



Metropolitan Police Authority

**Metropolitan Police Authority Domestic Violence Board
19 September 2006**

Minutes of the meeting

Introductions

Board Members

Cindy Butts, Deputy Chair of MPA (Co-Chair)
Anni Marjoram, Mayor's Advisor – Women's Issues, GLA
Anthony Wills, Partnership Officer (DV), Local Government Association
Davina James-Hanman, Greater London Domestic Violence Project (GLDVP)
Elizabeth Howlett, MPA London Assembly Member
Helen Slinger, Head of Crime Reduction, Government Office for London
Hilary McCollum, Director, Social Policy & Grants (Children & Domestic Violence Lead),
Association of London Government
Kirsten Hearn, MPA Independent Member
Sue Jacobs, Crown Prosecution Service (CPS)

MPS

A/DCS Phil Kaye, OCU Commander, Violent Crime Directorate (on behalf of
Commander Steve Allen)
Chief Inspector Julia Pendry, Brent Borough
David MacNaughton, Racial and Violent Crime Taskforce, Violent Crime Directorate
Denise Milani, Deputy Director of Diversity & Citizen Focus Directorate & Association of
Chief Police Officers (ACPO) Gender portfolio
Gerry Campbell, Violent Crime Directorate, Community Safety Unit Delivery Team
Professor Betsy Stanko, Senior Adviser, Strategic Analysis, Metropolitan Police Service
Vicky Kielinger, Senior Criminologist, Metropolitan Police Service

MPA

David Riddle, Deputy Chief Executive and Deputy Clerk of the Authority (Acting Link
Member for Brent)
Hamida Ali, Policy Development Officer, Race & Diversity
Laurence Gouldbourne, Head of Race & Diversity
Sarah Jones, Independent Minute Taker

Morning Session (Tower Hamlets)

Detective Superintendent Caroline Bates, A/C Borough Commander
Detective Chief Inspector Iain Saunders
Detective Inspector Kevin Baldwin

Afternoon Session (Brent)

Chief Superintendent Mark Toland, Borough Commander
Detective Superintendent Neil Wilson
Detective Inspector Ian Lott
Detective Inspector Pete Wallis

Pan-London & community representatives:

Beryl Foster OBE, Director, Standing Together Against Domestic Violence
Dr Pauline Magowan, Independent & Contract Researcher on Disability and Domestic Violence, School for Policy Studies, University of Bristol
Elizabeth Harrison, Haven Whitechapel Manager, Barts and The London NHS Trust
Harpreet Sihota, Asian Development Worker, Haven Whitechapel
Helen Bowes, Community Safety Team, GLA
Helen Oliver, Senior Community Safety Officer / Domestic Violence Co-ordinator, Brent Borough Council
Jackie Barron, Project Worker, Women's Aid
Janet Veitch, Women's National Commission
Jo Todd, Director, Respect
Karen Ingala Smith, Chief Executive (DV Services), Eaves Housing for Women
Louise Shellard, MPS Disability Independent Advisory Group
Michelle Clarke, Manager, Brent Domestic Violence Advocacy Project
Natalie Ker Watson, Hate Crime Manager, Tower Hamlets Victim Support
Nicola Sharp, Policy Advisor, Refuge
Penny Kennedy, Services Manager, Domestic Violence Intervention Project (DVIP)
Philippa Chipping, Tower Hamlets Domestic Violence Co-ordinator, Tower Hamlets Borough Council
Ruth Bashall, Co-chair, MPS Disability Independent Advisory Group
Sandra Horley, Chief Executive, Refuge
Sarbjit Ganger, Chair, Brent Domestic Violence Forum
Shaminder Ubhi, Director, Ashiana Network

Apologies:

Aneeta Prem, MPA Magistrate Member
A/C DAC Alf Hitchcock, TP Crime Directorate
Baroness Helena Kennedy QC
Commander Steve Allen, Project Umbra Programme Board Chair
Denise Marshall, Chief Executive, Eaves Housing for Women
Deputy Assistant Commissioner Rose Fitzpatrick
Detective Chief Inspector Fiona Gaskell, Crime Management Department, Hertfordshire Constabulary
Detective Chief Superintendent David Dillnutt, TP Crime OCU Commander
Dru Sharpling, Chief Crown Prosecutor, CPS London & London Criminal Justice Board (LCJB) representative
Linda St Louis, NCH (the children's charity)
Michael Verrier, Broken Rainbow LGBT Domestic Violence Service UK

Nicola Harwin CBE, Chief Executive of Women's Aid
Roger King, Director of Crime and Drugs Division, Government Office for London
Sandra Lewin, Domestic Violence Co-ordinator, Crime Management Department,
Hertfordshire Constabulary
Valerie Jones, Head of Community Safety Team, London Borough of Brent
Yasmin Rehman, Director of Partnerships and Diversity, Violent Crime Directorate

The first hour of the Board meeting is for Board members only to discuss the BOCU progress reports from the previous Board meeting.

Havering Progress Report

1. Kirsten Hearn raised a question regarding the recording of information on the CRIS database and the categories or 'flags' used to identify whether a victim or perpetrator is gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender (LGBT). A/DCS Phil Kaye said that the CRIS database is difficult in relation to accepting changes and the cost for this to be delivered. The MPS is looking to change the capabilities so that it can collate and use the information in a more user-friendly format and identify the information people need from the individual CRIS reports. We are working with the internal database to identify issues relating to same-sex victims and suspects. Kirsten said she feels it is time for a review of the system, but that she recognises this will take time. The R&DU team to follow up.

