

Policing Violence
Against Women
and Girls and
Operation Soteria
**National
Recognition
Event**

17 September 2024



10.00	Arrival and refreshments
10.30	Welcome Sameena Ali-Khan
10.35	Open DCC Maggie Blyth, National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) Portfolio Lead - Violence Against Women and Girls
10.45	Presentation Rob Flanagan, Salesforce
11.00	Recognition ceremony – awards 1 to 4
11.30	Break
11.50	Recognition ceremony – awards 5 and 6
12.10	Presentation D Supt Carly Humphreys, Chair of GB Women's Police Football Team
12.20	Presentation Simon Franc, kulpa
12.30	Lunch and networking
13.30	Recognition ceremony – awards 7, 8 and Special Recognition award
14.10	Special guest
14.30	Thank you
15.00	End



Working together to tackle and reduce violence against women and girls continues to be a key focus for policing and our partners. We know we must respond as part of a whole system approach to be truly successful.

Last year, the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) hosted an event to recognise some of that determination and dedication individuals and forces around the country have shown in their efforts to reduce violence against women and girls.

From the work of a passionate Police Community Support Officer to safeguard sex workers in the local community, through to the pioneering use of technology to pinpoint dangerous offenders, there was a huge variety of work to demonstrate how our policing family is looking to improve the safety of women and girls.

This year, we asked for nominations of police officers, staff members, special constables, or volunteers within and outside of policing, including partners, and members of the public.

Nominations were reviewed by regional policing panels before a national judging panel including policing colleagues and stakeholders made the final decision.

This event is an opportunity for you to share your stories, promising practice and be acknowledged for all your efforts.

There is still such a long way to go before we successfully tackle violence against women and girls, but these awards acknowledge the green shoots of change.

DCC Maggie Blyth
National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC)
Portfolio Lead - Violence Against Women
and Girls





DCC Maggie Blyth, Deputy CEO, College of Policing, National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) Portfolio Lead - Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG)

Maggie has operational experience of working in and managing criminal justice services over 30 years, with specialist knowledge of public protection working as a practitioner and manager in probation and prisons, youth justice and child protection.

In the early part of her career, she worked across London and Oxford in the probation service and set up the first youth offending service in Oxfordshire. During 2000- 2016 she held national roles with the Youth Justice and Parole Boards for England and Wales. In 2016, Maggie joined policing as a district commander with responsibility for Portsmouth City as Superintendent. After completing the National Police Strategic Command Course in 2019 she held the role of Assistant Chief Constable for Local Policing which included oversight of public protection services across Wiltshire, Hampshire and the Isle of Wight.

In 2021 Maggie was appointed the National Police Chiefs' Council lead for violence against women and girls, with oversight of the national policing response to VAWG, including portfolio lead for Violence and Public Protection. In November 2023, she became the Deputy Chief Executive Officer of the College of Policing, whilst retaining the NPCC lead for tackling VAWG and chair of the national Violence and Public Protection Board.



Sameena Ali-Khan

Sameena has been the main anchor for ITV News Central in the Midlands since 2005 and she also presents the ITN national news bulletins.

She has reported on hundreds of stories, presented many outside broadcasts and interviewed guests from all walks of life, across daily news and documentaries.

After studying Physiology and Chemistry Sameena was drawn to journalism. She first started working on commercial radio in Manchester and then moved to BBC Television before ITV.

Her presenting style is warm, intelligent, and authoritative and she has won numerous awards during her broadcasting career including three RTS Best Onscreen Personality awards and two RTS National News Programme awards.

She is a patron for Breaking the Silence - a domestic abuse charity that helps female survivors of any kind of violence. She has also done a special report with a survivor of a grooming gang in Telford who waived her right to anonymity.

She has two children, loves cooking, travelling and music. She is also a judge for Pride of Birmingham and regularly speaks at colleges to the next generation of broadcasters.



Simon Franc, kulpa

For the last 14 years, Simon Franc has held the position of Chief Executive Officer for a leading forensic science service provider, during which time he has overseen forensic analysis and expert witness testimony given in over 7,000 criminal cases.

