



Metropolitan Police Authority

Domestic and Sexual Violence Board Annual Report

2009-2010

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Chairs Foreword

We are proud to present the first annual report of the Metropolitan Police Authority Domestic and Sexual Violence Board (DSVB). This year has been one of continual change and growth, both at the DSVB and also in the field of tackling domestic and sexual violence in London.

In April of 2009, the MPA launched its Domestic and Sexual Violence Board, building on the success of the Domestic Violence Board between 2006 and 2008. In the same month, the serial sex offender John Worboys was sentenced to an indefinite jail term for a number of attacks on women in London. This case had followed another high profile investigation into a series of sex attacks by Kirk Reid. The investigations in both cases were flawed, and both were referred to the IPCC. A review into the way the MPS handled rape investigations had been completed and it had recently been announced that the investigation of serious sexual offences would move from the domain of borough policing into a specialist crime directorate.

In the same month, the Greater London Authority launched a consultation on the mayoral violence against women strategy, 'The Way Forward: A Call for Action to End Violence Against Women'. This came shortly after the launch of the consultation on the cross-government national strategy; 'Together we can end violence against women and girls'. Both place a greater focus on prevention of abuse, and drawing expertise and understanding together from the various fields of specialist responses to violence against women. Both recognise that women experience compound and varied forms of discrimination and abuse and that the different needs of women require provision of specialist support and a joined-up criminal justice system, and statutory services. With the country's most diverse population, in London this certainly holds true.

In July the DSVB held its annual thematic sessions and for the first time invited external organisations to present. The new sexual offences investigation command (SCD2) launched in September, and the DSVB heard from representatives from the new command several times to oversee the implementation of SCD2. In October the role of the DSVB Chair formally passed on from Cindy Butts and her contribution to the monitoring of the MPS in this field was publicly recognised by MPA Deputy Chair Kit Malthouse.

What has been notable in this past year is that whilst there has been so much improvement, some issues that crop up repeatedly; against which all this change does not seem to impact. It is these issues that we would like to focus on this year; the perennial problems which we found arose in so many of our discussions. With this in mind, DSVB is moving forward with a greater emphasis on supporting organisational learning, recognising good practice and placing a firm emphasis on ensuring better service delivery for victims of domestic and sexual violence.

Valerie Brasse and Kirsten Hearn
Co-Chairs, MPA Domestic and Sexual Violence Board

Executive Summary

In 2009, seven Borough Operational Command Units presented their response to domestic and sexual violence locally. These were; Bexley, Greenwich, Richmond, Merton, Wandsworth, Lambeth and Southwark. These boroughs explored in their reports and in discussions at the DSVB meetings; data on volume of reported domestic and sexual violence, and their performance outcomes; systems used to ensure compliance with MPS policy and processes to quality assure their services; the partnerships in place to holistically tackle domestic and sexual violence; the ways in which they engaged with victims and their local communities to inspire confidence and provide a service based on needs; and how organisational learning is used to develop better responses, as well as utilising their local expertise to inform MPS organisational learning. Two sessions of the DSVB were devoted to exploring issues on a MPS-wide basis; these focussed on disability and older people.

The findings section of this report explores the content of the reports and discussions at each of the DSVB meetings in 2009 in the context of MPS-wide service delivery and improvement.

The MPA also sends out a feedback questionnaire for Members, MPS Officers and BOCUs, and guests on the value of presenting to the DSVB, the outcomes for local policing and invites suggestions for MPS performance improvement. The questionnaire also invites comments on how the DSVB could improve its work in monitoring and scrutinising the MPS; responses to these are also considered below.

Together, they inform the MPA Domestic and Sexual Violence Board recommendations.

Recommendations to MPS

1. Review the volume of rapes and serious sexual offences which have been recorded as 'no-crime' or 'crime-related incidents' against the Home Office Counting Rules to ensure compliance.
2. Review the different levels of compliance across the MPS in recording domestic violence incidents and offences and support standardised compliance.
3. Borough Commanders to lobby their CDRPs to include sexual violence service provision within their CDRP priorities, projects and/or local service development plans.
4. Develop joint targets with CPS on both domestic and sexual violence.
5. Ensure consistent levels across MPS of community engagement with local communities specifically on domestic and sexual violence, and with diverse groups.

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6. Explore options for safely accessing feedback from victims of domestic violence, perhaps in partnership with stakeholders.
7. Disseminate the findings from their Domestic Violence homicide reviews across the MPS, and proactively identify learning opportunities from reviews across other business areas, such as Specialist Crime Directorate child protection serious case reviews, or reviews conducted into cases of rape and serious sexual offences. Disseminate also the critical success factors identified by Bexley to BOCUs.
8. Ensure that data on diversity of victims and offenders is collected and appropriately recorded.

Introduction

Since its inception in 2006, the Metropolitan Police Authority (MPA) Domestic Violence Board supported and challenged the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) to improve its response to domestic abuse. In the light of a regional and national shift towards a more integrated approach to different forms of violence against women, as well as in response to suggestions from members and stakeholders, the DVB became a Domestic and Sexual Violence Board (DSVB).

The volume of cases of domestic and sexual violence dealt with by the MPS has increased considerably in the last year. Given that both domestic and sexual violence are under-reported, any increase in members of the public coming forward to the police must be viewed as positive. However this also means that identifying whether or not increased reports are the result in an overall increase in rapes or domestic violence taking place is very difficult.

Borough reports provided to the DSVB detailed accounts of volume of reported crime locally, as well as the ways in which those crimes were being tackled by police and by local partnership initiatives. All the reports are available on the DSVB page of the MPA website, along with the follow-up reports which the MPA receives 6 months after the initial borough presentation, and which detail how the borough has responded to the issues raised at the DSVB meeting.

Between 01 October 2008 and 30 September 2009 the MPS recorded 118,920 incidents of domestic violence, of which 53,726 were recorded as crimes. Of those crimes, 24,757 resulted in a criminal justice outcome known as a Sanction Detection (either a conviction, or a caution). The Sanction Detection rate across the MPS was therefore 46%, which meets the corporate objective for the year 2009/10.

Offences of rape amounted to 2,400, with an additional 6,786 crimes recorded as serious sexual offences. Rape offences with a Sanction Detection numbered 752; therefore the Rape SD rate for the MPS as a whole was 31%, just missing the corporate target of 32%. Sanction Detections for serious sexual offences numbered 1838, which results in an SD rate of 27%, again narrowly missing a target of 28%. It should be added that the deadline for meeting these targets will be in March 2010 and that therefore the process of meeting these targets is still underway.

In comparison with MS data from 2007/08; the MPS recorded 108,197 incidents of domestic violence, of which 50,847 were crimes. Offences of Rape numbered 1,904, of which 635 resulted in a Sanction Detection (33%). undoubtedly have some influence on the final figures. Having said that, in the December meeting of the MPA Strategic and Operational Policing Committee it was noted that recorded rape had increased by just under 25% in 2009/10².

