

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST

REQUEST NUMBER: 4 - 2025

REQUEST DETAILS:

1. What are your office's key priorities for improving women's safety in Suffolk?
2. How does your office ensure that tackling violence against women and girls (VAWG) is a priority within Suffolk Police's strategy?
3. Have you consulted with women in the community to understand their safety concerns? If so, what actions have been taken based on their feedback ?
4. What portion of the police budget is specifically allocated to initiatives aimed at protecting women?
5. Can you provide a breakdown of how this funding is being spent, such as on public safety measures , victim support, or officer training?
6. Has your office secured or applied for additional funding, such as the Safer Streets Fund, to address women's safety? If so, how has this money been allocated?
7. Are there any plans to increase funding for women's safety initiatives in Suffolk?
8. How do you ensure that the funds allocated to women's safety are spent effectively and transparently?
9. What partnerships does your office have with local councils, community organisations, or charities to improve women's safety?
10. Are there any awareness campaigns or educational initiatives being funded to promote women's safety and prevent violence against women?
11. How do you measure the success of initiatives aimed at improving women's safety in Suffolk?
12. Can you provide recent data or reports on trends in violence against women and girls in Suffolk , and how these figures have influenced your priorities?
13. What mechanism are in place to hold Suffolk Police accountable for their actions and spending on women's safety?
14. Are there any upcoming strategies or programs focused on women's safety that your office is planning to launch?
15. What do you see as the biggest challenges in addressing violence against women and girls in Suffolk, and how are you addressing them?

RESPONSE

1. The Police and Crime Plan outlines the PCC's priority to 'Provide services which support victims of crime', within this there is a commitment to ensure quality provision to support all victims of Domestic Abuse (DA), sexual violence, as well as support effective DA perpetrator provision to prevent abuse. The Police and Crime Plan must take consideration of the national Strategic Policing Requirement, which in its most recent iteration has put greater prominence in tackling Violence Against Woman and Girls (VAWG). In addition, the PCC is a key contributor to the county's VAWG Strategy, providing data on victims' services and ensuring the victim voice from our services is a part of discussion. Furthermore, since July 2023 we have been successful in applying for over £800k from the Home Office Safer Streets Fund. The projects aim to make the county safer, which includes VAWG-related areas. More information on our Safer Streets projects can be found on the PCC's website: <https://suffolk-pcc.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/31-2023-Safer-Streets-Fund-Round-5.pdf> <https://suffolk-pcc.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/Safer-Streets-Fund-Round-5-Year-2.pdf>
2. Monitoring progress towards the objectives within the PCC's Police and Crime Plan is managed through the Performance Framework (<https://suffolk-pcc.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Police-and-Crime-Plan-2022-2025-Performance-Framework.pdf>). Within this framework, it highlights that the PCC's Accountability and Performance Panel is the key mechanism for holding the Chief Constable to account on tackling VAWG. This is through the 6-monthly Supporting Vulnerable Victims paper. The most recent report can be found on the PCC's website: https://suffolk-pcc.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/4.-AP24_40-Supporting-Vulnerable-Victims.pdf). In addition, as tackling VAWG is within the national Strategic Policing Requirement, the PCC uses this panel to hold the Chief Constable to account on ensuring capacity and capability.
3. The PCC's commissioning team are in regular contact with victims services. Services often provide evidence and accounts of victims experience which is then used to help develop our commissioning strategy and future work. In addition, the PCC attends many events which in turn allows the PCC to develop his priorities when updating the Police and Crime Plan. This also feeds into the county's wider VAWG strategy which uses direct lived experience to set objectives, which is managed by Suffolk County Council.
4. The Chief Constable is responsible to allocating budgets and our office cannot disclose this, an FOI will need to be submitted to Suffolk Constabulary. However, the PCC's commissioning budget for victims is around £2.1m, of which nearly all is directly VAWG-related.
5. The Chief Constable is responsible to allocating budgets and our office cannot disclose this, an FOI will need to be submitted to Suffolk Constabulary. However, in relation to the PCC's commissioning budget stated above, attached is a breakdown (Appendix 1).
6. See Q1 for details.