More recently, Simon founded kulpa, a mobile app for securely storing and sharing evidence that is immediately usable and legally admissible.

Each year, there are over four million victims of violence against women and girls offences, including rape, sexual offences, domestic violence, domestic abuse, stalking and harassment. With kulpa, victims of these crimes can now capture and store evidence, ensuring it is safe and legally admissible should they choose to share it with the police or a lawyer.

kulpa reduces the embarrassment and humiliation of reporting and should mean that, in a vast number of cases, policing will not need to download the victim's entire device – a process which is invasive and stressful for the victim and one of the reasons many victims drop out of the system.

The use of the kulpa app will also reduce the amount of lost or missing evidence and, more than that, its use should improve the quantity and quality of evidence. No longer should a majority of reported incidents need to be marked as having an 'evidential difficulty.' Instead, when the user chooses to share the evidence they have via the platform, police should have a wealth of authenticated and verified evidence which they can quickly use to arrest the subject and safeguard the victim.



Rob Flanagan, Strategic Accounts Lead, Salesforce Analytics

Prior to joining Salesforce in 2022, Rob spent 20 years serving as a police officer and then as a member of staff, working with the National Police Chiefs' Council, the Home Office and the College of Policing. He dedicated his career to driving innovation and supporting the vital work of the UK's public services. His journey from operational and strategic roles in policing, through national government, and now into the technology sector with Salesforce, has been fuelled by a deep commitment to improving community safety and protecting the most vulnerable.



D/Supt Carly Humphreys, Chair of Great Britain (GB) Women's Police Football Team

Carly Humphreys is a Detective Superintendent at City of London Police and also Chair of the Great Britain Women's Police Football Team. Carly has held this role for a year and is supporting the team to qualify for the Women's Police Euros in Germany 2025. The team are working closely with the NPCC VAWG portfolio to bring about shared opportunities to improve women's safety and trust and confidence through sport.







Category 1: Victim centred and collaborative working

WINNER: Louise Sproson, Cleveland Police

The initial response to rape victims is essential for procedural justice, providing them with support and recognition. In Cleveland, Sexual Offences Liaison Officers (SOLO), who volunteer in addition to their regular duties, faced burnout when Louise took the lead, with only 30 active officers.

Louise worked to enhance the SOLO role, training 130 new officers since 2020 and overseeing recruitment and training courses. She established support structures, including a dedicated Det Sgt for each local policing area to aid SOLOs.

Louise also organised Continuous Professional Development (CPD) days with subject matter experts and trained Police Constable Degree Apprenticeship (PCDA) cohorts on sexual offences. As the liaison with ARCH Teeside, a specialist sexual violence service, she built a strong relationship that improves services for victims, with ARCH's Barbara Pawson praising her efforts.

Under her leadership, every rape victim in Cleveland has access to a SOLO officer, leading to better victim support, more recognition for SOLOs, and reduced burnout due to peer networks. Louise's commitment is truly admirable and impactful.

Victim centred and collaborative working

- Effective engagement with stakeholders to affect change
- Victim-focused activity
- Engaging with others and making a difference – to plans, activities and outputs
- Seeing a problem through together

RUNNER UP

Lizzie Lewandowski, West Midlands Police

Lizzie worked to address misogyny and abuse faced by female officers at football events. At the 2023 Football Season debrief, she passionately highlighted these issues, prompting West Midlands Police to take proactive measures against misogyny. Her collaboration with #HerGameToo led to new strategies for improving safety for women and girls at matches, including training for officers and public awareness campaigns.

Lizzie's efforts resulted in arrests for public order offences against women in football, highlighting her impact. By bringing together diverse stakeholders, she fostered a collaborative approach to tackle sexism in the sport. Her personal experiences and leadership have made a significant difference, ensuring that football events are safer for all.

