VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS
Strategic Delivery and Assurance

To	Police Accountability Board
From	T/Detective Superintendent Dave Taylor
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Purpose	Assurance and strategic update

1. Purpose

This paper seeks to provide the Police Accountability Board with assurance on Cambridgeshire Constabulary's strategic and operational response to Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG). It summarises the current policing model, progress with major safeguarding reforms, the position across priority crime types, workforce training and the arrangements used to maintain professional standards and victim-focused service delivery.

2. Recommendation

The Board is invited to:

- Note the progress being made through the Constabulary's VAWG strategy, Operation Soteria and strengthened governance arrangements.
- Note the scale and interdependency of the specialist Rape and Serious Sexual Offence (RASSO) and Families First / Multi Agency Child Protection Team (MACPT) change programmes.
- Note the current risks relating to specialist workforce capacity, digital complexity, Claire's Law DVDS resilience and consistency outside specialist teams.
- Support continued partnership work with local authorities, health, education and the OPCC to strengthen safeguarding and specialist victim services.

3. Headline Assurance

Area	Assessment	Board-level interpretation
Strategic direction	Progressing	• Quarterly ACC chaired force VAWG governance meeting with a developing performance framework to align domestic abuse, sexual violence, stalking, HBA, offender management, prevention and victim experience. • Launch of refreshed force DA 4P delivery plan
Major reforms	Progressing with implementation	• Specialist RASSO teams are being developed for the Home Office mandated December 2027 national deadline. • MACPT implementation is being developed with both local authorities for March / April 2027. • The force is supporting Cambridgeshire LA with a MACPT pilot in East Cambs due to launch in early October.

Victim service	Progressing	• Specialist pathways and Soteria principles are established, but service consistency remains more variable where cases sit outside specialist teams. • The implementation of specialist RASSO teams will improve service delivery in this area.
Capacity and resilience	Progressing with risk	• Overlapping reforms rely on the same specialist detectives, supervisory, and safeguarding staff. DVDS has also depended on overtime and abstraction. A review of the MASH as part of specialist RASSO and MACPT implementation will resolve this issue.
Evidence of impact	Developing	• Governance and activity are clearer with evidence of improved victim outcomes. • Compliance and progress against the force adopted Operation Soteria transformation plan

4. Current Policing Model and Governance

The Constabulary's response is a whole-system model combining frontline policing, specialist investigation, safeguarding hubs, partnership decision-making, offender management, prevention and commissioned victim support. The model is intended to avoid treating individual offence types as disconnected workstreams and to apply consistent principles of early safeguarding, professional curiosity, with a suspect focused and victim-centred investigation.

Component	Core contribution	Primary assurance
Frontline response and local investigation	Initial response, risk identification, evidence capture, safeguarding and investigation of offences outside specialist allocation.	• Supervisory reviews, allocation standards, training and specialist escalation routes. • Audits through the force DCS led Crime Standards Delivery Group (CSDG) • D/Supt led DA scrutiny panels to be implemented by the end of the year. • Implementation of IDVAs within the force control room as part of Raneem's Law recommendations

		which has been underway since June, evaluation awaited • Adoption of the NCVPP digital VAWG online toolkits. Now embedded on force systems with single sign on through the ICT service portal available to all staff.
Protecting Vulnerable People	Specialist RASSO, child abuse, adult abuse, MASH, MOSOVO and safeguarding leadership.	Senior PVP oversight with bi-weekly performance reviews, daily management, performance dashboards, and thematic review.
Multi-agency safeguarding	MASH, MARAC, child-protection strategy discussions and developing MACPT arrangements.	Shared decision-making, information sharing, tasking and partnership governance in the form of the MASH Governance Board.
Prevention and perpetrator management	DVDS, civil orders, stalking interventions, repeat-perpetrator identification and disruption.	• VAWG governance, order monitoring, breach activity and high-harm scrutiny. • VAWG perpetrator panels based on the DA perpetrator panel model commence on the 30th October. • Drive DA perpetrator Programme. • Working group set up for Domestic Abuse Protection Orders (DAPOs) with a phased implementation from November 2026. • DVDS backlogs significantly reduced

		through Operation Marmoset
Victim support	ISVA, CHISVA, IDVA and wider commissioned support pathways.	OPCC commissioning, partnership agreements and victim-support referral arrangements. Internal process being developed to support officers and staff who may be victims of DA through 'own my life' This is in addition to the PPDA policy and process.

