £103,740 after opening an emergency round of the Police Property Act Fund.

The Fund, jointly managed by the PCC and Chief Constable, is created from money recovered by the police and the proceeds from the sale of items that cannot be returned to identified owners, including seizures from criminals.

In response to the impact of COVID-19, an emergency funding round was launched last month. 209 applications were received, seeking in excess of £1 million, and 32 organisations were successful in receiving funding of between £692 and £8,000.

Anthony Stansfeld said: "Community and voluntary organisations have been playing a vital role in supporting Thames Valley Police with the emergency response to the COVID-19 outbreak. Both the Chief Constable and I were keen to open this emergency funding round to provide vital grant funds to support their efforts.

“We were inundated with applications, seeking a total of more than £1million in funding, and I wish we could have supported more of the excellent bids. I look forward to seeing the positive impact that this funding has for the successful applicants and the public.”

John Campbell, Chief Constable for Thames Valley Police, said: “Both the Police and Crime Commissioner and I are pleased to announce more than £103,000 has been awarded to 32 voluntary and community groups across the Thames Valley. This is the most bids we have ever received for the PPAF and it has been a very difficult task to choose the successful applicants.

“This funding will support projects which have been supporting our response to the outbreak. It is vital that we all work together at a time like this and we hope that the funding will help people across our communities.”

For a full list of organisations who have been awarded funding, please see [Police Property Act Fund Donations 2020-2021](#).

Impact of peer-on-peer abuse across Thames Valley highlighted

SAFE! has recently published 'Experiences of Peer-on-Peer Abuse in the Thames Valley' after receiving funding from the Police Property Act Fund (PPAF).

After applying for the PPAF last year, [SAFE!](#) secured £5,000 to support the research and publishing of the report into peer-on-peer abuse. They provide support to young people between the ages of 5 and 25 years old in the Thames Valley who have been hurt by a crime or bullying.

Anthony Stansfeld said: “The impact of peer-on-peer abuse is an area of focus for the Thames Valley. Research into this, such as today’s report, can provide a really useful insight into the impact it can have on young people’s lives.

“We are pleased to have been able to support SAFE! in the production of this report through the Police Property Act Fund. I look forward to seeing the benefits this report will have in tackling peer-on-peer abuse across the region.”

Chloe Purcell, Director at SAFE!, said: “At SAFE! we support young people affected by any type of crime around the Thames Valley. We wanted to conduct this research because of the numbers of young people we were supporting who were reporting abuse from other young people. Through this report we are delighted to be able to provide a look into how young people, parents and professionals see peer-on-peer abuse and the impact it can have on the lives of young people.

“We would like to thank the Police and Crime Commissioner and Thames Valley Police, for providing the funding to produce the report, as well as our partners and young people for taking part in our research on this important area.”

For a copy of the full report, please visit the [SAFE! website here](#).

Thames Valley Police continues fight against domestic abuse

People across the UK have been given advice to stay at home in order to protect themselves and others during the coronavirus pandemic.

Thames Valley Police wants to remind the public that the force will never tolerate domestic abuse. In an emergency, people should always call 999. If you can't speak, call 999 and then dial 55. This is called the Silent Solution, and the call taker will sensitively manage the police response.

Detective Superintendent Rebecca Mears, Head of Public Protection, said: "You are likely to be feeling more alone than ever right now, but be assured that Thames Valley Police and all local and national agencies are extremely conscious of this and have put plans in place to support you.

"Families, friends, colleagues and neighbours are also encouraged to be vigilant and call the police if they believe domestic abuse is affecting the lives of their loved ones or of their neighbours."

Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner, Matthew Barber, said: "Home does not feel like a safe place for victims of domestic abuse and in these uncertain times, I would like to assure victims that support through Victims First and other contracted service providers is available for those that need it. Services have been adapted in line with Government advice to ensure that we can continue to meet victims' needs.

"Anyone experiencing domestic abuse and needing support can contact one of the Thames Valley domestic abuse services directly or can make an online referral via our website www.victims-first.org.uk"

More information about domestic abuse how to protect yourself in a domestic abuse situation, or how to spot the signs is available on the [Thames Valley Police website here](#).

PCC on the latest police officer recruitment figures

Anthony Stansfeld said: "The latest figures from the Government show that we are on track to meet the promised numbers of police officer uplift in the Thames Valley.

"With an additional 151 officers recruited since November 2019, I am excited to see the positive impact this will have on frontline policing. Now more than ever we see how important our officers are and the new recruits will give us extra resilience for the future."

"We are pleased to have the continued support of the Prime Minister and Home Secretary to help us make communities safer in the Thames Valley."

ICV scheme using telephone service to support welfare

The Independent Custody Visiting Scheme for Thames Valley, managed by the Office of the PCC, has been using telephone custody visiting service for all Custody Visiting suites.

Independent Custody Visitors (ICV) are members of the community who volunteer to make unannounced visits to police stations in the Thames Valley area. They check on the welfare of people in police custody by speaking to those detained and monitoring the conditions of the cells. Any problems highlighted during the spot check are brought to the attention of custody staff and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner to be dealt with.

The telephone system has allowed the scheme to maintain a level of monitoring and speak with detainees to check on their welfare, as well as checking on staff PPE equipment.

Jim Katouzian, ICVS Manager, said: "We have been pleased to see how well the telephone service has been supporting custody visitors and detainees across the Thames Valley. In the wake of the coronavirus crisis, the telephone system has ensured detainee welfare is looked after and staff PPE equipment is reviewed on a regular basis. With the system in place, we are confident that the ICV scheme will continue to support detainees during this period of uncertainty."

Follow us on our social media channels

You can follow the work of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Thames Valley on [Twitter here](#), where you will find the latest news and updates.

You can also follow the work of Victims First on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).

If you would like to receive this newsletter, go to the [web site](#) and subscribe via the link at the bottom of the page.