Category 2: Improving culture and conduct internally

WINNER: Steve Jones, South Wales Police

Steve's unwavering commitment to eliminating corruption in the police service has led to extensive work with the national violence against women and girls (VAWG) taskforce, where he has dedicated personal time to create the first internal threat problem profile for police-perpetrated VAWG. This initiative aims to understand the scale and nature of the issue while addressing challenges faced by Professional Standards Departments in investigations.

He developed a Centurion data script to standardise data collection across forces and crafted detailed questions for in-depth case analysis, leading to meaningful recommendations for prevention and enforcement. His contributions will help inform policy and improve responses to VAWG.

Additionally, Steve has significantly enhanced the Anti-Corruption Unit's search tool by expanding its keyword database, identifying over 7,000 new search elements. His innovative approach not only targets offenders but also considers the responses of victims and witnesses. His work has led to the first custodial sentence for a police officer caught proactively.



Our winners

Improving culture and conduct internally

- Changing internal culture, including addressing sexism and misogyny
- Upstander work
- Challenging rape myths and stereotypes
- Communication campaigns
- Professional standards activity
- Promoting awareness of intersectionality

RUNNERS UP

Rachael Barcas, Maria Brookman (rtd) and Lynsey Dawson, Merseyside Police

Recent incidents of police officers abusing their positions have eroded trust among sex workers. Rachael, the liaison officer for Red Umbrella, has built crucial relationships with these vulnerable individuals, encouraging them to report crimes.

To further enhance confidence, officers from the Anti-Corruption Unit, including Maria and Lynsey, have engaged in outreach work, explaining how misconduct is investigated. Lynsey also created a presentation on warning signs of abuse, ensuring that reports from sex workers are taken seriously.

As a result of these efforts, several sex workers have come forward to share their experiences of police misconduct, crediting Rachael, Maria, and Lynsey for helping them regain confidence in the police.

Victim centred and collaborative working

- A force, team, individual, or a member of the public who has dedicated time and experience to challenging violence against women and girls
- Effective leadership skills within VAWG
- Effective leadership skills demonstrated in the implementation of Op Soteria

Category 3: Violence against women and girls ambassador

WINNER: Lisa Squire

Libby Squire was a university student who tragically disappeared in 2019 and was later found to have been raped and murdered. Her killer had a history of sexual offences. Since then, Libby's mother, Lisa, has passionately campaigned for personal safety awareness among young students and advocated for tougher sentences for men convicted of non-contact sexual offences, like voyeurism, along with therapy support.

Lisa collaborates closely with police forces while balancing her full-time job as a nurse. She has supported Thames Valley Police's violence against women and girls (VAWG) strategy, educating officers about the impact of these crimes and the potential for non-contact offenders to escalate to more serious offences. She also speaks to new cohorts of Metropolitan Police officers about Libby's story and the importance of being a supportive first contact for survivors.

Additionally, Lisa has worked with Humberside Police on a public awareness campaign to encourage reporting of non-contact sexual offences. Recently, she has been involved in an educational campaign for KS4 students, set to launch during Fresher's Week, and is working with the Government to advocate for changes in sentencing for non-contact offences.

Lisa shares her and Libby's story at universities, schools, and conferences, leaving audiences inspired by her passion for change and education. Her dedication to raising awareness about VAWG and its various crime types is invaluable, making a significant impact on how young people perceive personal safety.



RUNNER UP

Nia Mellor, British Transport Police

Nia has dedicated over five years to promoting awareness of Violence and Intimidation against Women and Girls (VIAWG). As a Detective Inspector and later a Detective Chief Inspector, she has educated colleagues and advocated for cultural change within the police force.

Her involvement in initiatives like the Virtual Reality campaign and the Railway Guardian app demonstrates her innovative approach to tackling these issues. Nia has raised national awareness by speaking in the House of Commons and actively collaborates with partners to create safer environments for women and girls. Her role as the VIAWG tactical lead and support for the White Ribbon movement further highlight her commitment.