ACTION: MPA

2. Davina James-Hanman informed the meeting that there is a difference between the flag section and the information contained therein. Data analysts should be able to pull out the information on same sex DV. Analysis is done centrally so you have to record the relationship between the victim and the offender. The information is there, it is just not a flag field. Sue Jacobs stated that she was aware that the flag fields are under review. Phil said this review is not a strategic requirement for CRIS strategic meetings and said that he would liaise with Dave MacNaughton to see how this fits into the wider picture of the CRIS review.

ACTION: PK

3. Anni Marjoram stated that the points pulled out from individual boroughs throw up issues on a pan-London basis. Some boroughs are using the data that is available to them all to enhance their borough profiles whilst others are not. There is an issue with IT in the MPS, which should be noted. Anthony Wills said Umbra has been working on this for a long time without much progress.
4. Elizabeth Howlett said that Project Umbra is still working within their strands. Phil stated that the performance framework was adequate in relation to the use of information and intelligence on CRIS but the performance goes a lot wider than this, particularly in relation to victim care and issues linking to the Criminal Justice Systems. Information sharing for the strands must be performance led around better victim care, response of the MPS to victims, longer term planning to reduce the risk

to DV offenders and their families. Although we have tried to take information sharing forward in Primary Care Trust, the Probation and Prison Service there is an issue with these agencies buying in from their end. We are working on this. Cindy Butts stated that the Board wants to be kept abreast of and influence the speed and depth of any review of CRIS. The Board also want to influence the way boroughs already use the available data now before any wide scale changes are made to the system.

ACTION: PK

5. Elizabeth Howlett suggested we ask the boroughs how many analysts they have. If budgets are tight, perhaps they are not employing enough analysts or analysts of the right type. Anni said that the Board is aware that certain boroughs are only following government targets and refusing to implement the wishes of the MPA to cover such issues as street crime and domestic burglary etc. The Board is frustrated at the failure to adopt London wide minimum standards and want to expose weaknesses and call those boroughs to account. Phil explained that the plan is to have a public protection concept within the 32 boroughs, which is centrally driven and locally delivered. We want to see the same robust reviews and reports that are led daily by intelligence. Anthony stated that the reality is that DV work does not get a Borough Commander promoted. The reality is that DV is a sub-priority amongst a wealth of other areas.
6. Elizabeth Howlett asked how many children are referred to Child Protection due to DV cases. This is another question we could ask. Phil stated that there is a central daily review in relation to DV offences. We identify high-risk areas and conduct reviews into those boroughs. The MPS look into why boroughs have failed to comply with minimum standards and offer support and guidance. Intelligence is then focused into a task and coordinating meeting which Phil chairs in relation to high risk individuals and task out operations that will assist in reducing DV.
7. Davina informed the meeting that the data produced by Scotland Yard is very good but it is not being disseminated to the boroughs. There seems to be a gap in communication so that the boroughs are often using local data that is inaccurate. Helen Slinger added that partnership analysts are often not receiving data.
8. Laurence stated the R&DU would ask questions on a review of CRIS through the next EODB meeting scheduled for the 16th November. This meeting will also have discussions around Project Umbra and child protection. Phil stated that the MPS want to join up all areas of public protection including child protection and now have a joint central task team coordinating the intelligence review process in place. The MPS want to join this up with the investigation teams and the proactive capability to make sure it cuts across the whole of the protection command.

Croydon Progress Report

9. Kirsten raised the issue of dealing with employees who are victims or perpetrators of DV and also training. The Standard Operating Procedures are either not reflecting fully what is needed in relation to internal DV cases or else they are not being

implemented properly. Davina stated that she had drafted a policy on internal DV issues in 2002. She has also recently been commissioned to produce a training package on this topic.

10. Helen Slinger wondered why for both Havering and Croydon policy does not utilize Safer Neighbourhood Teams (SNT's) for domestic violence. Could they be better utilized for this? Anni said she has raised this with the Mayors office. It's a real lost opportunity. They are being utilized in some boroughs but not others. This again highlights how boroughs operate in relation to the centre. Elizabeth Howlett added that this is also an issue for training for the SNT. Davina said she drafted a training package for SNT two and a half years ago. Anthony informed the meeting that Hammersmith and Fulham have had very successful outcomes from implementing their SNT training. Phil explained that all front line staff are trained in DV and stated that he would explore the success of the training in Hammersmith and Fulham through the central team and see what good practise could be rolled out. Cindy asked that Phil must be clear what other boroughs are doing before rolling out good practise from Hammersmith and Fulham. Phil agreed that it needs to be a centrally driven approach so that all boroughs respond to the same level.

ACTION: PK

11. Anthony said the training delivered is not necessarily multi-agency driven. Davina said 124D training is delivered monthly. There is a week-long training course for CSU. Training is being developed for other parts of the MPS.
12. Cindy stated that the Board was taken aback by Croydon's response concerning employee DV cases. They have repeatedly quoted the NSY policy. Phil stated that guidance has been cascaded to the boroughs but not taken on board fully in terms of implementing the expectations. Phil will offer some guidance and support to Croydon from the central team and Steve Allen's office.