7. For 2025/26, the MOJ has given PCCs a single year settlement. This represents a 4.2% cut, however funding for victims of DA and Sexual Violence has been ringfenced and has not reduced. The PCC has no plans to cut services, however, the government's National Insurance employer contributions increase will have an impact on services.
8. For transparency, the PCC's commissioning decisions are published onto the website for public use. All decisions can be found here: <https://suffolk-pcc.gov.uk/key-info/decisions>
9. As previously stated, we attend the county's VAWG Steering Group, we have been successful regarding the Safer Streets Fund, and our victims commissioning with community organisations is attached (Appendix 1) In addition to this:
 - We fund Town Pastors across Suffolk to provide safety within the nighttime economy. More information can be found on the PCC's website under 'Decisions'.
 - We work closely with Suffolk County Council regarding Domestic Abuse services. The PCC funds support for Standard and High-risk victims, and the Local Authority funds support for Medium-risk victims (through their Domestic Abuse Outreach Service). Collaboration is therefore key to ensure effective support countywide.
 - We work with Suffolk Community Foundation, who manage a £300k crime reduction grant fund for the PCC. This is aimed to fund grassroot projects that contribute to the Police and Crime Plan objectives. This can include projects that promote greater awareness and safety for victims.
10. We are aware of campaigns, but VAWG communications are coordinated by Suffolk County Council.
11. Within the PCC's commissioning, we assess outcomes around a service's ability to help a victim cope, recover, and rebuild, as well as perceptions of safety and confidence in the police. This is in line with the Ministry of Justice's reporting requirements for the grants we receive from national government. We will also look at the number of victims that received dedicated support to ensure money is being used effectively.
12. The Suffolk VAWG Strategy uses data to understand prevalence within the county. The most recent strategy can be found on Suffolk County Council's website: <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/asset-library/imported/accessible-version-violence-against-women-and-girls-strategy-2022-25.pdf>. A revised strategy is due in 2025, which will have updated figures, but a date to publish has not yet been confirmed. For additional figures on crime and offences, you can visit the Supporting Vulnerable Victims report that is linked above in Q2.
13. See answer for Q2.
14. The Police and Crime Plan for 2025-29 is currently in development, this is due to be published in April. In addition, I have mentioned at Q12 the revised countywide VAWG strategy.

15. Below are some of the main areas for concern for the PCC:

- The inconsistency in national funding is a challenge. Single-year settlements reduce our ability to plan for the future and create insecurity in victim services. The government is in the process of developing a case for multi-year funding after 2025/26, which would provide needed stability.
- Confidence in reporting to police is low. For the Constabulary, this is about improving community engagement and ensuring investigations are more victims-led. For Rape and Serious Sexual Offences, Operation Soteria is a national initiative to improve victims' experience of the police. This is being implemented in Suffolk, as well as assessing best practice in the police's approach to tackling Domestic Abuse.
- Criminal Justice System challenges, such as court backlogs are delaying justice and increasing victim attrition. Better ways of working are addressed through the Local Criminal Justice Board, and this includes improving victim communication, increasing capacity to deal with cases, as well as prioritising vulnerable victims.
- A greater focus on prevention is needed. The PCC's new Police and Crime Plan puts greater emphasis on the need to work closer with young people and reduce exploitation, violence, and improve the safety of those vulnerable.

Location	Service Delivery	Service Provider	Description	Funding until	Funding for 2024/25
Suffolk	All Crime Types	Norfolk & Suffolk Victim Care Service (NSVC)	Free, confidential guidance and support to all victims or witnesses of crime whether or not the crime has been reported to the police. Support is available to adults and children and young people. The service also offers guidance to the victim as they navigate through the Criminal Justice System. The service is jointly commissioned by Norfolk and Suffolk Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) and managed by the national organisation Victim Support. Police referrals should be made on the basis of informed consent from the victim. Self-referral is available. NSVC also provide specialist support to standard risk victims of domestic abuse (DA).	30.9.2025	24/25 - £321,158 25/26 – £168,876
		The Restorative Justice (RJ) Hub	Restorative Justice (RJ) is a victim centred approach and brings those harmed or affected by crime or conflict and those responsible for the harm into communication. RJ can help a victim cope and recover from the impact or crime. The service is currently jointly commissioned by Norfolk and Suffolk PCCs and managed by the Norfolk and Suffolk Constabularies.	31.3.2025	£60,768
	DA (High Risk)	Independent Domestic Violence Advisory (IDVA) Service	The Suffolk IDVA Service provides high quality support for high-risk victims of domestic abuse (DA) from initial reporting to police through to support at court. Referrals to this service are through the police/ MARAC. Specialist IDVAs provide support in court, to young persons, male victims, and those from minority communities. The service is managed by Leeway Domestic Violence and Abuse Services.	30.9.2026	£689,985
	DA	East Suffolk and North Essex NHS Foundation Trust (ESNEFT)	IDVA within a health setting to provide specialist support to elderly victims of DA. The IDVA is based at Ipswich hospital and will risk assess, provide short term support and refer any patient who is a victim of DA to appropriate services. The IDVA will also work to promote awareness of DA within the hospital and wider health community.	31.3.2025	£10,000
		Anglia Care Trust	Money Advice Service for victims of DA. The service is accessed through the Domestic Abuse Outreach Service (DAOS), 24/7 Suffolk DA helpline or referral from other agencies/DA support organisations across Suffolk.	31.3.2025	£35,000
	DA/CYP	Leeway – Children and Young Persons Outreach (CAYPO) service	Funding supports a gap in services for CYP victims of DA. This service is a pilot to support children of IDVA clients aged 5-15 who have experienced DA and are resident with a non-abusive parent with group & one to one work. The support would continue when the children move into the community and are resettling into their new communities. There were 244 dependent children of high-risk victims of DA in 3 months giving an indication of demand.	31.3.2025	£115,396
	DA/BAME	The Phoebe Centre (PHOEBE)	2 x VAWG outreach workers, training, administration, and some overhead costs. Support for women and children from Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic, and migrant communities in Suffolk. For victims of DA they help find safe temporary accommodation, completing visa applications, facilitate support groups, providing counselling and casework, and legal advice. Supporting	31.3.2025	£45,000

