

John Howson (Liberal Democrat) - PCC Candidate for Thames Valley

All violence is abhorrent, and I hope that we have come a long way for the days when Erin Pizzy wrote 'Scream quietly of the neighbours will hear' . But, as you say, violence in relationships still exists and is under-reported, as is some other violence against women through sexual assaults. TVP police did institute domestic violence awareness training of both officers and others in the criminal justice system over a decade ago and recent improvements such as body cameras worn to incidents can record injuries not otherwise apparent later to a court. However, the police and other agencies failed in their prevention and awareness of sexual exploitation of both children and trafficked adults and more remains to be achieved in this area, not least in sexual abuse of children within familial settings.

Alongside the use of restorative justice I would place any inappropriate use of 'out of court' disposals that needed to be used sparingly, but we all know that the accusative method of justice that has been used in this country since the beginnings of the legal system works less well in many of these cases. indeed, there is a debate to be had about whether the European system of inquisitorial justice could serve victims better, but that is not for a lowly PCC candidate to decide.

The Conservative government has forced local authorities and the police to make cuts and that affects the services you mention along with many others. I have looked at the TVP data and they have a good record on some aspects, but a poor one on others, and I would challenge the Chief Constable if I am elected to improve where the force does not do well.

If I am elected, I am happy to discuss with your local representatives in Thames Valley where they think there are key priorities that the police can address and where the police can put pressure on other agencies to help.

Given the importance of this issue, I am surprised no organisation has arranged a hustings to meet the candidates and hear their views. Voters in the Thames Valley can read my answers to how I view the PCC role by going to www.jh4pccblog.wordpress.com

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