ACTION: PK

13. Cindy explained that the Board is looking for reassurance that support is being given to boroughs so that progress is being made on the areas that are highlighted. Anni said employee DV cases are a contentious issue for the MPS. There is huge cultural resistance around officers who are victims, but particularly those who commit DV crimes. Phil said there is a central review process on internal incidents of DV. This provides significant support to boroughs in these cases. There is cultural resistance that needs to be broken down and issues around the capability of boroughs picking up the same enquiry. Is this best practise? Should boroughs investigate their own cases of DV? Hamida stated that Croydon had been asked to explain their internal (employee) policy for survivors of DV. Laurence explained that at the last meeting there were concerns voiced by the Board that some of the MPS activities around perpetrators and survivors of DV was being hidden by the activities of the Family Justice Centre. The MPA had asked how Croydon responds separately to the support provided by the Family Justice Centre. Elizabeth Howlett said this is an issue for Professional Standards and as she sits on this she will raise the issue with them.

ACTION: EH

14. Sue explained that the CPS has an independent unit, which investigates officers up on a criminal charge, and perhaps there should be a link made here with the Professional Standards. Kirsten stated that the MPA must discuss how to take this up with staff associations and unions.
15. Davina said she was frustrated by Steve Allen's response to the data set because it was set out in the consultation document (for the second London Domestic Violence Strategy). No response was received from the MPS saying the data set was impossible to work with so it is frustrating to be told several months later that the data set is unworkable.
16. Anni stated that she did not see this as the end of the correspondence between the Board and Croydon and Havering. The Board now need to continue this engagement with them to address the issues their progress reports have thrown up. Helen Slinger suggested sending a note to Baroness Helena Kennedy outlining the further points that need to be raised with Croydon and Havering.

ACTION: CB

Please note that attendance is by invitation only. Members of the community who have been invited to attend are able to participate following the Board members review of the BOCU Progress Reports.

Tower Hamlets Borough Report

17. Detective Superintendent Caroline Bates explained areas of good practise identified:
 - Tower Hamlets were the first borough to trial the risk management 124Ds so we feel they are now well embedded. Risk assessment is carried out on every DV allegation that is received. The Safety Planning Panel is led jointly with the Council. Cases are shared that may not be going through the courts but allows us to make sure all victims identified as being at risk are supported.
 - Victim Support Advocates were trialled in 2004 and we now have financial backing to have them again within the CSU working with officers so that there are reductions in gaps between the time a report is made and the time a referral is made. Communication gaps between officers and the SS are reduced. Issues that are raised with the Advocates can be put straight back into the investigation.
 - The positive arrest policy has been in place for a while but now it is being embedded and supervision scrutiny is being enhanced. Once you start reducing the number of allegations on a daily basis it is easier to look at every single one. Every morning Caroline receives a list of all the allegations of DV

where arrests are made or not and what follow up is required. This work shows in the positive arrest figures.

18. Caroline explained some of the blockages Tower Hamlets are experiencing:
 - A risk management issue that needs to be looked at is when offenders are released from prison without prior notification. Systems are in place in relation to sex offenders and people on the multi agency register but not for DV offenders.
 - Tower Hamlets have issues in relation to sanction detection and positive outcomes in court, victim care in relation to prosecutions and the ability to secure summons and remand applications. Caroline said that dedicated DV courts have been successful elsewhere and the borough would be very interested in implementing this.

Questions and Comments

19. Sue asked if the borough have measures in place to comply with the Victims Code in relation to vulnerable witnesses. What links are made between the Victim Safety Unit and the Child Protection team? The borough has a high number of cautions. Could more be done to convert them into charges?
20. Iain explained that the borough is trying to comply with the administration demands of the Victims Code. The majority of the work is recorded on a non-searchable part of CRIS. The challenge he faces is getting POs to complete the Victims Charter Codes.
21. Iain said he has a good working relationship with the Child Protection Team and they liaise on cases regularly. Kevin stated that as of next month there will be a nominated officer from CPT who will sit on the Safety Planning Panel.
22. Iain said that cautions are an effective way of dealing with perpetrators. We mirror the CPS decision-making process and in certain cases it will be a CPS decision to give a caution. A caution is considered after all of the evidence is made available to the police. A decision is made on if there is sufficient evidence. Public interest criteria are also considered. Cautions are only given if the perpetrator has admitted to the crime and if it is considered the most appropriate way of dealing with them. The victim's views form part of the process.
23. Anthony said Tower Hamlets clearly has a high arrest rate and a high number of incidents that are non-crime. The caution rate is 473 to 391. Are sanction detection rates the right target to work to? Are cautions the right way to go to hold a perpetrator to account? Would arrests turned into prosecutions be a better indicator of success?
24. Iain said the Caution Plus Process is a significant system to hold perpetrators to account and reduce DV incidents. Perpetrators posing a risk but falling into the remit for a caution can be subject to the Caution Plus process, which allows for their

actions to be reviewed later down the line. This process does require considerable resources, but Tower Hamlets would like to introduce Caution Plus. Removing cautions from the disposal options is a strategic decision and one that would have to be decided by Government policy.

