

Report to the Thames Valley Police & Crime Panel

Title: Topical Issues

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New figures reveal how many sex offenders are living in the Thames Valley Police area

<https://www.buckinghamshirelive.com/news/buckinghamshire-news/buckinghamshire-crime-new-figures-reveal-6168688>

Nearly 2,000 sex offenders live in Thames Valley - but with crimes up and convictions down offenders may be missed from schemes aimed at protecting the public.

There were 1,959 registered sex offenders living in the Thames Valley Police force area at the end of March 2021.

This is the equivalent of one sex offender for every 1,082 people aged 10 and over.

Compared to March 2020, the number of sex offenders in Thames Valley has fallen slightly from 1,963.

However, it has risen by 104% over the past decade since the police force level figures were first published at the end of 2010/11.

The figures released by the Ministry of Justice cover offenders managed by Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) aimed at preventing further offences.

Sex offenders are required to notify the police of certain details, with further notification required if any of those details change (sometimes referred to as 'being on the sex offenders register').

The increase in the number of sex offenders is influenced by sentencing trends, as well as a cumulative effect on the figures, with offenders often required to register for long periods of time, including for life.

Offenders can apply for a review of lifetime notification requirements, after at least 15 years for adults and eight years for juveniles - a total of 12 offenders in Thames Valley had these requirements revoked in 2020/21.

The MoJ report on the figures says increases in the number of offenders covered by MAPPA have slowed in recent years as “fewer people have been convicted of sexual offences in the last four years and more people are no longer subject to notification requirements in recent years”.

Police in Thames Valley recorded 5,878 sexual offences in the year to June 2021, new figures show.

That was up from 5,536 a year before, and numbers have grown from 2,053 reported in the year ending June 2011.

However, convictions are low, at 153 in 2020 (the most recent figures available), down from 177 in 2019 and 273 in 2016.

The MoJ report says Sexual Harm Prevention Orders (SHPOs) have also fallen for the fourth year running, coinciding with the decreasing number of people being convicted of sexual offences.

SHPOs are aimed at preventing sexual harm, and prevent convicted offenders from doing anything described in the order, which can include a prohibition on foreign travel. Breaching a SOPO/SHPO is a criminal offence punishable by up to five years' imprisonment.

Last year, 132 SHPOs were issued in Thames Valley, down from 170 in 2019/20.

Press Release from PCC - Launch of Community Speedwatch scheme across Thames Valley

Following the success of a pilot scheme earlier this year, a Community Speedwatch scheme has launched across Thames Valley this week. The pilot, which ran in small areas of Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire, was so successful the whole of Thames Valley can now take part with the hope of reducing speeding in our communities.

Championed by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, new Speedwatch groups are being invited to take part in activities to both tackle and improve road safety across the region. As part of this work, they will have the opportunity to borrow speed detection equipment and devices, helping trained volunteers to assist in the battle against speeding motorists.

Matthew Barber, Police and Crime Commissioner for Thames Valley, said: “I want to embed Community Speedwatch as a core part of Thames Valley's response to road safety. The work that the volunteers of this scheme do is vital to the wider strategy to keep everyone safe on our roads.

“We're delighted with how the pilots have gone and that we can now open up this scheme to the rest of the Thames Valley. Community Speedwatch is just part of a strategy to keep us all safe. The data gathered by Community Speedwatch will now be immediately visible to roads policing officers. The results from this work will lead into enforcement action by the police, and even notify the DVLA of breaches that fall within their jurisdiction.

“Undoubtedly the work of the volunteers on this scheme, in collaboration with Thames Valley Police, is helping to save lives and keep people safe.”

PC Lee Turnham, Thames Valley Police Community Speedwatch Co-ordinator, said:

“Following a successful pilot period earlier this year, where we trialled a new system, the online training and support of volunteers has enabled us to capture important data which in turn has helped police activity.

“The pilot scheme has been running since April and has proven to be a platform of which individuals and the Police are able to work seamlessly. To that end, I am really pleased that the new platform will now be rolled out across Thames Valley within the next three months.”

Before community teams are able to attend the roadside, they undergo a number of training sessions, to ensure risk assessments have been completed and protocols have been adhered to.

Court Delays

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-58910799>

Huge rise in domestic abuse cases being dropped in England and Wales

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-58910802>

Victims of alleged domestic abuse are seeing their cases dropped at a rapidly increasing rate, according to data obtained by the BBC.

The time limit to charge common assault - including instances of domestic violence - is six months. Nearly 13,000 cases were dropped in England and Wales over five years after the authorities hit that limit.

Campaigners say women are being denied justice and the police and prosecutors should be given more time. The new figures relate to common assault cases - which includes things like a push, threatening words or being spat at - and which are normally dealt with at magistrates court.

But three-quarters of all domestic abuse cases - including sexual assaults - are closed early without the suspect being charged, according to a report by HM inspector of constabulary.

And just 1.6% of rape allegations in England and Wales result in someone being charged, something the government has said it is "deeply ashamed" about.

Victims of domestic common assault are sometimes reluctant to come forward and the cases can be complex - which is why campaigners say the police should be given more time to investigate them.

A government spokesman said all allegations should be investigated and pursued where possible, and money had been invested to support victims of such crimes during the pandemic.

The six-month time limit is meant to keep the criminal justice system moving - but campaigners are calling for it to be extended to two years in instances of domestic violence.

Figures obtained by the BBC using Freedom of Information from 30 of the 43 police forces in England and Wales, reveals a huge increase in allegations of common assault involving domestic abuse - but a fall in the number of charges being brought.

From 2016-17 to 2020-21 there were at least 12,982 cases of common assault that were flagged as involving domestic abuse in which no-one was charged due to the time limit.

There has been a 159% increase in the number of times common assaults flagged as involving domestic abuse have not been charged because of this time limit.

The data was not broken down by gender and covers both men and women.

Between 2016-17 and 2020-21 the total number of common assaults flagged as instances of domestic abuse increased by 71% from 99,134 to 170,013.

In the same time period, the number of these common assaults that resulted in charges being brought fell by 23%.

Victims of Domestic Abuse get more time to report crimes

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-58980387>

Knife Crime in Oxford

<https://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/19660810.three-knife-attacks-fortnight-police-face-calls-do-more/>