4.1 Strategic governance

The quarterly VAWG Governance Board provides regular coordination, scrutiny and accountability across investigations, prevention, partnerships, Operation Soteria and victim voice. The performance framework includes domestic abuse, RASSO, stalking and harassment, honour-based abuse, non-contact sexual offending, MASH, MARAC, DVDS, Civil orders, offender management, commissioned services and workforce capability.

This provides a clear route for risks to be identified, owned and escalated. The main improvement requirement is to strengthen outcome-based and preventative measures so that assurance extends beyond activity completed or training delivered and demonstrates whether victims experience safer, more timely and more consistent services.

4.2 Strategic risks requiring continued visibility

- Detective and supervisory capacity is shared across existing safeguarding demand and two major mandated reforms (MACPT and specialist RASSO teams)
- Digital evidence and online offending increase investigation time, disclosure requirements and specialist support needs. This is one of the pillar areas on the force Operation Soteria transformation plan.
- Partnership delivery is dependent on two local-authority models, health and education participation, information-sharing arrangements and commissioning capacity. A Government pause on LGR has removed some uncertainty for the short term.
- Specialist skills take time to develop and cannot always be expanded immediately in response to demand.

4.3 Performance and evidence of impact

A VAWG performance dashboard has been developed to bring together crime trends, investigative outcomes, victim disengagement, repeat victimisation, protective-order activity and victim feedback.

A separate DA performance dashboard has also been developed to support delivery at team, district and force level.

Overall performance delivery is monitored through the force Crime Performance Accountability Meeting (CPAM)

Rape performance (child and adult) is subject to a separate bi-weekly PVP D/Supt led performance review.

Of note force solved rate performance for rape and serious sexual offences outcomes is at the highest level for over a year.

Current national solved rate data as of July 2026 shows the force 14th nationally for rape outcomes (compared with 36th in July 2025) and 15th nationally for serious sexual offences outcomes (compared to 35th in July 2025)

Crime Type	Cambs	Rank 12mth Jul26	Rank 12mth Jul25	National Average	MSG Average	National Best	MSG Best
All Crime	18.0%	10th	24th	15.5%	16.2%	Cheshire 23.5%	Cheshire 23.5%
Rape	10.3%	14th	36th	9.4%	8.6%	Durham 16.7%	Cheshire 13.3%
Serious Sexual Offences	10.9%	15th	35th	10.0%	9.8%	City of London 18.7%	Cheshire 15.5%

5. Families First Partnership Programme and MACPT

The Families First Partnership Programme is a significant DfE led reform of family help and child protection. It brings local authorities, police, health and education into a more integrated model, which includes Multi-Agency Child Protection Teams intended to improve joint decision-making for children experiencing significant harm, abuse, neglect or exploitation.

Cambridgeshire is developing two locally tailored but connected arrangements through the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough local authorities. A Detective Inspector has been assigned to the programme and is working with both local authorities on practice frameworks, decision-making processes, workforce implications and the relationship with existing MASH, child-exploitation and child-abuse functions.

Expected benefit	Current progress	Risk or dependency
Earlier, more coordinated safeguarding	Practice-framework and operating-model work is progressing with both local authorities.	The two local arrangements must remain sufficiently consistent for police deployment, governance and quality assurance.

Better multi-agency decision-making	The developing framework emphasises strategy discussions and child protection conferences, agency contributions, decisions, actions, ownership and recording.	National expectations for the precise scope and fidelity of MACPT remain subject to ongoing review. Feedback and learning has been taken from pilot areas. As stated the force is supporting a Cambridgeshire pilot in East Cambs.
Reduced duplication and clearer ownership	Demand and process mapping is informing the future relationship between MASH, CAISU, CE and MACPT.	Without aligned workforce and digital systems, structural reform may move rather than reduce pressure.
Improved child and family experience	The model supports earlier help, shared safeguarding plans and more proportionate intervention. MACPT will deliver consistent support to children and families	Police protection, ROTH, missing children and wider child-protection processes require clear interfaces and escalation routes.