² Financial Year to Date. www.mpa.gov.uk/committees/sop December 3 Headline Performance Report.

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Data from five years ago³ shows the number of domestic violence incidents as 106,176, and the number of recorded crimes as 57, 944. The sanction detection rate for domestic violence was 32%. 2005-06 data for sexual violence⁴ shows that 8950 serious sex offences were reported, as well as 2,398 rapes. The sanction detection rate for rape at that time was almost 31%.

It is notable, therefore, that reported rapes have varied from 2,398 in 2005/06, to 1,904 in 2007/08, and finally reaching 2,400 in 2008/09. The sanction detection rate has remained relatively steady within that time period. It is hoped that the creation of a centralised Sapphire Command (SCD2), and changes such as centralised Crime Monitoring introduced to authorise all crime recording decisions in relation to rape allegations⁵ will support notable improvements in the coming months and years.

Incidents of domestic violence have increased from 106,176 in 2005/06, to 108,197 in 2007/08, to 118, 920 in the 12 months to September 2009. From those incidents, the number that were recorded as offences fluctuated considerably from 57, 944 in 2005/06, to 50,847 in 2007/08, to 53,726 in 2008/09. However whilst the sanction detection rate was 32% five years ago, it is now 46%, so this year the MPS has supported a significantly higher proportion of domestic violence crimes towards a criminal justice outcome than in years gone by, and that commitment to seeking justice is to be commended.

As always, though the volume of these crimes is a concern, any increases in reporting to the police are to be welcomed, as every report to the police is an opportunity to make someone safer, and to hold a perpetrator of violence and abuse to account.

³ Rolling year data from Oct 05 to Sept 06. This data is used in place of full financial year data because the counting rules for domestic violence incidents changed in 2005 and comparisons could not otherwise be made.

⁴ Data from financial year 2005-06, MPS.

⁵ Commissioners Report to October MPA Full Authority meeting; www.mpa.gov.uk/committees/mpa

Domestic and Sexual Violence Board Membership and Structure

Though the DSVB is MPA-led, it is a multi-agency board, with members from other national and pan-London organisations present in order to harness their specialist knowledge and expertise.

Feedback from a DSVB Member:
I think the DSVB model works very well and having sat on a number of boards / groups / working parties I think it is one of the most successful

Senior representatives from the MPS Violent Crime Directorate and Specialist Crime are also present to take forward any areas of concern centrally as well as support any organisational learning from examples of good practice locally. A list of current members is below, and the MPA would like to take this opportunity to thank them for their continued commitment and engagement; their contribution makes the DSVB the success that it is.

Metropolitan Police Authority
Greater London Authority
Standing Together Against Domestic Violence
Greater London Domestic Violence Project
Eaves

Havens
Crown Prosecution Service London
Government Office for London
Respect
Southall Black Sisters
NHS London

The DSVB meets 6 times a year, and each board meeting invites two Borough Operational Command Units along with the associated local Sapphire Unit to present on their response to domestic and sexual violence. We prepare a commissioning brief to guide their report, and ask them to cover topics such as volume of crimes, resourcing, community engagement, training, and so on. The Borough Commander with the Sapphire Detective Superintendent presents a brief introduction to the report and then the session is opened up to questions from the board members and discussion.

For each borough session, community practitioners are invited (usually through the domestic violence coordinator or the community safety team) and as the meeting is open to the public, anyone can attend, and anyone can ask questions. The aim is to allow local expertise to feed into the meeting, to ensure the police are accountable to the public, and make use of the expertise of board members to challenge where necessary and support where possible. We have two boroughs attend each meeting to support organisational learning and networking for the attendees (we hold a buffet lunch after the meeting). The MPA also ensures that link Members and officers for boroughs are invited, to share local expertise and support the process of taking issues back to CDRPs and other borough partnerships.

Feedback from a Borough Commander:

The process, whilst very time consuming in the preparation of the papers, served as a quality assurance check and served as a useful reminder of the strong and weaker points of service delivery on the borough

After the meeting, a formal letter is sent to the Borough Commander outlining the issues which were identified as areas for improvement, as well as commending and congratulating the BOCU on the successes of its work. The DSVB then requires a short follow-up report approximately 6 months after the initial meeting. This is to allow any new initiatives a chance to affect change, and any individuals tasked with actions an opportunity to complete them and measure any outcomes. The reports are available on the MPA website⁶.

The DSVB also holds an annual thematic meeting, which looks at the MPS-wide response to an issue. This year the DSVB scrutinised the MPS response to sexual abuse of disabled people, and older people and domestic and sexual abuse. The DSVB also invited external organisations and experts to contribute to the meeting and heard presentations from Voice UK, Action on Elder Abuse, and the MPS Disability Independent Advisory Group.

As noted above, the MPA feedback forms also support organisational learning and invites recommendations on how to improve the scrutiny function of the DSVB. Last year, the DSVB acted on recommendations and included sexual violence within its remit to become the DSVB. The suggestion by BOCUs to provide visits to boroughs prior to their presentations to the board was implemented and this has produced very positive feedback. Many responses highlighted the benefits of the thematic sessions and the scope for exploring other issues in this way.

The key recommendations from feedback for the DSVB were to;

1. Ensure data is provided in a structured and consistent fashion, to allow easily comparable figures and ensure transparency.
2. Request shorter reports.
3. Expand membership to create a balance between domestic and sexual violence specialists.
4. Focus more on MPS outcomes than on processes and explore process of following up on the BOCU action plans.
5. Provide boroughs preparing to present with a list of the DSVB Members in order to prepare more fully.

⁶ www.mpa.gov.uk/dsvb/reports

Update on Recommendations from Annual Report 08-09

The 2008-2009 Domestic Violence Board Annual Report made six recommendations to the Metropolitan Police Service. Below the MPS provides an update on how these have been progressed⁷.

1. Expand upon and disseminate the learning from Domestic Violence Homicide Reviews by producing an annual report on the Reviews with recommendations across the service.

The MPS is currently drafting an annual report on behalf of the London DV Homicide Review Group, which is in an advanced draft format. The MPS is committed to sharing this report with partners including the MPA Domestic & Sexual Violence Board and its members. It is hoped that this document will be available in the new year.

2. Review the terms of measurement in 'what does success look like' - sanctioned detections are not the most accurate or appropriate sole measure.

The MPS in its previous reports to the MPA has maintained that sanctioned detections are not the sole accurate measurement of success in effectively managing domestic violence. In addition the MPS has highlighted previously that other measures maybe a better reflection of success in relation to DV performance including: reducing seriousness i.e. homicide, most serious violence, reducing repeat victimisation, improving victim satisfaction & confidence and improving attrition & conviction rates. The MPS also currently measures DV Offence arrest rates.

3. Introduce performance indicators on domestic violence to reduction of incidents of repeat victimisation, reduction in domestic violence homicides, and reduction in most serious violence in incidents of domestic violence.

The MPS acknowledges the importance of the above in partly supporting an overall suite of 'success' performance measures.