Category 4: Behaviour change in perpetrators

WINNERS: Karen Butler, Metropolitan Police Service (MPS), Stephen Kelly (MPS), Dr Alan Underwood and Sara Henley (NHS North London Mental Health Partnership), Ricardo Munoz-Bailey (Probation Service) and Raimonda Svirskis (Suzy Lamplugh Trust)

The nominees are leaders of a multi-agency stalking unit that has been operational for six years, combining health, probation, advocacy, and police efforts. This unit focuses on perpetrator behaviour change through mental health interventions and probation management while providing essential advocacy services for victims, who are predominantly female (80% victimisation rate).

Since the introduction of Stalking Protection Orders (SPO) in 2020, the unit has achieved the highest national rates of delivery, significantly protecting victims. Remarkably, 78% of offenders did not re-offend, and there was a 71% reduction in recorded stalking offences, thanks to thorough risk assessments and multi-agency collaboration.

The police team also supports higher-tier cases under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997, maintaining a charge rate above 15%, surpassing national averages. Additionally, the unit has delivered training across the criminal justice sector, achieving over 90% satisfaction rates, which is crucial for keeping the system informed and effective.

Continuing to innovate, the team is exploring ways to enhance engagement with behavioural change initiatives for Stalking Protection Order respondents, furthering their impactful work in this critical area.

Behaviour change in perpetrators

- Interventions focused on education and rehabilitation of a perpetrator or perpetrators
- Use of protective orders to change behaviours
- Stakeholder engagement
- Innovative activity under Pillars 1 and 2 of Op Soteria to improve suspect focus





RUNNERS UP

Martin Treen and Tom Curlett-New, Northants Police

The nominees identified a gap in managing individuals considered a sexual and/or violent risk who did not fit existing offender management provisions. To address this, they established the Potentially Dangerous Person (PDP) Panel, aimed at proactively managing emerging risks to the public.

Since its first meeting in September 2023, the panel has achieved significant success, including:

- 64 cases referred
- 52 cases adopted (81%)
- 7 Sexual Risk Orders granted (with 7 more in process)
- 1 Stalking Protection Order in application
- 3 Sexual Harm Prevention Orders in application
- 2 Violent Offender Orders in application

The panel has also developed safeguarding plans for those not qualifying for orders and has fostered positive partnerships, resulting in a reduction in police incidents. The PDP process is now fully embedded, with ongoing training for supervisors to identify potential referrals. The nominees' dedication has led to a substantial positive impact in a short time, successfully achieving their goals.



Category 5: Effective working with children and young people regarding violence against women and girls

WINNERS: County Schools Challenge Team, Northants Police

The County Schools Challenge (CSC) is a unique police-led partnership project involving secondary schools, including those for Special Educational Needs. Using a Dragon's Den-style approach, the CSC encourages students to consider the impact of actions and develop solutions to local issues, particularly focusing on violence against women and girls (VAWG).

In the 2023/2024 campaign, 26 schools participated, engaging over 4,000 students in discussions about VAWG, misogyny, and the roles of bystanders and upstanders. Students work in teams to create innovative products or services that promote respect, consent, and healthy relationships, fostering discussions in mixed-gender groups.

Schools receive resources, including posters with QR codes linking to local support organisations. The initiative has led to several positive outcomes, such as increased student ownership of the issue, greater awareness of misogyny's effects, and a shift in attitudes towards VAWG, contributing to safer schools and communities.

Each school can submit one team to the semi-finals at police headquarters, where they present their ideas to a panel of judges, including the Domestic Abuse Commissioner and Chief Constable. The top eight teams compete in a grand finale at a local theatre, attended by around 300 people. The winning product will be produced to raise awareness of VAWG across the county.

Effective working with children and young people regarding violence against women and girls

- Educational settings
- Multi-agency approaches
- Proactive or reactive activity
- Social and community settings
- Initiatives including media and communication campaigns
- Programmes for younger victims and family members of victims



RUNNERS UP

Wealdon Volunteer Police Cadets

The Volunteer Police Cadet Unit in a rural policing district is addressing violence against women and girls (VAWG) to inform their peers. They believe schools are crucial for prevention, especially for students about to enter the wider world who often lack police interaction and information.