25. Anthony raised the question of whether it is easier for Tower Hamlets to achieve targets by going for cautions rather than charges. Kevin said that Tower Hamlets achieved a rate of 19.8% for offences charges. This places them at 8th position within the MPS. In cases where this is not suitable, i.e. sibling arguments that got out of hand, cautions are a legitimate response. Charges are still a preferred option. Some cases come back from CPS with a caution as the recommendation.
26. Cindy asked if there is any mechanism in place for external independent scrutiny of decisions. Kevin said that the caution process comes under Inspector authority. Those cases that go before the CPS are already under scrutiny but the ones the borough deals with are not. Perhaps this could be looked at. Cindy said she would like Tower Hamlets to explore this option.

ACTION: TH

27. Sue said that DV cases are not included in conditional cautions policy. Also the Service Level Agreement (SLA) with the MPS indicates that a caution for DV cases should be referred to the CPS. Phil said he is aware that the SLA has been suspended between the CPS and Emerald.
28. Davina commended Tower Hamlets on the depth and richness of their data collection. The lack of information on prisoner release in DV cases is an issue she is currently taking up with the Prison Service. Davina asked for the usually high number of male victims to be explained. She also requested more information on the Positive Action Days. Kevin explained that there are a high number of brother and sister, brother and brother or father and son cases, which would account for the high number of male victims. Kevin said the borough strive to arrest perpetrators of DV in the first 24 hours. The Positive Action Days involve cases where the perpetrator has fled or has not been arrested and extra officers are drafted in to try to get these people arrested. Davina said this is excellent practise and ought to be promoted to other CSU.
29. Anni congratulated Tower Hamlets on their submission. In connection with Caution Plus, she has seen a scheme run in China where a caution is used but then it is the involvement of the partnership agencies afterwards that had a huge impact on repeat offending. Anni asked for comments on the development and trial of the 124D that happened in Tower Hamlets. Have your experiences been a learning curve for other boroughs and how has this learning been incorporated? Anni also said the report submitted indicates that the ethnic background of those reporting DV mirrors the ethnic composition of the borough. Tower Hamlets has a large Bangladeshi community. How has Tower Hamlets developed links with the Bangladeshi community? What is the involvement of the SNT in this relationship?

30. Kevin said the 124D has been very successful for the borough. More training is still needed but it focuses on the need for risk assessment and taking a statement as soon as possible, which the CPS will rely on if the victim subsequently withdraws support for a prosecution. To train all the officers on 124D is a mammoth task. We have had 90% coverage on DV training. All officers who would attend DV cases have now been trained in 124D. Delivery, training and subsequent supervision are key to success. Caroline said Tower Hamlets did have an influence on the trial. Feedback was given and changes were made to the format of the 124D and how the pilot would be rolled out.
31. Caroline explained that Tower Hamlets has a high profile around community issues. There have been a number of projects involving the community in relation to changing the borough policing forum. A lot of work is carried out with mosques and there are regular invitations to meetings. SNT's have been rolled out across the borough having now received funding for this. Caroline said they are keen to ensure lower level intelligence is passed on to 3rd party reporting. Due to time constraints Cindy asked that written information on DV work with specific communities within Tower Hamlets be submitted.

ACTION: TH

32. Phil explained that the MPS are collating best practise with the 124D and the learning areas to be noted. An evaluation is being carried out on all 32 boroughs and this forms part of the agenda on a monthly review meeting with all Safety Units.
33. Kirsten commented that part of the borough submission that struck her was the statement that Tower Hamlets treats everyone in the borough the same. She was pleased to see there was a LGBT forum in the borough, which discusses DV issues. How is this connected into the wider DV framework? There is nothing in the report that mentions work with the disabled community. Iain said Tower Hamlets have advertised for an LGBT Liaison Officer. Clearly more work needs to be done with disabled groups. Iain said the MPS is focused on dealing with perpetrators and we now need to focus more on links with partnership groups and improving after care skills with hard to reach members of the community.
34. Ruth said the MPS does not carry out much monitoring around disability. Tower Hamlets mention nothing around monitoring except around mental health. What is done in situations where for example a carer has abused a disabled person and so they have felt too frightened to report the abuse for fear of repercussions? Disabled people, particularly women who report DV crime are automatically labelled as a vulnerable adult. Social services are then involved and this is a real deterrent to people reporting DV crime. There are issues around specifically involving disabled women in monitoring work. The borough report talks of a supervisor template to identify needs. Is it at this point you would look at access needs and interpreter needs etc? In terms of evidence gathering, what happens if the victim has communication needs?