One mustn't overlook the direct influence that multi-agency external partners have on the MPS' performance e.g. CPS influence on charge and conviction rates and MARACs (as described below). That said repeat DV victimisation is already measured through the NI32 indicator regarding the effectiveness of MARACs. The MPS currently chairs almost all of the 32 Borough MARAC meetings.

There's a careful balance to be achieved by aspiring to be better, by improving the MPS' service delivery to victims and potential victims and achievement against performance indicators. The MPS is concerned that an additional suite of

⁷Update provided by MPS Violent Crime Unit, November 2009.

performance measures may have the opposite effect of negatively influencing quality as staff strive to clinically achieve performance indicators.

The MPS' positive action policy is reinforcing and already contributing to a reduction in DV homicide - for example there has been 38% reduction in ACPO DV defined homicide in the last 5 years. In the same period there has a 38.7% reduction in intimate & ex-intimate partner homicide.

4. Improvements in policy around measurement (conviction rates) in respect of 'victimless' prosecutions

As previously highlighted the MPS operates a positive action policy concerning Domestic Violence, which has resulted financial year-to-day (8.11.09) in 15132 Sanctioned detections (138 over target) and 24 997 arrests being made (1521 over target).

The form 124D is an important tool in the effective & consistent gathering of quality evidence, which supports independent prosecutions. However, it is the MPS' view that the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) should take the policy lead in this area. That said the MPS recognises that its staff has a key responsibility to ensure that the Crown Prosecutor is provided with a qualitative evidential product on which to make a decision. In addition the MPS is also currently working with the CPS to re-develop the MPS/CPS DV Service Level Agreement.

5. Include performance on domestic violence and other forms of violence against women as part of the assessment process for Borough Commanders.

Borough Commanders are held to account for an array of performance outcomes, which include domestic violence. They are directly accountable to TP DAC for their overall performance against the whole range of performance indicators.

In relation to Violence Against Women Borough Commanders are held accountable for Domestic Violence (including Honour Based Violence and Forced Marriage), Rape, Serious Sexual Offences and Most Serious Violence (which may include HBV and Forced Marriage cases not covered by the DV, Rape and SSO definitions). There is currently no suite of performance indicators relating to Violence Against Women & Girls, although this may be considered further in due course.

6. Ensure more consistency across London in response to domestic violence.

The MPS continues to strive for consistency in its DV Service delivery across the 32 Boroughs. The MPS remains committed in this goal. We have developed a number of control measures to achieve this consistency including;

- Performance management of boroughs by the Cluster Commanders
- VCD provides the Cluster Commanders with performance material with commentary

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- Having a dedicated VCD CSU Service Delivery Team
- Recently published updated DV Policy and SOP
- Compliance reports by PIB e.g. DV Flagging consistency
- Upgrades to Crime reporting IT to ensure consistency e.g. mandatory flagging
- CSU investigators 5-day course
- CSU Supervisors 1 day course
- DASH 2009 Trainers training
- Piloting risk assessment template for Children (in DV cases) on MERLIN.
- Conduct of Public Protection Group review
- Conduct of public Protection Desk Accreditation.
- Critical Incident Team reviews, which incorporates compliance with policy and SOPs.
- Developed through meeting structure e.g. Borough Commanders' monthly meetings, CSU DI six weekly meetings and Sapphire Team leaders meetings.

The above represents a snapshot of the work undertaken by the VCD to improve consistency.

Domestic and Sexual Violence Board Findings

The commissioning brief (see appendix 1) requests quantitative and qualitative data across a range of performance areas. These include;

- Data
- Policy Compliance and Quality Assurance
- Partnership work and Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships
- Work with Victims and Communities
- Organisational Improvement

This section goes into greater detail to reflect the Board's overall findings against each of these themes and draws together issues which arise across boroughs to form recommendations for MPS service improvement. All the data and information provided in the sections below are taken directly from the reports provided to the DSVB in 2009. It is important to note that volume of reported cases will have changed since then, as well as service developments and improvements made. For example, the data refers to a 12 month period in which the new SCD2 command was not in place and reported sexual offences were investigated by Sapphire teams within Borough Operational Command Units. The findings also explore the content and issues raised from the thematic meetings.

Data

In terms of MPA performance, the data provided by boroughs showed a consistently high level of domestic violence arrests and sanction detections, with most boroughs meeting their targets. In the context of rising reports of domestic violence across London, this consistent level of performance should be commended. Targets in relation to rape and serious sexual offences (SSO) were less often met; indeed most boroughs failed to meet targets in this area and those who consistently exceeded them were rare; Bexley exceeded both targets whilst Merton exceeded its rape target but did not meet its SSO target.

Compliance around recording differed enormously. Merlin reports were usually consistently completed and information about child protection shared appropriately. Likewise the conversion of emergency calls (recorded onto the CAD system) onto the crime reporting information system (CRIS) was usually very high. However almost every borough found that accessing data in relation to diversity from the MPS Performance Information Bureau was difficult and often had to supplement the data with information accessed by their own analysts. In almost all the reports received by the DSVB, some diversity data was missing. Some of this is in relation to the level of detail the DSVB requested and it is recognised that trawling through data systems is time consuming. However, consistent recording of diversity data is essential for the MPS to ensure that they meet the needs of London's diverse communities who are reporting to them, as

well as identifying whether particular communities are less likely to report crime, and have less favourable criminal justice outcomes⁸.

The use of cautions also varied enormously, with the lowest use of cautions for domestic violence in Bexley (40% of all the Sanction Detections) and the highest in Richmond (53% of Sanction Detections), despite the volume of domestic violence crimes in Bexley being more than double that of Richmond (1309 compared to 598). More concerning to the DSVB was the volume of reported rapes and/ or serious sexual offences which were recorded as 'No Crime' or 'Crime Related Incident'(CRI). Those boroughs with the fewest reported SSO's recorded as no-crime or CRI were Greenwich with 28% and Wandsworth with 25%. However Richmond no-crime'd or CRI'd 44% of reported SSOs (15 of 34). Even with the small sample of those boroughs which reported to the DSVB in 2009, a minimum of 1 in 4 reported serious sexual offences will not be recorded as an offence at all. This data requires an assurance that the newly created SCD2 will review this process and ensure compliance with the rules of offences recording stipulated by the Home Office.

DSVB Recommendation:

Review the volume of rapes and serious sexual offences which have been recorded as 'no-crime' or 'crime-related incidents' against the Home Office Counting Rules to ensure compliance

Policy Compliance and Quality Assurance

Many boroughs identified the same processes and procedures which supported quality assurance and policy compliance in their boroughs. Ultimately, what the DSVB has seen is that success has a pattern, and it is across policy compliance and quality assurance that this is exemplified. Whilst the MPS police and performance framework outlined above is the same across London, it doesn't explain why the outcomes in one borough should be any different from its neighbour.