The Cadets aim to present to all Year 11 students, emphasising that violence can happen anywhere and highlighting the important role males play in supporting their communities. They have created a 6.5-minute presentation filled with impactful statistics and provide students with information packs on domestic abuse, stalking, and drink spiking prevention.

So far, the presentation has reached 760 students, with 382 information packs distributed. Feedback has been positive, with many students previously unaware of these issues. The Cadets have shown enthusiasm throughout the process and aim to expand their message to more students in neighbouring districts to help stop violence against women and girls.



Category 6: Focusing violence against women and girls related delivery with seldom heard communities

WINNERS: Jo Ritchie, Barnardo's and Rose Brown, Avon & Somerset Police

In March 2020, police raised concerns about young people at risk of child exploitation in an area affected by street sex work, prompting a large-scale investigation to disrupt a network of perpetrators and protect exploited children. A location assessment identified the area as a hotspot for child sexual and criminal exploitation, leading Jo to recognise that street sex workers could provide valuable insights into identifying at-risk youth.

This realisation led to the creation of “Night Light,” a partnership project co-led by Jo from Barnardo's and Rose, a Police Sex Work Liaison Officer. The initiative involves a small team from the police and partner agencies patrolling the area from 7pm to early morning, allowing the women to share vital safeguarding information.

In the past nine months, Night Light has interacted with the women 96 times, safeguarded 12 children, assisted in the remand of a potential serial rapist, and submitted intelligence on 32 children and young people. The project has also responded to increased reports of sexual violence from the women, leading to arrests and interventions with missing children and those at risk of grooming.

Night Light aims to raise awareness for potential replication of the project. Jo and Rose presented their initiative at the National Sex Work Conference, generating national interest. Three constabularies have expressed interest in replicating the model, and there has been increased media coverage, including features on Sky News and discussions with the BBC.

Their goal is to empower street sex workers in safeguarding vulnerable children and preventing future exploitation.

Focusing violence against women and girls related delivery with seldom heard communities

- Innovative approaches to engaging with seldom-heard local communities (to include homelessness, mental health, disability, LGBTQ+, gypsy, Roma, travellers, religious groups, ethnic minorities, asylum seekers) and responding to their needs
- Innovative approaches under Pillar 3 of Op Soteria to engage with seldom heard communities
- Innovative approaches to upskilling officers/staff to understand how VAWG may impact on women and girls from minoritised communities



RUNNERS UP

Joanne Parks, West Yorkshire Police

Jo's compassionate approach has not only fostered trust between the police and sex workers but has also significantly improved the reporting of crimes against this often-marginalised community. By prioritising the voices and wishes of sex workers, she has created a more respectful and dignified environment for them, which is so important in addressing the violence they face.

Her proactive engagement, especially with migrant sex workers who may fear law enforcement, has led to increased awareness of their rights, and has encouraged many to come forward in support of human trafficking investigations.

Jo's dedication, even in the face of challenging local politics, displays her commitment to championing the rights and safety of sex workers. Her willingness to go above and beyond, including participating in community initiatives, reflects her deep-rooted passion for justice. Her impact will be felt for years to come, not just within her force but across the broader community.

Dipti Manani, Leicestershire Police

Dipti has effectively navigated the complexities of diverse communities by creating a welcoming space for open dialogue, especially around sensitive topics like domestic and sexual abuse. By organising monthly coffee mornings and collaborating with various partners, she has not only increased awareness but also built trust within the community.

Her innovative approach, which includes multilingual leaflets and outreach through local radio, has made a significant impact, reaching over 1,000 attendees. Moreover, her commitment to inclusivity, especially in addressing the needs of both women and men in the community, highlights her dedication to fostering a safer environment for everyone. Dipti's efforts are a fantastic example of how community engagement can lead to positive change.



