

# Auditing and assessing violence against women and girls (VAWG) investigations

Wiltshire Police have implemented an audit and assessment process to quality assure and provide feedback on investigations into violence against women and girls (VAWG).

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## Key details

|                          |                                                                                                                 |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Stage of practice</b> | Untested                                                                                                        |
| <b>Purpose</b>           | Organisational                                                                                                  |
| <b>Topic</b>             | Violence against women and girls<br>Investigation<br>Productivity                                               |
| <b>Organisation</b>      | <a href="#">Wiltshire Police</a>                                                                                |
| <b>HMICFRS report</b>    | <a href="#">PEEL 2025–27 Police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy: An inspection of Wiltshire Police</a> |
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| <b>Region</b>            | South West                                                                                                      |
| <b>Partners</b>          | Police                                                                                                          |

## Key details

|                                |                              |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------|
| <b>Stage of implementation</b> | The practice is implemented. |
| <b>Start date</b>              | May 2025                     |
| <b>Scale of initiative</b>     | Local                        |
| <b>Target group</b>            | Workforce                    |

## Aim

The aim of the initiative is to quality?assure investigations, primarily those involving violence against women and girls (VAWG) offences, to ensure a quality service is delivered for victims.

## Intended outcome

The intended outcomes of the initiative are to:

- improve victims' experience with the criminal justice system
- improve how the force identifies vulnerable, intimidated, persistently targeted and serious crime (VIPS) victims to ensure they receive their enhanced rights under the Victims' Code of Practice (VCOP)
- reduce investigation delays
- improve the quality of 'golden hour' enquiries, reasonable lines of enquiry and supervision

## Description

Following Wiltshire Police's His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) inspection in 2022, the force was placed into Engage status. In response to the inspection, the deputy chief constable established an audit and assessment team. The purpose of the team is to provide independent quality assurance of VAWG investigations. The team was tasked with assessing investigative standards and delivering an evidence?based assessment of how effectively the force investigates crime.

## Roles and team

The audit and investigation team consists of:

- five detective constables who are professionalising investigations programme (PIP) level one and two trained
- three detective sergeants responsible for quality assuring the audits, providing feedback to supervisors and delivering specific training or mentoring

## Planning process

The team developed an audit to gauge compliance with VCOP. VAWG investigations were selected for the audit due to the cross-cutting themes of the offence type, which include:

- vulnerable and intimidated victims
- VCOP
- investigation delays
- forensic
- telephony
- third party material, 'golden hour' enquiries
- evidence-led policing

The audit was initially trialled in a single community policing team area which included both urban and rural populations. The purpose of the trial was to support the identification of key themes relating to vulnerability, investigation, and supervision. Following the pilot, the team provided an assessment of the findings to the local superintendent.

## Implementation

The team developed a Qlik Sense dashboard linked to a Microsoft Form submission, which records and analyses key performance indicators (KPIs) related to vulnerability, investigation, and supervision. The KPIs have been set by the deputy chief constable and focus on the following aspects of investigative quality and victim services:

- quality of the investigations,
- identification of VIPS

- compliance with victim needs assessments (VNA) and VCOP
- supervisory oversight
- adherence to investigation plans
- timeliness of reviews,
- effective application of golden hour principles and reasonable lines of enquiry

While the application captures a broader set of performance indicators, those listed above are presented within the Qlik application as a high-level overview of the force's performance. This allows senior leaders to quickly assess organisational performance, with the ability to drill down further into departments, stations, and individual teams.

The auditors complete the Microsoft Form which contains questions on:

- vulnerability
- investigation and supervision
- assessing VNA
- victim contact contracts
- delays
- 'golden hour' enquiries

Auditors receive a combination of in-person and online training, covering local inputs and providing opportunities to practise conducting audits.

Access to the Qlik application is primarily granted at chief inspector level, reflecting their responsibility for managing local performance. Qlik users are required to watch a training video explaining how to access and interpret the data within the system.

Departmental performance assessments are conducted jointly by the audit manager and the deputy chief constable, alongside the relevant departmental senior leadership team. Findings are formally presented every six months, and a continuous improvement plan is agreed. A follow-up review is undertaken six months later to assess progress against the identified actions.

## Cost and senior management approval

There was no cost involved in the planning and implementation of the audit and assessment process. The initiative is supported by the deputy chief constable who meets with the audit manager on a monthly basis to check progress.

## Overall impact

The audit and assessment process has provided the force with an increased understanding into the standard and quality of investigations. The force have conducted a survey and received 79 responses:

How clear did you find the feedback in your report?

- 65 found the feedback very clear
- 11 found the feedback somewhat clear
- three found the feedback unclear

Did the feedback highlight the areas where you perform well in your Supervision?

- 52 said yes definitely
- 22 said yes somewhat
- five said no

Did the feedback help you identify areas where you can enhance your supervision?

- 40 answered yes definitely
- 29 answered yes somewhat
- 10 answered no

Do you think the recommendations in your feedback report are achievable?

- 58 said yes
- 18 said partially
- three said no

The following feedback has been provided by two sergeants:

- "I'm comfortable in the way it was delivered and I found it useful. I took away learning point which would help in future investigations / occurrences."
- "More than happy with this, it was constructive without feeling oppressive or demeaning. Very happy with this and wish this would occur more!"

## Learning

- The process has been supported by the deputy chief constable, which has helped drive the implementation of the audit and assessment team.
- While the process is providing valuable insight to teams, there has been a significant increase in requests for investigative audits. In response, the audit and assessment team has managed the rise in demand by triaging cases.
- The audits are designed to be detailed and time-intensive, enabling the collection of in-depth investigative data. This data is used by the VAWG team to provide insight at both force-wide and individual officer level.

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