Boroughs which have strong, clear leadership in this field, and who assess management of risk in these areas as 'murder prevention' and who employ intrusive supervision techniques by senior officers to ensure policy is complied with tend to have more consistent and successful outcomes. Indeed, Bexley borough provided the DSVB with its profile of 'Critical Success Factors', compiled by the Borough Commander Tony Dawson and DCI Pete Thomas. It is recognised that to comply with this requires sustainable resources, which in the current economic climate is increasingly difficult for senior police officers to balance with all the other priority areas of work. However the very existence of

⁸ Criminal Justice outcomes, it is recognised, are the responsibility of the whole criminal justice system and the CPS and court system also have a key role to play here.

this document demonstrates that officers do understand why this area of business is different from others and needs to be treated as a priority.

The process of attrition touches on a number of themes across policy compliance. Above the CAD to CRIS conversion rate demonstrates the initial step in the process from an emergency call to the police to a criminal justice outcome. Not all emergency calls will be converted from the CAD System onto the CRIS system, due to several calls placed for a single incident, for example. The next step in the process is the recording of a call as a crime. Many calls that the police receive about an incident do not constitute a crime taking place, for example within domestic violence cases there may be abusive language and loud arguments which in and of themselves do not constitute a crime; these will be recorded as incidents. Acts which contravene the law are of course recorded as crimes.

There seems to be considerable variation across the boroughs in terms of those domestic violence cases which are recorded as crimes and those which are recorded as incidents. Though the same policy applies across the MPS, some boroughs are recording significantly less crimes in proportion to the reported incidents than others. Using MPS data for all boroughs⁹, the average across London is 45% of all reported DV incidents are recorded as crimes; slightly less than half. Across boroughs who didn't present to the DSVB; Camden recorded 2678 incidents and of those, 949 crimes; 35%. In terms of the borough reports which the DSVB received; the borough with the highest conversion rate was Richmond, where of 754 DV incidents, 598 were recorded as crimes, which is 79%. At the other end of the scale; Lambeth identified 1976, or 39% of its reported 4979 DV incidents.

DSVB Recommendation:

Review the different levels of compliance across the MPS in recording domestic violence incidents and offences across the MPS and support standardised compliance.

Partnership work and CDRPs

Of the boroughs that presented to the DSVB this year, Richmond, Merton, and Lambeth¹⁰ excelled in this area, and most boroughs had a strong partnership in place; which inevitably proved to be a solid foundation upon which to build a robust delivery of services to the public. At a minimum, this usually consisted of a Domestic Violence Forum (which formed part of the structure around community safety, was linked into the CDRP) a MARAC (multi-agency risk assessment conference), and one or more voluntary sector specialist domestic violence services. Several boroughs were able to provide more than this, for example,

⁹ MPS data, from 01 October 2008 to 30 September 2009.

¹⁰ Lambeth have been tasked by the DSVB to provide partnership Critical Success Factors for the DSVB, but as these will not be available at the time of printing, these will be shared in 2010.

through preventative work in schools. Interesting examples of this was work with local schools in Southwark and Merton to ensure pupils understood appropriate sexual behaviour, taking a positive and proactive stance on sexual bullying.

However even the strongest partnerships often lacked a cohesive response to sexual violence within the borough. Only Merton and Southwark included sexual violence either as an equal partner to domestic violence with its own forum (Merton's Sexual Violence Forum) or jointly within a partnership forum (the Sexual Offences and Domestic Abuse Forum in Southwark). Most often, the services available to the public were the police local Sapphire team, should they wish to report a sexual offence, and the local branch of the charity Victim Support, which would provide emotional and practical support to victims. Victims of domestic violence who experienced sexual abuse within the context of the abusive relationship would of course be able to access support through their local DV support services, but according to MPS data, domestic sexual assaults account for between a third and a half of all reported rapes. There is therefore, a gap in service provision across London, a problem which has been identified a number of times in recent publications¹¹.

A key partnership for MPS is with the CPS, as though police are often measured and assessed on criminal justice outcomes it must be noted that the police investigate; the courts prosecute, and bringing offences to justice requires the equal effort of both parts. Many boroughs cited regular contact with CPS as a positive element of partnership working and that 'surgeries' in which legal advice could be sought were successful in Wandsworth and Greenwich, among others. The MPA welcomes the introduction of Integrated Prosecution Teams to ensure better collaboration across MPS and CPS. The MPS and CPS have been exploring the possibility of joint targets for some time, and it is hoped that the national and regional developments will also support these coming into practice.

DSVB Recommendations:

Develop joint targets with CPS on both domestic and sexual violence.

Borough Commanders to lobby their CDRPs to include improvements on sexual violence service provision within their CDRP priorities, projects and/or local service development plans.

Victims and Communities

Overall this was found to be the weakest area of performance in the reports to the MPA. Most boroughs were able to evidence that they complied with the victims code of practice, which lays out the level of contact and types of information victims can expect to receive from the police. However compliance across crime

¹¹ Map of Gaps, 2009, and the Mayor's Violence Against Women Strategy - The Way Forward, 2009.

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types was not measured separately and given the extremely distressing nature of domestic and sexual violence, as well as the levels of attrition (most particularly victims who withdraw from the criminal justice process) this could be an area for improvement.

The challenge in this area can be partly attributed to the very nature of domestic and sexual violence, and the difficulties in safely ensuring real engagement with victims or potential victims. For example, whilst the MPS has systems to access feedback for victims of certain crimes such as vehicle theft and assault, it does not access feedback from victims of domestic violence on the basis that such communication may put the victim in further danger should the abusive partner discover it.

The MPS is in the process of working to revise the process for victims of serious sexual offences. A system was previously in place for victims of rape to feed back though this was inconsistently applied across the MPs, indeed many boroughs did not reference this in their report at all. One borough was able to demonstrate a tangible improvement in service delivery following feedback from victims of sexual assault. DS Grant Donnachie of Merton borough proactively ensured the provision of a victim comfort suite, separate from the main police station areas to provide victims reporting sexual offences a safe, private space, which was a direct result of listening to the needs of service users. To know that victims' opinions and needs can be heard and responded to is a very powerful driver in terms of public opinion and confidence in the police, and it is hoped that this example will support victims in having the confidence to come forward in the knowledge that officers will listen and respond to what victims need.

Within the partnership structures of the boroughs, some did ensure that service users were part of the decision making groups or reference groups. For example, Wandsworth referred to the involvement of a survivor on their training course to their Primary Care Trust. It seems there is a gap, however, for all victims of domestic violence to feedback to the MPS on their experience of the service provided to them. The only borough who presented to the DSVB who routinely accessed feedback from victims of domestic violence was Lambeth, and as an action following from that meeting the DSVB asked Lambeth and the Violent Crime Directorate within the MPS to explore whether this could be extended across the MPS.

Partnership with the local authority often provided the source of community engagement locally, however upon further exploration this often proved to be consultation about local priorities or general community engagement, rather than on specific types of crimes like domestic and sexual violence or with specific communities such as those who are well represented locally in terms of demographics, or those most likely to be affected such as women.