Category 7: Technology and its use in tackling violence against women and girls, including innovative approaches to support the implementation of Op Soteria

There are joint winners in this category:

WINNER: Rob Mason, Bill Tillbrook, Craig Downham, Liam Macdougall, and Simon Laurence, Police Digital Service

Rob, Bill, Craig, Liam and Simon are the core team behind a life-changing service, managed by the Police Digital Service. The service consists of a bespoke technology solution which provides support to victims and survivors of abuse, including domestic abuse, stalking and harassment. Bill, Craig and Liam are on shift duty to give 24/7 support to police forces and, together with Simon and Rob, they work tirelessly to improve the service.

On numerous occasions, this solution has saved lives and led to the arrest, conviction, and imprisonment of an offender. Several victims have also testified that the service has provided them with reassurance and helped them to get their lives back after abuse.

Thanks to Rob, Bill, Craig, Liam and Simon's continued dedication, 29,556 individuals have been helped over the lifetime of the service and 15,046 victims and survivors felt threatened enough to activate the service and seek support over the last five years.

Recent improvements have made this service available in 43 languages and is now embedded within 36 police forces across the UK.

The entire team has proven to put victims and survivors at the heart of their approach, helping to increase confidence and improving trust among the most vulnerable.

Technology and its use in tackling violence against women and girls, including innovative approaches to support the implementation of Op Soteria

- Small scale or large scale
- Internal or external focused
- An educational tool
- Keeping women and girls safe
- Preventing behaviour
- Pillar 6 Op Soteria initiatives

WINNER: Greig Watkins, British Transport Police (BTP)

The Streamline matching system, built by Greig Watkins and his BTP's Visual Identification Bureau (VIB), is a fantastic innovation that addresses the challenges of isolated investigations in cases of violence against women and girls. By creating a searchable database of suspect images and linking offences that might have otherwise gone unnoticed, the VIB is significantly enhancing the ability to identify and apprehend offenders.

The system not only aids in connecting crimes across different jurisdictions but also helps prioritise resources to tackle the most serious offenders. The collaboration with the Metropolitan Police to capture cross-border offences is a great example of how teamwork can lead to more effective policing. This proactive approach not only helps bring offenders to justice but also plays a crucial role in preventing further victimisation.





RUNNERS UP (Category 7)

Sarah Marsh, Emily Mohan, Kent Police

In a remarkable advancement in the fight against domestic abuse and violence against women and girls, Sarah and Emily's use of SmartWater's forensic marking technology not only helps in identifying perpetrators but also serves as a deterrent for future offences. This initiative has expanded across the force and has already led to significant outcomes, such as the recent arrest and conviction of a prolific offender.

The collaboration with the College of Policing for evaluation and best practices further emphasises the importance of this innovative approach with the technology being harnessed in such an impactful way to support victims and enhance safety.

Angie Jones, NPCC Hydrant Programme

Angie implemented a robust data collection and analysis process, enabling law enforcement agencies to gain a clearer picture of the scale and nature of child sexual abuse. The creation of the Child Protection Abuse and Investigation (CPAI) dataset and the Complex and Organised Child Abuse Database (CACAD) is a remarkable achievement, as it allows for a more coordinated and informed response to these serious issues.

The collaboration with various agencies, including the National Crime Agency and the Vulnerability Knowledge and Practice Programme, highlights the importance of sharing data to enhance strategic assessments and operational responses. It is encouraging to see that reports generated from this data are being used at multiple levels, from national to regional, to inform policy and strategy. This kind of innovation is crucial in tackling complex issues like child sexual abuse, and it is great to hear that the UK is now leading the way in understanding organised crime in this context.

Category 8: Making spaces safer

WINNER: West Mercia Prevention Hub

Operation Rudolph was a proactive initiative aimed at enhancing safety in West Mercia town centres. By focusing on behavioural detection, licensed premises checks, and targeted patrols, the operation not only aimed to prevent crime but also fostered a sense of security within the community, especially for women.

There was a notable decrease in violence against women and girls offences compared to previous years, as well as fewer public order incidents and concerns for safety. The training provided to officers and CCTV operators seems to have made a real difference in identifying and addressing predatory behaviour early on.

The staff involved found the new tactics effective and are motivated to continue using them in future operations. This cultural shift towards preventative measures is essential for long-term safety and community trust.