35. Kevin said the Supervisor Template was introduced because of 124Ds. Included within the template are any issues the victim face that we should be aware of. We are trying to improve the quality of the template to include all issues involved. The Safety Planning Panel has changed recently to include work done by the DV Team to include more partner groups. Iain said the use of representatives from the Health Service is a significant step forward and exposes the MPS to a wider range of victim needs. Caroline said the borough is now working with partnership groups to seek out victims of DV. This is dependent of referrals from other agencies. If victims are vulnerable then they will need their support.
36. Beryl Foster said that she would like it noted that in her opinion digital cameras are needed to record evidence. How does the history of a case get to a response officer? Will third party reporting sites lead to more reports rather than charges? How do advocates prioritise their cases when they receive such a large volume of reports? Are the advocates trained in things like risk management? Do they provide you with outcomes monitoring? Does the Community Safety Unit work with advocates to build cases? How do you assess the effectiveness of the Safety Planning Panel? Are other agencies bringing effective safety measures to victims over and above what the advocates and the MPS are doing?
37. Kevin said advocacy work is a new concept in the borough so is still being built on. Kevin meets monthly with Natalie Watson from Victim Support to discuss how to improve advocacy work. Officers are perhaps not aware of the support Victim Support provides so advocates can inform victims of the support that is available. High-risk victims and repeat offenders are now automatically referred to the Safety Planning Panel. The period of time over which a repeat victim is monitored has been changed.
38. Vicky Kielinger said that she and Susan Paterson were responsible for an evaluation of 124D. Supervision came up as an important issue, for example officers crossing out pages with 'Not Applicable' (N/A). Kevin said that supervision issues have been addressed in Tower Hamlets.
39. Pauline highlighted the importance of the police response to DV cases, as they are the first point of contact people think of. She suggested a good contact for disabled women would be the British Council of Disabled People. Caroline said that disability training is covered within the training programme. Perhaps the definition of abuse needs to be looked at to ensure we are covering the appropriate range of issues. Mental health issues need to be addressed and challenged vigorously.
40. Sandra wanted to echo others concerns over the high number of cautions issued. More monitoring needs to happen on what happens to these cases. Perhaps we should be looking at having a culture of pro-charging rather than an arrest culture. Is follow up and evaluation of your own methods and risk assessment accurate? How can we tackle the issue of prisoners being released without prior notification? How many cases in reality do involve family DV cases? In connection with the User Satisfaction Survey, how satisfied are victims with the level of service received?

41. Kevin said in connection with monitoring risk assessment, the template is mirrored onto the crime report. DV crimes are all screened for investigation. In some cases the victim had informed them that the perpetrator had been released which is not acceptable and needs to be addressed. Kevin said he has no statistics available on family DV cases but has shared with us his observations from his own work. These cases are often difficult to prosecute due to a lack of evidence or victims who do not want to support prosecution.
42. Cindy asked that Tower Hamlets give a written report on what proportion of DV cases are family orientated and is there a rational behind this.

ACTION: TH

43. Caroline said that she had negotiated with Heidi Joplin that Tower Hamlets would receive victim service feedback from support organisations. We have seen a dip in the level of those happy with the service received from the police and there has been a negative impact from the Safety Planning Panel. Victims often do not welcome this intervention.
44. Elizabeth Harrison asked what proportion of victims are asked if they have prior experience of DV? Iain said a rape forum meeting is held on a regular basis and this is discussed there. Hilary asked if figures on repeat victimisation pick up cases where there has been prior DV incidents happen outside the borough. Kevin said they would only know about repeat victimisation that happened in within the 32 boroughs of London. Hilary asked if there is different performance on repeat victimisation across areas of London. Phil said there is a variance of operation practise across London although there shouldn't be. There are different minimum standards adopted by individual boroughs. Minimum standards are there for the MPS but how they are interpreted is different. We do ask for compliance to prevent this.
45. Betsy said that there is different practise but we are now in a better position to monitor practise, which is picking up inconsistency. The definition of repeat victimisation is now looked at more robustly which may pick up victims who have moved borough. We now look at this over a three-year period and look at names rather than flags.
46. Phil said he would be looking at the action points raised at this meeting with the view to making significant updates for the February meeting. Davina said she would like a response from the MPS about using digital cameras. She would also like to know if Strand 6 exists. Phil said Strand 6 is being formed but it has yet to have its inaugural meeting. Iain said that Tower Hamlets has offered to contribute to Strand 6 but this offer has not been taken up yet.

ACTION: PK

47. Philippa said she is a borough DV coordinator and the partnership through the DV forum has paid a lot of attention to the needs of equality and diversity. They are

working to make responding to DV calls a priority. The links with the advocate service and the borough DV team do have a wide involvement in community education approaches. Philippa said a lot of the improvements seen have been because of improved dialogue with the community.

48. Ruth asked how much diversity is included in the training for the Community Safety units. Are disability and LGBT issues included? Do you keep information on which organisations are appropriate to contact in cases, e.g. which ones have wheelchair access etc?
49. Cindy asked to be provided with a written response to this.

ACTION: TH

50. Anthony said that the report mentions integrated borough operations and receiving the history of cases. Is this a MPS wide practise? The CDRP budget is 4 million. DV is allocated 6% of this, which seems rather small. Have Tower Hamlets applied for funding? Caroline said integrated borough operations desks are not MPS wide yet. Tower Hamlets is a pilot site for this. Iain said DV is a priority, and it is down to leadership to drive it forward. It is about effectiveness rather than funding. Diversity is being worked on with partnership links and drawing on their experience.
51. Cindy said that the report was of high quality and contained areas of good practise. There is more to be done. Cindy said that there are key issues around succession planning to ensure the borough is not reliant on the current team. Cindy said the Board are looking forward to the feedback on the issues raised. All the points will be forwarded and the borough will be given the opportunity to feedback on future progress.