DSVB Recommendations:

Explore options for safely accessing regular feedback on service delivery from victims of domestic violence, perhaps in partnership with stakeholders.

Ensure consistent levels across MPS of community engagement with local communities specifically on domestic and sexual violence, and with diverse groups.

Organisational Improvement

The DSVB has found that without exception there is proactive and creative work underway to tackle domestic and sexual violence on boroughs. However whilst there are systems in place for best practice to be shared, both informally such as through a specific group (initiated by a DI in Merton) the MPS intranet system Aware and through pan-London CSU and Sapphire meetings at Detective Inspector level, run by officers at headquarters, these were not always fully utilised. The process of reporting to the DSVB highlighted a range of systems and service developments which could be explored and expanded across the MPS, such as the allocation of single officer to repeat cases of domestic violence in Wandsworth. At the request of an MPS Commander, Bexley produced a list of critical success factors which could be disseminated across the MPS for all BOCUs to consider, which can be found at Appendix 4.

The DSVB invited BOCUs presenting to the board to recommend to the MPS ways in which it could improve in the field of policing domestic and sexual violence. Below are the areas of service delivery or practice that MPS Officers stated in their reports could improve performance;

- A process of recording information once onto administrative systems would save time and duplication of effort.
- The centralisation of all Sapphire Investigations under the Specialist Crime Directorate (SCD).
- Domestic violence equates to a very large proportion of reported crime across the entire MPS, yet the time dedicated to delivering training on this topic at Initial Recruit Training School is minimal. In depth training should be made available to new recruits on the risks and implications of domestic abuse.
- Coordinated approach with CPS on consistency in decision making around the threshold tests for sexual violence case and approach to unsupported domestic violence prosecutions.
- Every BOCU should have the resources made available to have comfort suites to interview victims in a safe comfortable environment.
- DV performance and survivor confidence would be improved if each area had a DV specialist court.

- Accessibility of Havens to victims from outer London in terms of distance and time to travel.
- Consideration should be given to using targets other than sanctioned detections to reflect victim-focused outcomes, e.g. referral to support or welfare groups. In cases of serious abuse or assault the concept of public interest has to be considered but the majority of victims consider the criminal justice system to be inadequate at providing effective long-term solutions to prevent offending and re-offending.

DSVB Recommendations:

Disseminate the findings from their Domestic Violence homicide reviews across the MPS, and proactively identify learning opportunities from reviews across other business areas, such as Specialist Crime Directorate child protection serious case reviews, or reviews conducted into cases of rape and serious sexual offences. Disseminate also the critical success factors identified by Bexley to BOCUs.

Develop joint targets with CPS on both domestic and sexual violence.

Thematic sessions

The DSVB held two thematic sessions during 2009, one exploring domestic and sexual violence and older people and the other exploring sexual violence and disabled victims. The DSVB also heard from specialist organisations Voice UK, the MPS independent advisory group on disability, and Action on Elder Abuse. A number of professionals representing specialists attended the meetings and joined in the debate.

In terms of the volume of domestic and sexual violence identified in the report on older people, there were 5040 victims of domestic violence aged 50 years and over were reported to the MPS¹². Of 27 DV homicides in 2008/09, 5 were of sons killing mothers aged 50 or above, and of those victims who were under 50, all were killed by a partner. 55 serious sexual offences were recorded with victims over 50, of which 41 were rape (39 female victims, 2 male).

The report noted a significant decrease in offences recorded, where the victim is aged 65 years or older, and recognised that as victims grew older it was less likely that they would report a crime, or that a crime would be recognised and recorded. There were 523 offences recorded for victims aged 51 years with a steady decrease until victims reach 65 years; where 82 offences were recorded. Possible reasons for this included fear of criminalising family members or carers, inappropriate assessment of their credibility as a witness, and threats or intimidation by the perpetrator.

¹² Between the 1st April 2008 and 31st March 2009

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The presentation from Action on Elder Abuse explored this further and noted that their statistics¹³ suggested that 1 in every 25 people aged 66 or over experienced abuse or neglect, which amounts to hundreds of thousands of older people at risk. In the context of the figures recorded by the MPS, it is clear that under-reporting of such offences is extensive and Action on Elder Abuse stated that 9 out of 10 older people being abused were not accessing support. The presentation also noted that the older the person, the more likely they were to be abused, and that women are more likely to be abused than men.

Recording of diversity characteristics was a concern, as an exploration of the data revealed that the ethnicity of older victims was frequently not recorded. Echoing some of the discussions in relation to the MPS approach to community engagement in relation to domestic and sexual violence, it became clear that the MPS cannot claim to understand the needs of service users if it is not adequately identifying them and then engaging in dialogue with them.

The MPS report on sexual abuse of disabled people noted that in the year 2008/09, 145 serious sexual offences were recorded where the victim was recorded as having a disability (and aged 16 and above). Of these, 32 resulted in a sanction detection (22%). Concerns were raised again at reported rapes as 'no crime' or 'crime-related incident'; 56 cases were classified as such. The report was presented before the implementation of SCD2 and it is hoped that closer monitoring of compliance against recording guidelines will impact on the recording of serious sexual offences.

Demographically victims are broadly proportionate across ethnicities to those of London as a whole, with the exception of fewer Asian victims. Best practice was identified in Westminster, where MPS Officers provide training to local mental health facilities to improve investigations.

Presentations from Voice UK, and the MPS independent advisory group on disability explored the prevalence of sexual abuse of disabled people, as well as the multiple barriers to reporting. Voice UK referenced a study¹⁴ which suggested that at 1,400 adults with a learning disability are likely to be reported as victims of sexual abuse each year in the UK. They stressed the importance of police training and understanding in responding to initial reports and when conducting investigations. They stated that working at the pace of the victim (notably when in the process of establishing the facts of a case in an interview), belief and respect, and a supportive environment are all specific things that should be in place to provide a good service to disabled people.

The MPS Disability Independent Advisory Group (DIAG) stressed that the MPS has come a long way in responding to disability hate crime, but that there was still more to do, and that in the field of sexual violence has some catching up to do. Issues relating to prevention, reporting, victim care, investigation, prosecution, outcomes, and engagement were identified and questions posed for the MPS to consider.

¹³ UK Study of Abuse and Neglect of older people, 2007

¹⁴ South East Thames Regional Health Authority, 1994

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In both reports the MPS stressed the importance of working in partnership with specialist agencies and statutory partners. Both Voice UK and the DIAG stated that there were commonalities with domestic and sexual violence overall: lower levels of reporting, perpetrators are usually known to the victims; females are more at risk than males, and the complexities of the cases and intimate nature of the crimes as well as cultural and professional attitudes mean that victims who report to the police do not always get the criminal justice outcomes they might want. They both stated that to provide an accessible and equitable service, there needs to be communication with disabled people, and clarity about their needs. The messages were clear; equality does not mean 'being treated the same'; it means the same quality of service provided in a way that meets the needs of the individual.