5.1 Workforce and implementation considerations

MACPT implementation is interdependent with the creation of specialist RASSO teams because both affect the future remit of existing child-abuse teams and require appropriately skilled and trained detectives and supervisors. The implementation approach must therefore be based on evidenced demand, clear allocation rules and realistic assumptions about recruitment, accreditation and partner capacity.

Delivery against the March 2027 national deadline requires continued senior oversight. The principal assurance questions are whether the model is adequately resourced, whether decisions and disagreements are consistently recorded, whether investigation and safeguarding responsibilities are unambiguous, and whether the new arrangements improve safeguarding, timeliness and outcomes.

6. Domestic Abuse including PPDA and DVDS

Domestic abuse remains a high-volume and high-harm priority. The operational response combines DARA risk assessment, MASH triage, MARAC, evidence-led investigation, safeguarding, DVDS, protective orders, perpetrator management and scrutiny of repeat and high-risk cases. A force domestic-abuse delivery plan uses a four-pillar approach, with a superintendent-chaired scrutiny process being developed to test practice from first attendance through investigation, outcome and closure.

There is an embedded PPDA policy and procedure in place which operates across Beds, Cambs and Herts. The policy has recently been reviewed and widened and so the remit is now wider than DA and includes police perpetrated sexual offences, including non DA sexual offences.

A new process is being implemented across Cambridgeshire to support female police officer and staff victims of DA. The force is working with ‘Own my life’ to train staff who will then be able provide to support within the workplace. It is recognised that this will include non- PPDA

offending and a separate policy will be implemented in relation to this. The force has also been liaising with Bedfordshire Police in relation to their Operation Bluebell which supports police officer and staff victims of violence and abuse.

DVDS performance has previously presented a recognised safeguarding risk. The function has operated without dedicated staffing and has relied on MASH abstraction and overtime to manage sustained demand. This has made performance sensitive to workforce absence and competing safeguarding pressures.

The immediate level of risk has reduced through senior oversight, performance dashboards, temporary support from other policing functions, overtime and targeted recovery activity. Additional fixed-term staff are being recruited to strengthen recovery and resilience. The position continues to require active management and these measures do not provide a sustainable long-term operating model. The PVP review is therefore considering dedicated prevention-focused DVDS capacity. There is an ongoing review of options to identify and implement proportionate digital tools to reduce repetitive research and administrative activity.

7. Priority Crime-Type Position

Crime type	Current approach and progress	Key concern / next focus
Domestic abuse	DARA, MASH/MARAC, evidence-led investigation, DVDS, civil orders, perpetrator management and governance through the VAWG framework.	Timeliness, repeat victimisation, victim disengagement, protective-order use and sustainable DVDS capacity.
Rape and sexual violence	Adult rape is investigated by the specialist Rape Investigation Team. Soteria products, CPS templates, victim information and ISVA/CHISVA relationships support delivery.	Other serious sexual offences remain distributed across PVP, online-child-abuse and local teams, creating a risk of variable specialist knowledge and supervision.
Stalking	Investigation quality, safeguarding, specialist support, Stalking Protection Orders and breach enforcement are monitored through VAWG governance.	Consistent identification of stalking patterns, early civil-order consideration, breach oversight and learning from the national super-complaint.
Honour-based abuse	Managed through specialist safeguarding and VAWG arrangements, with risk and investigative oversight within PVP.	Low-volume, high-risk cases require specialist knowledge, careful information handling and culturally informed safeguarding.
Child sexual abuse and exploitation	CAISU, OCAST and CE functions manage the highest-risk work with multi-agency safeguarding. Operation Beaconport is supporting national review of group-based CSAE cases.	Digital scale, historic investigations, cross-team allocation and the interface between MACPT and specialist RASSO.
Organised Drug Facilitated Sexual Assault	Linked referrals are routed to the Rape Investigation Team with a single DI SIO and senior PVP oversight. Force contact, intelligence and crime-management functions have been briefed.	Complex cross-border evidence, concealed victimisation, victim notification and the need for tailored specialist support.