Our winners

Making spaces safer

- Online, private, or public spaces
- Stakeholder engagement
- Public engagement
- Innovative practice
- Evidence based practice

RUNNER UP

Poppy Murray, Founder, SafetyNet

Poppy's work with the BeLads campaign and the SafetyNet charity addresses the critical issue of women's safety in a constructive and inclusive way, with a platform that encourages men to be allies without placing blame. Her approach fosters understanding and collaboration, which is essential for making real change in communities.

She has managed to engage with a wide range of organisations, from police forces to sports clubs, training various sectors to raise awareness about violence against women and girls. Her ability to speak in front of large audiences shows her dedication and passion for the cause.

Poppy's commitment to running both the BeLads campaign and the SafetyNet charity alongside her full-time job demonstrates her incredible work ethic and passion for creating safer spaces for everyone. The impact she has made locally is significant, and her influence is growing nationally as well.



Special Recognition Award

WINNER: Avon and Somerset Bluestone Team, represented by Andy Fox, Rich Marsh, Andy Branch and Paul Melton.

This award is for the police team which helped instigate Bluestone, supported the first research, and set the benchmark nationally as a pathfinder. As the National Police Chiefs' Council noted in May 2024, "much learning is being taken from this force to inform the practice of Adopter and Expansion Forces and the ongoing development of the National Operating Model".

The Bluestone research began in early 2021. Academics, led by Professor Betsy Stanko and Professor Katrin Hohl, undertook a deep dive into the force's practices around Rape and Serious Sexual Offences (RASSO) and in May of that year set out force-specific findings. Over the following two years, the team's task was multi-fold; they:

- Responded to those 19 findings and made immediate improvements
- From mid-2021, worked closely (via weekly meetings, boards etc.) with the emerging Soteria team to define its national objectives, areas of focus and ways of working
- Built a brand-new RASSO investigative unit from scratch. This unit acted as a testbed for emerging Soteria thinking
- Drafted many of the documents which ultimately became National Operating Model products, and workshopped most of the others, providing insight to the academic team
- Worked closely with the Soteria "theory of change" leaders to help develop the change model now used across the Soteria programme. Many of the project-management tools now used nationally have their roots in this team

- Trialled the new course for PIP1 RASSO investigators, and then far-exceeded the national target for uptake
- Committed energetically to the victim-centred “Police Experience” survey, and achieved the second-highest use nationally, behind only a much larger metropolitan force
- Hosted and chaired the pathfinder force Senior Responsible Officer network, and represented that group for two years on the national board
- Began, in early 2024, the roll-out of Soteria learning to non-RASSO investigators, becoming one of the first nationally to move forward on a key underpinning principle of the programme, that Soteria both shines a spotlight on and provides solutions for huge organisational challenges.

The team has achieved significant huge performance improvements during this period:

- Shortly before Bluestone, the force was 42nd nationally for its adult charge rate but by 2023 was 11th
- It now has the fourth highest suspect charges per 100,000 population in the country
- Its use of Early Advice – a key Soteria metric which illustrates the health of local Criminal Justice partnerships – improved 25% year on year when comparing 2023 with 2022
- Significant work to improve Crime Data Integrity and to build trust and confidence with partners such as the local Independent Sexual Violence Advisor Service and the Sexual Assault Referral Centre has contributed to the force now recording more adult rape offences per 100,000 population than any other force area; and the team now has sufficient capacity and capability to provide good service to every one of those victims.

This has been a huge team effort for over three years, involving Lisa, Rich, Andy and Paul. The force’s pillar leads, project team, and investigators have combined with huge effectiveness to host, test and help develop a hugely complex national programme and recognition of their shared efforts as a team is needed.





ACC Samatha Millar, Strategic Programme Director, Violence Against Women and Girls

“Violence against women and girls is a priority for policing, and as a Taskforce we are driving change for victims. I am proud of the individuals and the work we are recognising in this event and look forward to sharing it with you all to take back to your organisations.”