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			women to access education and employment opportunities, and improve their English enables victims to become more independent and more able to leave abusive relationships.		
Ipswich	DA	Lighthouse Women's Aid	The funding will support the following roles to deliver the core services from the Centre as well as contributing to premises and overheads: Crisis Worker; Advice & Support Worker; Project Worker (facilitating programmes). Advice, guidance and programmes are delivered from the Centre, by telephone, online or face to face. The Centre supports predominantly in the Ipswich area of Suffolk.	31.3.2025	£75,000
West	DA	Alumah	Specific support to children and young people affected by DA in West Suffolk through a trauma intervention programme. Funding is utilised towards staff and organisation costs which directly supports this work'	31.3.2025	£6,500
		Bury St Edmunds Women's Aid Centre	Contribution towards the Outreach Centre in Bury St Edmunds including staff and property costs. The Centre provides space for small group and recreational therapy as well as counselling rooms. It brings in external organisations to support victims with housing, legal and therapeutic needs and supports survivors to ensure their continued safety and recovery to break the cycle of DA. There is also support for male victims as well as women and children.	31.3.2025	£50,000
		Compassion	The continued employment of the part time Lead Programme Facilitator to run support groups, one to one support and programmes for victims of DA in the Babergh area of Suffolk. A proportion of the funding will support the employment of the DA Project Manager. Compassion supports women and their families with advice, guidance and programmes in addition to providing information and signposting to those making enquiries.	31.3.2025	£20,000
East	DA	Waveney Domestic Violence and Abuse Forum	Funding for a part time charity manager and the Advice and Guidance worker and contribute to the core costs of supporting victims of DA.	31.3.2025	£35,000
Suffolk	Sexual Violence	Suffolk Rape Crisis	Contribution to the overall costs of "Outreach@SRC", staff salaries for three members directly delivering the outreach work, administration, management, and office overheads. One to one practical and emotional support, online courses and groups and face to face groups with women and girls who have been subject to sexual violence whether recent or historic.	31.7.2024	£30,000 ¹
		Survivors in Transition	Funding for specialist trauma support for adult survivors of Child Sexual Abuse (individuals and group programmes), male victims of sexual assault and young people's (13+) support and therapy.	31.3.2025	£150,000 ²

¹ Please note that due to the closure of Suffolk Rape Crisis at the end of July 2024, £60,000 of its £90,000 annual grant award was reallocated to Survivors in Transition to ensure there is specialist support available to victims of sexual violence in Suffolk.

² The £90,000 grant allocation increased by £60,000, totalling £150k to Survivors in Transition.

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			Survivors in Transition (SiT) have been providing support for adult survivors of CSA and sexual violence in Suffolk since 2010.		
		Brave Futures (formerly Fresh Start New Beginnings)	Contribution to trauma treatment for 60 children, young people, and their families per annum. The organisation provides a therapeutic treatment service for child victims of sexual abuse to address the short and longer term symptoms of trauma. Treatment prevents or decreases the incidence of the difficulties sexually abused children experience and increases wellbeing at the point in time as well as enabling them to lead successful adult lives in time.	31.3.2025	£60,000
		Sexual Assault Referral Centre - (ISVAs)	Funding for 7.81 FTE Independent Sexual Violence Advisors (ISVAs) within the service to focus on awareness and engagement with minority communities and specialist ISVAs for young people and those learning disabilities.	31.3.2025	£324,382
		Restitute	Contribution to dedicated support worker costs for core family support services. Restitute supports 3rd party victims of crime – the parents, carers and siblings of those who have survived sexual abuse, sexual violence or other serious violence including DA. The service provides practical and emotional support (including counselling where necessary), supporting clients through child protection processes and ensuring there is a reduction in harm and risk for all members of the family.	31.3.2025	£30,000
Total				£2,227,065	