7.1 Operation Beaconport

Operation Beaconport is an NCA-led national operation that is developing a consistent approach to reviewing and investigating group-based child sexual abuse and exploitation. Forces have reviewed relevant records against national criteria, enabling a broader understanding of offending patterns and opportunities for investigative and safeguarding learning. Locally, the work is connected to child-exploitation governance and future PVP structures. A service specification has been developed with the OPCC for specialist ISVA support associated with Operation Beaconport, alongside work to strengthen investigative capability and organisational learning.

7.2 Organised Drug Facilitated Sexual Assault (ODFSA)

Cambridgeshire manages linked referrals through specialist RASSO arrangements with senior oversight. A small number of referrals linked to the wider national activity have been received from other UK forces. Information has been shared with safeguarding and domestic abuse and sexual violence partnerships to support practitioner awareness while protecting sensitive operational detail.

Victims may have limited or no prior awareness of the offending and may require sustained, trauma-informed support alongside complex investigation and cross-force liaison.

The force have links to the national SIO forum for ODFSA and to the NCVPP through regional RASSO meetings.

8. Training, Workforce Capability and Consistency

Operation Soteria provides the central improvement framework for rape and serious sexual offence investigations. Its principles are victim-centred, suspect-focused and context-led. At the September 2026 update, a significant proportion of transformation actions were recorded as complete or in progress. Current priorities include supervisory standards, specialist-team implementation, repeat-perpetrator management, civil-order use and improved intelligence and performance arrangements. Locally, training and practice products include specialist investigator programmes, first-response training, continuing professional development, victim-information products, CPS advice templates and joint-working arrangements with specialist support providers.

8.1 Specialist RASSO development

The national deadline for specialist rape and sexual offence teams is December 2027. Current modelling indicates that the future team will require a broader remit than adult rape alone and will draw work from local investigation teams, child-abuse teams and elements of online child-abuse investigation. The intended benefit is clearer ownership, specialist supervision, improved victim engagement and greater consistency of investigation.

The main constraint is the number of suitably trained investigators and supervisors. Specialist RASSO and child-abuse accreditation takes time, and the implementation plan must avoid destabilising existing safeguarding functions while new structures are created.

8.2 Digital and online offending

VAWG investigations increasingly involve social media, devices, online contact, non-consensual intimate images, spiking-related evidence and extensive digital disclosure. A new VAWG digital toolkit provides officers and staff with rapid access to guidance and legislation

concerning online harm, spiking and intimate-image abuse. This supports, but does not replace, professional curiosity, specialist advice and officer engagement with victims.

8.3 Ensuring a professional service outside specialist teams

Control	Status	How it supports consistency
Allocation and investigation standards	Established	Set expectations for ownership, investigative plans, safeguarding and escalation.
Routine supervisory review	Established	Tests risk, victim contact, lines of enquiry, suspect focus, timeliness and use of protective measures.
Specialist advice and escalation	Established	Provides access to PVP, RASSO, stalking, digital and safeguarding expertise. NCVPP VAWG toolkits are now linked to the force intranet allowing frontline responders and investigators instant ‘single sign on’ access. This negates the previous requirement to access a separate website and log in.
Revised review templates and dashboards	Being strengthened	Improves visibility of backlogs, ageing, outcomes, compliance and the quality of supervisory decision-making.
Thematic audit and scrutiny	Being strengthened	Tests whether practice reflects policy and identifies learning, repeat gaps and improvement activity.
Specialist RASSO allocation and supervision	Future model	Will provide more consistent specialist ownership for the most serious sexual offences within the PVP department and significantly reduce the volume of investigations allocated to non specialist investigators.

8.4 National super-complaints (Stalking and RASSO)

Learning from HMICFRS inspections, safeguarding reviews, the Angiolini Inquiry and national super-complaints is incorporated through policy, training, audit and governance.