DSVB Recommendations:

Ensure that data on diversity of victims and offenders is collected and appropriately recorded

Ensure consistent levels across MPS of community engagement with local communities specifically on domestic and sexual violence, and with diverse groups.

Conclusion

In conclusion, some findings are similar to issues that have been presented to the MPA in previous years; consistency being a key example. It is clear that the MPS learns from high profile mistakes but also that these are not drivers for consistent improvement, nor should they be. The dedication and leadership of officers locally and centrally ensures ongoing organisational improvement. The implementation of systems consistently, backed up with leadership, intrusive supervision and clear allocation of responsibility do make a difference to Londoners lives.

That is not to say there are not considerable barriers in place. Having several complex data systems with different purposes means frustrating repetition for front line officers. Internal targets competing for resources and outcomes for different crime types means that consistent resourcing of particular business areas and competition for outcomes across so many different areas, fracture commitment. Externally, policies implemented within MPS can't be as successful as they were intended to be because the targets or intentions of partners such as the CPS or Social Services conflict and therefore the joint working process required to make these polices a tangible success can't progress. Nationally, with the exception of widespread and welcomed developments across the field of domestic violence, there has been an historical lack of commitment to the sexual violence and wider violence against women agenda, though it is noted that within the last few years more and more changes are being made, such as the creation of the Forced Marriage unit and Forced Marriage (Civil Protection) Act 07, and the Sexual Violence Action Plan.

On a regional level, short term resourcing streams for projects on boroughs mean support and experience are often piecemeal and transient. As we have seen, even the most well-functioning local partnerships and high-performing police units can be limited by the amount of external support provided for victims of sexual violence. It is hoped that with the launch of the national strategy; 'Together we can end violence against women and girls', as well as the regional strategy 'The Way Forward', integrated actions to prevent abuse, educate the public, protect victims and hold perpetrators to account across all forms of violence against women and girls will ensure greater consistency, and sustainable service delivery and support.

The MPA recognises and commends the continual strive for improvement across the MPS, and welcomes a number of positive developments and successes, most notably the creation of SCD2 with a new training package, a new intelligence unit focussed on sexual offences and the capacity to provide a consistent service across London and access for victims to specially trained officers within 1 hour of reporting a serious sexual offence. It is hoped this dedicated unit will come to be a well recognised success story for the MPS and support growing confidence that reporting rape and sexual offences will be met with a supportive, believing and professional response.

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This report and the work of the DSVB in the past year is one voice among many; the report published by Sara Payne highlighting the national experience of victims of rape drew the same conclusion in relation to consistency: there are committed, professional, caring officers across London and elsewhere providing an excellent service to the public. Our task is to make that the standard.

APPENDIX 1: Domestic and Sexual Violence Board Commissioning Brief (example)



Metropolitan Police Authority

REQUEST FOR report to the MPA
Domestic and sexual violence board

The purpose of this commissioning brief is to:

- *clarify the Authority's requirements and deadlines;*
- *ensure SCD2 and the BOCU are provided with support and information as needed; and*
- *ensure members receive the information they need.*

The brief is not intended to replace the professional judgment of report writers and managers. For further advice on the format, content and distribution of Authority reports please contact the MPA officer named below.

Section A: ADMINISTRATION DETAILS

MPA committee / date: MPA Domestic and Sexual Violence Board

Open or exempt item: Open

Draft with MPA by: *date*

Final report with MPA by: *date*

MPA officer: *Lynne Abrams* Tel 57163

Notes: Reminder that any tables, graphs or diagrams are inappropriate and that any data must be presented in word form.

Section B: OVERVIEW OF REPORT

A report is required which:

Gives members of the MPA Domestic and Sexual Violence Board information on SCD2 / the BOCU's work to:

Keep survivors safe

Tackle domestic and sexual violence

Hold offenders to account

Bring offences to justice

Increase reporting of domestic and sexual violence

Work in partnership with organisations and communities to continuously improve the BOCUs response to domestic and sexual violence

Support to (B)OCUs will be provided by:

MPS Violent Crime Directorate:

DCS Julian Worker, Violent Crime Directorate
Violent Crime Directorate, Territorial Policing
Tel: 0207 321 9127 (internal 49127)

MPS Performance Directorate/ PIB:

Performance Directorate Helpdesk
Tel: 0207 161 3131 (internal 783131)

MPA Gender-Based Violence Officer:

Lynne Abrams, Oversight and Review Unit
Tel: 020 7202 0163 (internal 57163)
Email: Lynne.Abrams@mpa.gov.uk

Section C: SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS

This section lists any requirements with respect to content, presentation or timing. Reports should be **no more than 15 pages** long (excluding appendices). Any detailed information (if required) should always be placed in appendices and the main report should concentrate on describing key issues.

Please note that every report must include a paragraph that addresses the equality and diversity implications of the information contained in the report. The MPA will not accept a report that omits this. The report author is responsible for writing this paragraph. Attached to this commissioning brief is a guidance note on identifying such implications.

Specifically the Domestic and Sexual Violence Board would like the following information included in the report:

PART ONE – Quantitative Information

C1: Data for a) Domestic Violence and b) Serious sexual offences (including rape) investigated by SCD2 and c) Sexual offences investigated by (B)OCU. Data should be drawn from 12 month period between (01.08.2008) & (31.07.2009). This data will be provided by PIB and does not need to be provided by the BOCU.

Number of incidents flagged separately as domestic violence and serious sexual offences¹⁵?

¹⁵ For the purposes of data collection for the DSVB, serious sexual offences comprises rape, sexual assault by penetration, causing a person to engage in sexual activity, and any attempt to commit any of the above relating to victims over the age of 16. See Section F for CRIS codes.

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Number of crimes flagged separately as domestic violence and serious sexual offences?

Number of crimes flagged as both domestic violence and serious sexual offences?

Number of crimes representing repeat victimisation?

Number of un-supported domestic violence prosecutions?

Number of crimes also 'flagged' as 'honour'-based violence and / or forced marriage?

Sanction detection rate for domestic violence and serious sexual offences

Number of sexual offences investigated by (B)OCU (post-SCD2 implementation)

Sanction detection rate for sexual offences investigated by (B)OCU (post-SCD2 implementation)

Number of sanction detections which are cautions.

Number of serious sexual violence cases which are not-crimed or crime-related incidents?

Number of cases of serious sexual violence which are referred to the Havens?

Number of domestic violence homicides over the last 12 months.

Number of posts (including administrative support) within the Community Safety Unit (CSU) and Sapphire Unit, and the number of vacant posts?

Number of officers and staff are currently trained in a) Child protection? b)

'Honour'-based violence and forced marriage? c) Stalking and harassment? d)

Victim care? e) Sexual offences investigation f) domestic violence

Number of cases of domestic violence and serious sexual offences¹⁶ withdrawn (attrition)?

Number of feedback forms distributed to victims by Sapphire Team?

