

Additional issues raised by the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) at the Performance Meeting 11 May 2015

DEMAND MANAGEMENT

During 2014/15, the following demand was placed on West Yorkshire Police:

- There were 1,436,148 calls for service which was an increase of 6.4%.
- There was a 3.6% reduction in the number of incidents recorded (to 629,104), however there was an increase of 7.7% in the number of incidents which were recorded as crimes.
- There was a 2.7% reduction in the volume of incidents attended by officers to 394,083.
- 88.3% of emergency response incidents were attended within 15 minutes, this was a reduction of 2.5% on last year.
- The average time taken to attend the 101,829 emergency response incidents last year was 10 minutes 7 seconds.
- The number of crimes allocated for investigation to officers increased by 12.5% to 107,430 in 2014/15.

These points have been discussed with the temporary Chief Constable who has assured me that the police are implementing changes to improve the ways in which they handle call volumes. This includes looking at a triage process and working more actively with partner agencies and local authorities to divert calls to agencies which may be better suited to deal with the issues. With regards to managing the emergency calls; the reduction in the number of emergency response incidents attended within the target time had been raised during the previous quarter as it had fallen to 88.7%. Although this has now stabilised slightly having only reduced by a further 0.4% to 88.3%, it was raised with the temporary Chief Constable again who reassured me that the police are still focusing on this issue. On a daily basis those calls for service not reached within 15 minutes are reviewed by the district Senior Leadership Team and considered at the Local Accountability Meetings. The police have also been carrying out analytical work to better understand the reasons for the misses and have concluded that in the majority of cases are the result of multiple high-resource incidents occurring simultaneously i.e. high risk missing persons. I will be monitoring this data on a regular basis to understand the impact of demand and cuts on the service and the community it serves.

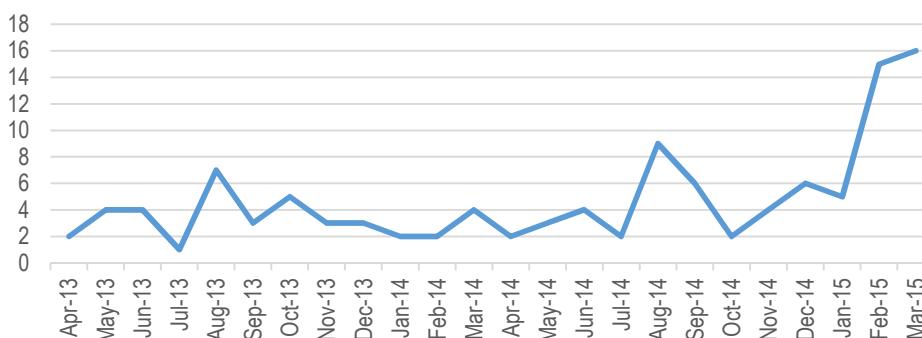
ARSON

There has been a rise of 9.7% in arson when the 12 months to March 2015 are compared to the 12 months to March 2014 from 1,039 to 1,140 offences. This was raised with the temporary Chief Constable who stated that this has been jointly due to a 25% (361 to 452) increase in Leeds attributed to a single offender setting low level fires and also a change in crime recording processes. Many incidents which were previously graded as “unknown cause” are now graded as arson if there is any suspicion at all, meaning that the recorded levels of arson have risen, however there is no increase in the threat to life or safety.

BLACKMAIL

The levels of blackmail have increased by 90% in the 12 months to March 2015 compared to March 2014. Although the numbers are relatively small (currently just 74 offences), the rise is significant nonetheless, particularly given that the “other theft” category (to which this belongs) has reduced by 12% in the same period.

Blackmail across West Yorkshire



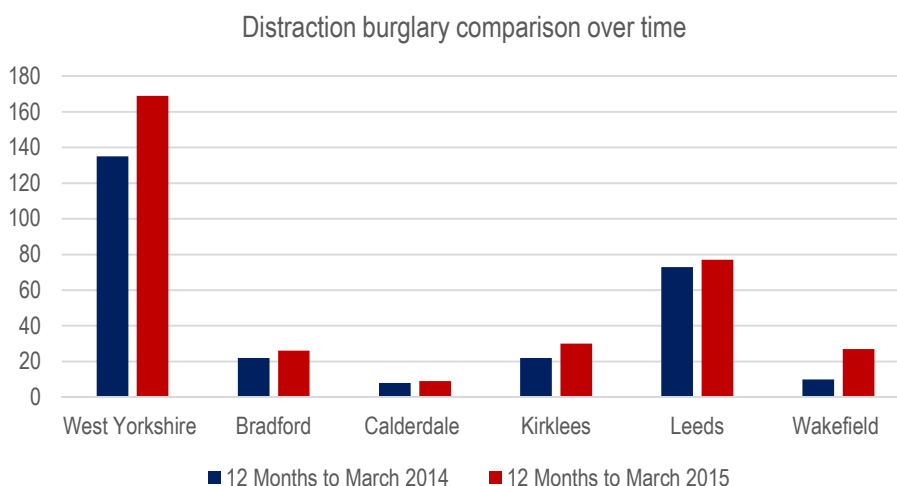
When questioned about this, the police stated that there was no single explanation for the rise although there are a number of contributing factors such a rise in blackmail via social media and historic reporting. It is possible that the recent cyber-crime awareness campaigns have led to increased confidence in reporting this sort of crime however that is difficult to say at this stage. Encouragingly, there is no indication of a rise in blackmail linked to organised crime.

THEFT OF MOTOR VEHICLE

There has been an increase of 3% (3,494 to 3,610) in theft of vehicle across West Yorkshire, although this is more significant in Bradford (14% - 874 to 998 offences). Much of the rise is linked to a specific vehicular security vulnerability and similar trends are being seen nationally. The police have tasked their Force Crime Prevention Officer to engage with the vehicle manufacturer to establish a solution or way to improve the security going forward.

DISTRACTION BURGLARY

Distraction burglary was raised in May following a rise of 4% in Leeds, with an action plan being put in place to tackle the rise through target hardening, intelligence development and trigger plans. Since then Leeds has remained stable however distraction burglary in West Yorkshire as a whole has risen by 25% from 135 to 169. Although the number of distraction burglaries only account for 0.7% of all burglaries in West Yorkshire the fact that this crime type often affects the most vulnerable residents makes it a serious cause for concern. When I shared these concerns with the police they responded stating that there has been a national increase in deception and fraud and also more localised networks, and the root causes of this is being explored.



VEHICLE INTERFERENCE

The recorded levels of vehicle interference have risen by 162% in the 12 months to March 2015 from 965 to 2,527 offences, which initially is very concerning. However this is not due to a genuine increase in this crime type, rather it is the result of changes to the categorisation of certain vehicle crimes. The Home Office Counting Rules changed meaning that crimes which were once recorded as an attempt theft from a vehicle may now be classed as a vehicle interference depending on the level of “contact” that the offender has with the vehicle. To ensure that the police are not missing any genuine rises, they are reviewing these two crime types together, which on the whole have reduced.

PUBLIC ORDER OFFENCES

There has also been a 10% rise (4,684 to 5,150) in recorded levels of public order offences when the 12 months to March 15 is compared to 14. When this quarter (Jan-Mar 15) is compared to the same quarter last year the increase jumps to 41%. The police explained that it may be due in part to a change in recording practice and national crime recording standards; fights in the street involving pushing and shouting may have previously been recorded as anti-social behaviour but may now be linked to non-injury violent crime or public order, resulting in an increase in these crime types. Analysis suggests that there has been no increase in the level of threat, harm and risk to the public.