Brent Borough Report

52. Chief Superintendent Mark Toland explained that he had taken over the Brent Borough Command post in July this year. He is aware that there are areas for improvement but foundations have been laid for change. Brent is on a journey of improvement. In January Brent was second from bottom for sanction detection. This improved to 24% at the end of 2005 and now we have reached 30%, which is Brent's target, and the aim is now to improve even further.
53. There has been a huge drop in the number of offences being reported. Similar numbers of people are being arrested but Brent is not getting the disposals that other boroughs are. Are we getting the balance right? Mark said they are looking at how many offences are brought to justice and a process has been started for this.
54. Brent has a Violence Against the Person focus desk that does lots of analysis into repeat offenders and repeat victims. We are trying to raise the quality of our evidence. Brent has a good Community Safety Unit in terms of detection rates. Brent has good sanction detection rates over all but DV detection rates are an area they would like to improve, and this needs to happen by being robust at the scene. Power

of arrest is of concern. Mark now asks the inspectors to meet with him every morning to report on progress being made. DV does feature every morning. Compliance around 124D is an issue. Brent is looking at using DV Enforcement Campaign cars, which was previously operated. They want to make sure all young officers make contact whilst they are at a scene to make sure all sorts of evidence is gathered.

55. 3rd Party Reporting is being reviewed and re-launched. We do need to make sure a referral is made in each case and opportunities for investigation are not lost through this process. The advocacy team have done excellent work around family support and gathering additional evidence.
56. Victimless prosecution has been looked at. We need to consider the long-term risk to potential victims. We do have a survivor centred approach but we also have a duty to protect people. All the departments are being looked at to ensure there is enough of the right staff. Succession planning is crucial. There has been a long hand over period between the last Borough Commander and Mark. Performance is improving. Mark said he is not sure Brent is engaging SNT enough around issues such as DV. There are opportunities to support victims through visits.
57. Partnerships have been formed with other boroughs. Visits have been made to better performing boroughs Havering and Cardiff. The Local Area Agreement around DV issues, to improve arrest rates and sanction detection, highlights this focus on partnership. Brent is keen to do more work with young people. Brent is signed up to a Local Area Agreement to bring perpetrators to justice.
58. The Advocacy Project was established in 2005. Before this people were going to 13 agencies where as now there is one point of reference. Brent is looking to extend this service to victims of sexual assault. Victim surveys are interesting as people are willing to disclose far more information about themselves. Stats show incidents that have not been flagged around forced marriage and yet it is known that 4% of referrals from women of Asian background involve forced marriage. The project has also raised issues around forced marriage in the traveller community. 96% of those asked said they were satisfied with the level of service.
59. Brent has met the criteria for a specialist court. Brent is also launching multi agency victim conferencing in October. This will be linked into other strategies; prolific offenders, Safeguarding children, back to work scheme for victims, work with schools, a lot of sport initiative with a focus on DV message.
60. Mark says Brent is working on submitting accurate data to the CRIS system. Work is continuing around links between drug abuse and DV. Training is considered to be hugely important and 80% coverage has been achieved on DV training.
61. Mark stated that he has a list of vulnerable staff that are suffering DV issues or alcohol abuse. This is discussed weekly and every manager has staff they are responsible for. Chief Inspector Julia Pendry is devising a corporate response to give

managers guidance on how to support staff who are victims of DV. Staff have been arrested for DV offences.

Questions and Comments

62. Ruth asked if Brent have worked with disabled organisations. Ruth said she was impressed that Brent had been flexible around the definition of DV and what are the views on DV offences against disabled people? Helen Oliver said the list of contacts has been expanded from 50 to 450 contacts. Ruth said there are issues around DV and sexual violence about working on policy and operational levels with organisations and including disability. This needs to be done in a DV forum not a wider forum where the issues don't get picked up on. Pete said Brent try to take an active part in committees involved in disability and vulnerable adults. It has been noticed that since the advocacy project victims will disclose more offences and Brent have ended up running both Sapphire investigations and DV investigations. DV offences can be prosecuted if a victim withdraws their statement whereas sexual offences cannot.
63. Anni commended Brent on their internal DV policy. She was pleased to see that Brent consults with other boroughs and said she will recommend other boroughs to visit Brent on this issue. Anni congratulated Brent on their application for a specialist court. She warned that the spotlight from the court would be unrelenting. The expectations raised by national developments will be huge. Brent needs to accelerate their journey because scrutiny will not just be at a local level.
64. Davina said the DV definition has now been adopted in all Government departments for **monitoring purposes only**. This allows all organisations to operate to a wider definition should they choose to do so. The core definition is to ensure data is collected to monitor trends across the agencies. Sue asked if other multi agencies share Brent's definition of DV. What is the relationship between CSU and child protection? How is Brent finding compliance with the Victims Code and in particular the 24-hour deadline? Sue asked if there are any Domestic Homicide Review recommendations that have not been achieved.
65. Pete said Child Protection Team (CPT) has narrowed their response to child abuse. There are a number of children of 16 and above who are involved in violent relationships that are falling outside of the CPT remit. It has always been a caveat on the CSU remit that the CSU manager in discussion with the Crime Management unit would take on these investigations. There are some vulnerable young adults out there involved in criminal activity who report their needs to the CSU and there have been some good results around this. Neil said Brent now have 4 to 5 advocates specialising in cases involving children of 16 and over. However, information sharing is not at a stage they would like it to be yet.
66. Helen Oliver said Brent is working on 50% of the Domestic Homicide Review recommendations. Inaccuracy around PCT input is a concern. Neil said Brent are

progressing an application for a PCT advocate that will hopefully be a nurse. Mark stated that a lot of work is being done around the Victims Code to ensure first line supervisors make sure people are kept up to date on what is happening. Brent has a passionate Victims Care Unit. It is very important that the initial investigator tells the Crown Prosecution Service immediately if there are special measures needed.