Can this above data be presented according to the identity of survivors and offenders/ staff and officers in terms of equality categories (where available) i.e.: Age, gender, disability, race, religion &/or belief and sexual orientation¹⁷

C2: Policy compliance and quality assurance

How does the (B)OCU and SCD2 use risk assessment and risk management tools to ensure victims/ survivors are made safer, and that perpetrators are made accountable for their behaviour?

What processes are in place to support officers and ensure that they are effectively implementing Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), especially in cases where several procedures may be relevant to particular cases, e.g. where an incident may involve domestic violence, rape and child abuse within a single family?

What work is being done to ensure that the 124D (or DASH 2008) form is being used consistently across the borough in 100% of domestic violence cases and that the information it collects is being entered onto the relevant MPS IT assets / systems e.g. CRIS, MERLIN, and CRIMINT?

How does the (B)OCU and SCD2 support staff / officers who are experiencing domestic violence, and ensure suspected staff/ officer perpetrators of domestic and sexual violence are held accountable for their behaviour?

¹⁷ It is recognised that sexual orientation is not recorded as standard, but data should be accessible through use of the DI Flag for LGBT (this may only apply to domestic violence).

C3: Partnership working and Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRP)

What is the funding dedicated to tackling domestic and sexual violence from within the overall CDRP budget?

Is domestic violence and sexual violence considered as part of the annual Strategic Assessment? Has domestic and sexual violence been identified as a priority within the Partnership Plan?

Are there any CDRP domestic and/ or sexual violence projects in progress?

How does the (B)OCU and SCD2 work in partnership with voluntary and statutory sector agencies locally? What training is delivered in partnership with the community?

Which partnerships are particularly successful and what might be the reasons for this?

C4: Work with victims and communities

How does the (B)OCU and SCD2 monitor service user satisfaction and/ or seek feedback from victims/survivors of domestic and sexual violence, and then integrate any improvements into policy and practice?

How does the (B)OCU and SCD2 ensure that victims are provided with regular updates on cases and informed quickly of any changes or decisions (particularly those which may impact on their safety e.g. release on bail)?

How does the (B)OCU and SCD2 ensure compliance with the Victims Code of Practice?

How does the (B)OCU and SCD2 build trust and confidence with hard-to-reach communities, particularly around sensitive cultural issues such as forced marriage and 'honour'-based violence?

C5: Organisational Improvement

Where there have been recommendations from homicide reviews or serious case reviews, what are they and how have they been implemented?

What have been the benefits and challenges of implementing SCD2 locally?

How have close working practices been ensured between SCD2 and the (B)OCU?

Where there have been cases of 'honour'-based Violence, has the HBV Action Plan proved fit for purpose? If not, how could it be improved?

What have been the successes and areas for improvement of Public Protection Desks?

What single improvement do the BOCU think the Metropolitan Police Service could make which would greatly improve the response to a) domestic and b) sexual violence locally?

What do you think the MPA Domestic and Sexual Violence Board and its Members could do to help or support the (B)OCU in dealing with domestic and/or sexual violence?

APPENDIX 2: Summary of issues raised by the Domestic and Sexual Violence Board with the MPS BOCUs/ SCD2:

Bexley:

- The development and implementation of Virtual Courts; how is the project progressing? What have been the successes and barriers to its implementation?
- The establishment of a Specialist Domestic Violence Court; has there been any movement in this area and is there anything the Board can do to assist your efforts to bring this into existence?
- Community engagement; how does the borough specifically target its engagement to ensure it interacts with those most vulnerable and in need of its service? Are the right community leaders being engaged and, in particular, how are the views of women's groups being sought? It may be beneficial to the borough, and reassuring to the Board, to conduct an audit of community engagement activity.
- Advertising of services; how can the boroughs services be more effectively advertised? While some methods may be prohibitively expensive (e.g. wholesale translation) there may be more creative methods the borough can explore through its partnerships.
- Independent murder review; the Board will raise the possibility of independent murder reviews with the MPS centrally. However it would be helpful for Bexley to consider how this potential change would impact on the boroughs work.
- Succession planning; the Board would like to see the good work and improvement continuing in Bexley and would ask that a close watch is kept on ensuring that succession planning is in place and robust.

Greenwich:

- Clarity on the victim and suspect data for domestic violence and serious sexual offences. The data provided in the BOCU report on 12th June was confusing and there was no indication on actual numbers of victims. In addition, the percentages were incorrect. The DSVB would like a clearly presented account of sections C1 and C2 as outlined on the original commissioning brief, which I have attached for reference.
- Consideration of the possible causes of the high rate of repeat victims of domestic violence in the borough and how the use of a single point of contact will address this.
- Confirmation that the MPS/CPS 'surgery' is back in place.
- Details on the process of support and signposting for victims of sexual and domestic violence, and how success of external support services are monitored to ensure police are signposting effectively
- An exploration of any possible reasons for the disparity around ethnic minorities over-represented in the accused data for serious sexual offences.

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- An update on the success of community engagement efforts with ‘hard to reach’ communities and the efforts to engage with Muslim women’s forum and PCTs.
- What the BOCU could do to access service feedback from survivors of domestic and sexual abuse.
- An outline of the Action Plan resulting from the visit from TPHQ and an update on how Greenwich is progressing against these actions.

Richmond:

- Clarity on the prevalence of male victims and whether there are a considerable number of counter-allegations which may have skewed the data presented to the DSVB.
- Further details on the disability data. There was a prevalence noted of victims with a learning disability and what, if anything, is being developed by way of a specialist response by BOCU.
- A proposition on what the BOCU could do to access service feedback from survivors of domestic and sexual abuse.
- An assessment of success of the large plasma screens, and whether consideration could be given to their use with regards to other forms of violence against women such as serious sexual offences?

Merton:

- Data across domestic and sexual violence in relation to disability and sexuality of victims and perpetrators to be provided as requested in the Commissioning Brief.
- An update on the use of the email reporting system in schools and any increased reporting of sexual exploitation through this process.
- Examination of the unusually high proportion of males (approximately a third) in the recorded incidents of domestic violence, which is then not reflected in the proportion of males represented in figure for domestic violence crimes.
- An exploration of the volume of serious sexual offences resulting in a caution (13%) and consideration of how this might be reduced.
- An assessment of the success of the CSU email system pilot
- Any outcomes relating to policing (e.g. increased reporting or criminal justice outcomes) to date of the project exploring identification and awareness of inappropriate sexual behaviour.
- An overview of how specific groups are being engaged with, for example the LGBT community.

Wandsworth:

- Data across domestic and sexual violence in relation to disability and sexuality of victims and perpetrators to be provided as requested in the Commissioning Brief.
- A brief outline of any projects stemming from the CDRP relating to domestic and/or sexual violence.

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- Feedback on the possibility of implementing a sexual violence forum or on how to integrate sexual violence work into the DV forum.
- An outline of the process of engagement with local partners in undertaking the three DV homicide reviews.
- An update on the proposed reinstatement of the local DV charging 'surgery;' with the CPS and explore what impact, if any, this and the sexual violence surgery have had on criminal justice outcomes.
- Identification of how the BOCU is engaging with women specifically around the issues of abuse from the perspective of the LGBT community.
- Exploration of the possibility of an SDVC within the borough.
- Confirmation that the fortnightly sexual violence intelligence meetings continue to take place and an update on how SCD2 is involved in this process.
- An exploration of why 25% of serious sexual offences are not crimed or CRI'd and any measures taken to review this.