ACC Dee Perkins, Strategic Programme Director, Op Soteria

“Our Operation Soteria programme is working to deliver a transformative new approach to rape investigations and prosecutions. Much of the programme’s work focuses on helping forces to radically and sustainably improve procedural and outcome justice for victims of rape and sexual offences and those involved in investigating them. The awards today recognise many of those who are doing brilliant work in this area.”



Nicole Jacobs, Domestic Abuse Commissioner for England and Wales

“Being a part of the judging panel for this event gave me the opportunity to highlight the exceptional efforts of police officers who have gone above and beyond in their response to violence against women and girls.

“It is inspiring to see these individuals making such a meaningful impact. Their work serves as a reminder of the importance of a victim-centred approach in policing.

“Well done to those recognised for their outstanding contributions.”

Melanie Warnes, National Board Member, Police Federation of England and Wales

“It was an honour to sit as a panel member for the Violence Against Women and Girls and Op Soteria recognition event. The sheer volume of the nominations shows what great work and volume of work that is taking place up and down the country in these important areas. Well done to all those nominated.”

Natasha Rattu, Executive Director, Karma Nirvana

“It is great to be part of the panel for the National Violence Against Women and Girls’ Policing and Operation Soteria recognition event. We know that the epidemic of VAWG requires clear and strong accountability to address the many harms arising from it. We also recognise it very important to acknowledge positive policing practice to tackle VAWG to support a ‘culture change’ and inspire confidence for victims to come forward and report the crimes committed against them.”

Emma Lingley-Clark, Interim CEO, Suzy Lamplugh Trust

“It is vital that we champion good examples of policing so that other police forces can follow suit and learn from best practice. At the Trust, we work with the National Police Chiefs’ Council (NPCC) and local police forces to improve their response to stalking and ensure victims get the support and justice they deserve. Good policing can transform a victim’s experience of the criminal justice system, and these awards are a crucial initiative for showcasing this. We were delighted to be involved with the judging process of the VAWG police awards to ensure that new initiatives truly reflect the lived experience of the victims we speak to on a daily basis. We very much hope that this event will drive innovation and improve the national police response to victims of all forms of violence against women and girls which is so urgently needed.”

Brandy Hubbard, Head of Training and Development, SafeLives

“SafeLives is delighted to support the VAWG & Op Soteria Recognition Event. We’ve worked closely with so many forces over the years and have seen close up the commitment to improving the response to domestic abuse (DA) from many rank and file officers right through to senior leaders. Delivering cultural change is always hard, but we are proud to have worked alongside police and DA sector colleagues to help shape that change and congratulate every nominee and winner at today’s event.”

Debi Potter, chair of UNISON’s Police & Justice Service Group and Police Sector Committee (England and Wales)**Fiona Merkin, College of Policing, DEI (Diversity, Equality, and Inclusion) Coordinator****Abigail Ampofo, Interim CEO, Refuge****Sara Kirpatrick, CEO, Welsh Women’s Aid and Jo McAthey, Training and Education lead, Women’s Aid****Amelia Handy, Head of Policy and Public Affairs, Rape Crisis**

Thank you



We are incredibly grateful to our sponsors **Salesforce** and **kulpa**, helping us with the use of this wonderful venue, supporting us with the event management, and providing all the awards, food and drink at no cost.

Thank you to all the judges – regional panels and national panel – who read and scored all the submissions and gave so much time to this event.

Thank you too to all police forces who nominated work for the recognition event. Every piece of work that was submitted is testament to the hard work and dedication of police officers, staff, and volunteers and even the time taken to enter the event must be commended.

We hope that this will continue to be recognised in the years to come.



**Victims
empowered
to report**

**Police
receive**



**immediately
usable
evidence**

**Effective and
efficient
suspect-focused
investigations**



We bring **policing** **and citizens** **together.**

With Salesforce's trusted platform you can empower your teams to work more efficiently and cost-effectively, delivering better policing for their communities.



salesforce



Learn more about Salesforce
salesforce.com/uk/publicsector



www.npcc.police.uk/our-work/violence-against-women-and-girls

Published by the National Police Chiefs' Council September 2024