67. Anthony said he is confused as to which Brent forum sits where and whether there is a strategic group and an operational group. How does the structure work? Neil said Brent have a very well organised DV forum. This does a lot of work on the ground that has sown the seeds for specialist DV cluster courts. Within the previous structure people were not held to account. The CPSG was the equivalent of the CDI. Now we have a local strategic partnership and below that is the CDRP and below that the delivery group has an operational forum for each area of crime. This is the statutory agency held to account within the local strategic partnership. A wide range of organisations come to the DV forum including the voluntary sector. The forum does the groundwork for what Brent is asked to do at a strategic level. Neil said Brent does not intend to set strategies because there is enough strategy out there to tackle DV. Brent intends to implement the National and local strategies.
68. Anthony asked if Brent has agreements amongst their partners where if they agree to do something proposed at the DV forum they could be held to account. Neil said Helen Oliver took all the strands from the available strategic documents and collated them into a colour-coded document. This document gives leads of who is to be held to account.
69. Beryl said the report mentions reviews for murder cases and a lot of recommendations, but none of the recommendations were for the police. Beryl asked who could progress these other issues with all the other agencies. Who coordinates and leads that process of review? Do they have enough powers to take forward the recommendations? Helen Oliver said the recommendation report goes to the operational forum.
70. Beryl said the introduction of the DVEC car is impressive. It is also commendable that Brent has started MARAC. There are a large number of DV reports in Brent. How do the advocates prioritise their caseload? Will cases be systematised from SPECSS¹ to MARAC? Who will coordinate this? Neil said the DVEC car is a double-edged sword because it throws up resourcing issues funding cars for other crime areas. To sustain it on a long term basis is going to be a challenge.
71. SPECSS come with every allegation of DV. MARAC will only pick up on a percentage of this. It entails a much more detailed assessment and intervention. Pete said MARAC has been designed to be a victim centred process for vulnerable and high-risk victims. Advocacy workers will have the ability to feed these victims

¹ High risk factors that may be present are identified using the SPECSS risk assessment model – **S**eparation (and child contact disputes), **P**regnancy / New Birth, **E**scalation (attacks becoming worse and happening more often), **C**ommunity isolation and sensitivity, and **S**exual assault.

through to MARAC. Brent has confidentiality agreements so the advocates feed victims at immediate risk back to police officers so they can take immediate action. Helen Oliver said that when the advocacy project was established Brent designed the risk assessment to pick up on victims disclosed to advocacy workers rather than the police.

72. Pauline said she was concerned that disability is not mentioned in the report. What sort of message does this send out? Mark apologised for this omission. Brent is trying to cater for the needs of different groups. Neil said Brent does have a signpost document that has a range of agencies that cover disabled cases. It is not often that Brent gets a disclosure from a disabled person. Pauline said this is probably because the facility is not promoted. Neil said he accepted this point. He said Brent would absolutely seek specialist needs for any person who approached them. Mark said disabled issues are being looked at as part of citizen focus work.
73. Cindy asked Brent to take this issue away and provide written evidence of how disabled DV cases are handled.

ACTION: BRENT

74. Elizabeth Harrison asked about the connection between DV and sexual assault. Brent's report indicates that sexual assault is asked about on the risk assessment forms. What proportion of people say that they have been sexually assaulted? What is done for these people? Are the references to links with the Sexual Assault Referral Clinic at Northwick Park Hospital to do with Amethyst²? Pete stated that cases where sexual assault is flagged are assigned a specialist rape officer from Sapphire to investigate that particular offence. There is the wrap around of the advocacy service and a CSU officer who will conduct the risk assessment. Neil said he and the Detective Chief Inspectors (DCIs) would also carry out an assessment for the level of competency needed for the investigating officer. There are 5 specialist officers within Sapphire to conduct rape investigations. Mark said around 3% of DV cases go on to disclose sexual assault.
75. Anni said a great deal of effort went into setting up the Havens and they are seen as a gold standard. Anni said boroughs should be encouraged to make use of the Havens. Anni stated that one of the objectives of the Board meeting is for Tower Hamlets and Brent to disclose where they are experiencing difficulties. Anni said she recently met with borough Chief Executives where a series of borough profiles are produced on their involvement with DV. An issue that comes up frequently are Primary Care Trusts (PCT) and the issue of the Health Service. Annie said she and

² The Amethyst Pilot Project, based in North West London, is one of two national Children's Sexual Assault/Abuse Referral Centres. Amethyst works in partnership with local agencies including The Haven, Social Care, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, the Metropolitan Police, NHS and Department for Education and Skills to provide a comprehensive service for children and young people aged 0-18 years who may have suffered sexual abuse. The pilot project provides services for children from Brent, Harrow, Hillingdon and Ealing. The pilot project will run for 12 months from April 2006.