Lambeth:

- Lambeth CSU to review the possibility of fortnightly MARAC or extension of time in current MARAC and update with feedback from CAADA review
- Lambeth CSU to develop 'critical success factors' for partnership working to be shared by TPHQ/SCD2 and DSVB AR as best practice guidelines
- Lambeth to work with TPHQ to explore the use of 'quality call back' in relation to domestic violence and assess whether this could be expanded across the MPS
- Explore the impact of the Disability Liaison Officer
- Lambeth BOCU to update the DSVB on whether the staff member cautioned for DV continues in employment with the BOCU or elsewhere in MPS
- Lambeth BOCU to provide an update on the BOCU sexual offences unit and how this is performing
- Lambeth CSU to provide evidence that an HBV action plan has been developed as required by TPHQ and feedback on how this is being implemented
- Lambeth CSU to update on whether an application for an SDVC has been successful
- Lambeth SCD2 / BOCU to update the DSVB on the progress that the MPS has made in lobbying for integrating action against sexual violence into its partnership work, strategic targets and funding applications
- Lambeth SCD2/ BOCU to consider whether the successful preventative work currently undertaken in local schools could be expanded to include forms of sexual violence such as sexual bullying.
- Lambeth CSU to provide information on how to ensure successful unsupported DV prosecutions and how Lambeth reduces attrition in these cases

Southwark:

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- Southwark CSU to consider lowering threshold for MARAC applications
- Southwark BOCU to feedback on the FGM project mentioned in report
- Southwark BOCU to liaise with TPHQ on expectations for minimum levels of CSU staff training and provide a plan on ensuring that BOCU staff training meets the levels identified by TPHQ
- Southwark BOCU / SDC2 to share best practice in relation to sexual violence and gang/ serious youth violence activity
- Southwark SDC2 to feedback on the proposed focus on youth and sexual violence work as explored by SODA
- Southwark CSU to feedback on why with such a high domestic violence arrest rate, the sanction detection rate is not commensurately high
- Southwark CSU to feedback on best practice around dealing with HBV / FM
- Southwark BOCU/ CSU to confirm or otherwise that all the 13 IDVAs referred to in the report are all funded from Southwark

APPENDIX 3: Bexley Borough Public Protection Group - Critical Success Factors

Bexley's Public Protection Group (PPG) is currently achieving a 63% Sanction Detection rate for Domestic Violence, and a very high rape detection rate, both of which have doubled in the last year.

Cdr Shaun Sawyer has asked for the critical success factors. It is our view that our success could be replicated by any Borough that invested in high quality staff, systems and leadership.

The most important factors are:

- Application of major crime and murder investigation techniques;
- Inspirational leadership by experienced DI and DSs;
- Motivating response teams to arrest perpetrators whenever possible;
- Co-location of the whole PPG in one police station under unified command.

Chief Supt Tony Dawson
Bexley Borough Commander
Protection Group
20 Dec 2007

DI Pete Thomas
Bexley Borough Public

Leadership & Performance Management
SMT support. Access to resources when required (eg. complicated enquiries or conducting arrest days). Recognition of staffing levels needed and maintaining them.

- Inspirational leadership by PPG DI.

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- Scorecard. Responsibility for 5 out of 8 TP Scorecard Sanction Detection PIs (DV, Race, Homophobic, Rape, Sexual Offences). All PIs linked to PPG with single chain of command.
- Challenge performance re reporting officers' initial investigations (eg. where no 124D or risk assessment completed, especially when arrest not made) and involve duty officers in feeding issues back to their team.
- PPG units performance-aware through scorecard and league system. Regular meetings with teams to discuss performance and involve them in this process.
- Response teams. Attend parades to refresh the message on positive action. Stress DV and race hate crime is serious crime. Inform response officers and inspectors of good performance.

Supervision & Investigative Review

- Decision making on disposal to rest with DI PPG, who can overturn decisions made by other officers to re-open investigations.
- Review of undetected crimes, including cases that slip through because detections are missed, offences that should be No Crimed but remain classified as crimes, flags assigned when they should not be.
- Educate PPG officers to challenge CPS, custody officers and duty officers, especially around NFA decisions.
- Educate response officers that investigations without victim support will take place. Arrests will be made, and other evidential leads followed before disposal decision.

Investigation

- Every suspect is arrested or engaged (such as those receiving harassment warning letters) leading to reduced repeat victimisation.
- Consider cautions rather than NFA. Some staff assume the evidential threshold to authorise a caution is the same as that applied to charge decision, which is not the case, so staff are educated on this.
- Investigate malicious allegations to same degree as those confirmed as crimes, especially rape investigations.
- All sexual offences investigated by Sapphire Unit, with SOIT officers conducting investigations of non-rape offences.

Systems & Resilience

- All PPG Units located together within same location in building.
- All units provide support to other units across PPG when investigating critical incidents (eg. high risk Mispers, Rape, Racial/DV GBHs, honour based violence).
- 4-week rota to provide late and weekend cover.
- Borough protocol defining areas of responsibilities.
- Custody suite and CPS within same building is beneficial.
- Intelligence support – Good service from BIU at RY, again located in same building
- Created SPOC for arrest tasking, using Emerald officer at RY. Officers utilise this to task response teams or BSU, providing IBO with one point of contact rather than numerous officers inundating IBO for arrest enquiries. Emerald officer has access to other contacts to assist with manhunt enquiries.

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- Circulate those offenders not arrested, including those suspected of summary offences and those where the victim is not supportive of police action.

Skills

- DI with murder investigation expertise.
- Experienced DSs.
- Officer selection. Populate with best performing officers or those identified with potential to perform. Mix of experience with youthful enthusiasm.
- SOIT investigators are recruited from CID domain rather than response teams direct. Successful applicants will have desire to be DCs in future.
- Corporate SOIT application process amended to suit Bexley, with a further competency to provide example of an investigation added to application.
- Mixture of DCs and PCs (who want to be DCs) with no postings for recuperative officers. Unit marketed as providing a dynamic and robust response to serious crime.
- Officers in post for sufficient period. Many in place for 12 months plus.

Partnership

- Good links with partner agencies such as Crisis Intervention Team (two DV advocates), Women's Aid, VSS and Bexley Supporting People Office.
- DI or deputy represent Bexley on DV forum, Race Hate Forum etc.
- Links to SNT teams re problem solving, especially racial hate crime and regular missing persons reports re children in care.

Information Quality & Data Accuracy

- Correct use of flags.
- Correct interpretation of DV definition.
- Ensure allegations identified as 'No Crime' are classified as such, such as harassment allegations where there is no course of conduct, or where victims admit the allegation was malicious.