In relation to stalking and wider VAWG offences, the focus is on accurate identification of patterns, professional curiosity, timely safeguarding, effective use of civil orders and clear supervisory accountability. Assurance must demonstrate that this learning enhances and improves operation practice, not only that communications or training have been issued.

The force has made good progress against the Stalking super complaint action plan with all actions either complete or in progress.

Details are awaited on the national action plan related to the RASSO super complaint. Updates from the NCVPP suggest it is likely that the action plan and HMICFRS scrutiny will focus on legacy investigations particularly those over three years old. The force is in an improving position around legacy investigations with an embedded performance management process.

This is an area covered in the PVP D/Supt led bi-weekly performance review. The aspiration is that there are no RASSO investigations over 18 months ongoing by the end of this calendar year held within the RIT and CAISU teams. Investigations over three years in length have been significantly reduced over the previous 10 months.

There is PVP D/Supt oversight of legacy RASSO cases within local policing teams with monthly performance data provided by the corporate performance team. Local area standards and assurance DCIs have local oversight of cases which are also less than 10 per area.

Oversight of case numbers for local areas will be monitored through the force Crime Performance Accountability Meeting (CPAM)

Oversight of the force RASSO super complaint action plan once published will be through PVP SLT and the force VAWG governance meeting.

9. Assurance Assessment and Forward Priorities

Priority	Required action / assurance	Proposed evidence
Sustainable specialist operating model	Complete integrated modelling for specialist RASSO, MACPT and associated PVP functions.	Approved structure, demand assumptions, allocation policy, workforce plan and implementation milestones delivered within the stated timescales (March / April 2027 for MACPT, December 2027 specialist RASSO)
DVDS resilience	Move from temporary recovery controls to a sustainable capacity model.	Review of current and future resource profile through the PVP operating model review. Proposed timescales in line with MACPT and specialist RASSO implementation.
Victim experience and outcomes	Strengthen measures beyond process completion.	Victim feedback (including through the DASV partner network), disengagement and attrition levels, timeliness, repeat victimisation, safeguarding outcomes and complaints learning. Implement the ‘own my life’ supportive process for officers and staff

Consistency outside specialist teams	Test service quality where VAWG investigations remain locally allocated.	Dip-sampling, supervisory compliance, investigation-plan quality and escalation records. DA scrutiny panel.
Digital capability	Improve access to skills, tools and expert support for online and device-heavy investigations.	Training completion, DFU timeliness and prioritisation process review, toolkit use, audit findings and case reviews.
Partnership delivery	Maintain aligned governance with local authorities, health, education, OPCC and commissioned services.	MACPT readiness, information-sharing arrangements, joint audit and service-commissioning milestones. Police representation at relevant partnership subgroups and boards including at DSP and exec level.

10. Conclusion

The paper seeks to demonstrate the Constabulary can provide assurance that strategic governance, specialist capability and transformation activity are in place and progressing. Regular governance, project delivery, Operation Soteria, specialist investigation, safeguarding partnerships and performance oversight provide a coherent basis for delivery.

Assurance is strongest in relation to governance, ownership and implementation activity. It is more limited in relation to sustained workforce resilience, consistent standards outside specialist teams and measurable improvement in victim experience and outcomes. The key issue is the safe and sustainable implementation of several interdependent reforms. Specialist RASSO and MACPT offer substantial opportunities to improve consistency, joint decision-making and victim service, but they rely on overlapping specialist workforce capacity and clear partnership arrangements. DVDS recovery controls have mitigated immediate risk, although a sustainable staffing and operating model remains a priority with planned delivery as part of the MACPT and specialist RASSO operating model.

Over the next reporting period, proposed assurance will focus on delivery against the RASSO and MACPT implementation milestones, sustainable DVDS performance, investigative standards outside specialist teams, and clearer evidence of impact on victim safeguarding, confidence and experience. These measures will allow the Board to assess not only whether activity has been completed, but whether the policing response is becoming more consistent, timely and effective.