Davina had met with Jennette Arnold, the Chair of the London Health Commission, to see what level of scrutiny is possible. Anni said it would be very useful to receive some kind of report from borough commanders picking up this issue. Where are borough blockages happening? Are they local blockages?

76. Mark said one of the biggest challenges is around victims taking a case through to prosecution. PCT has financial difficulties in most parts of London. There are problems around it taking too long to get a case to court because witnesses are lost in that time, including police officers. Operation on delivery is a problem for holding partners to account financially and meeting targets. Davina stated that the CPS data shows just under 50% of prosecution failure is due to victim behaviour and the rest is due to the police and Crown Prosecution Service so there is room for improvement by the Crown Prosecution and the police.
77. Davina stated that the staffing numbers in Brent CSU are admirable and the level of commitment to dealing with staff DV issues is also commendable.
78. Davina said that she was interested in the targets for operational policies and how this does not create perverse incentives. 124Ds are not being completed unless a crime is committed. Does this not create a perverse incentive for officers to decide that a crime has not been committed? What steps are in place to prevent this from happening? The Local Area Agreement (LAA) target only counts offenders present at the scene of the crime. What steps have been taken to ensure a speedy response from officers? What follow up work is done with those who have left the scene after officers arrive? Under what circumstances are Fixed Penalty Notices (FPN) used?
79. Mark said there is a 41% completion rate on 124Ds, which is not acceptable. There is a far higher completion rate on cases where it is determined a crime has been committed. A system is now in place to ensure that all the 124Ds are completed. LAA targets are about sanction detection and bringing the offender to justice as well as arresting at the scene. Pete said the LAA target about arresting at the scene of the crime was there before SOC was introduced and so is slightly outdated. It is recognised that offenders who have left the scene are more likely to offend again. Brent looks to detain outstanding suspects very quickly. FPNs are given out for a victimless criminal damage case.
80. Anthony referred to Brent saying they were unsure of getting outcomes for criminal prosecutions. The SDVC system should give the necessary information. Anthony asked where DV sits as a priority amongst all the other priorities? Do you feel you can devote as much time to DV as you think it deserves or are you restrained by other MPS priorities too much? Mark stated that Brent needs to know how successful they are with cases and what the outcomes are. Particularly through the Local Criminal Justice we need to understand why we are not getting an effective trial. Mark feels work to ensure this should start now. Mark said DV work is such an important aspect of police work. People must feel safe within their own homes. Crimes around a person are much more of a priority than crimes around property for instance. Partnerships are crucial.

81. Neil said violent crime has an enhanced position over the last two years. Historically violence against the person was not given key priority over robbery, burglary and car crime. Now violent crime is featuring more and more. Brent is now reviewing the status of SIP teams. Brent is trying to bring together SIP teams and crime teams and divide them to have a Crime Investigation Unit and a Violent Crime Command locally. Later there will be a Public Protection Unit to bring together some of the Public Protection Units such as Sapphire and DV. It is hoped to strengthen staff resilience through training. Neil said he is currently developing Detective Inspectors. Funding comes through the BCU fund but it is unsure how long this funding will last. Mark said that if there were not MPS Policing Plans then he would revert to his Community Safety Strategy, which is based on local people's priorities. The annual policing plan does dovetail with the Community Safety Strategy.
82. Cindy asked if Mark was not here, where would this strength of accountability and scrutiny sit? Who would hold Brent to account on DV issues? Mark said performance is on the agenda. The Link Commander plays a huge role and meets with Mark monthly. They meet at the North West Group to share good practise. Mr Godwin meets with Mark at least once a month and themed performance review meetings are held around violent crime.
83. Gerry Campbell said that after street crime DV is a main area of accountability threaded through most meetings the Borough Commander or management team goes to. The Violent Crime Command was developed this year and is led by Steve Allen. His aspirations are around the development of Public Protection Commands for each of the 32 boroughs. Gerry said he has worked with the Crown Prosecution Service around strand one of Umbra (Improving performance and data sharing) and this looks at core outcomes. One of the actions came from the Boards scrutiny of Havering and the discussion around core outcomes at the Magistrates Court. Work with the CPS around this has been productive. Compliance work has been done around the learning from this. Work in Brent around Vulnerable Persons policy and plugging gaps in service delivery was jointly identified as a result of an investigation. The policy has been implemented as good practise. DV identification, assessment and management have had good input in the Leadership Training program for Inspectors and Sergeants.
84. Beryl said that she hoped all of the initiatives mentioned would be robust enough to withstand a change of administration. Beryl stated that nothing from the Domestic Violence Act has been put into operation. Victim consent is a barrier for many advocacy projects where Victim Support is automatically getting referrals over the Internet. Can the police make referrals to Sanctuary within Brent? In some boroughs the Housing Departments are very much involved in this. Helen Oliver said Sanctuary has been reviewed recently to improve how the system works. Meetings are held with CSU and Housing to ensure risk assessment is carried out.

85. Sandra said she was pleased that Commander Mark Tolland was present today. It is a positive signal. Sandra asked what is happening to offenders. How many cases get to court? What are your caution rates? How many plead guilty? What is the charging rate? What are your plans for improving data gathering and accuracy? Do you experience offenders being released from prison without prior notification? You say the MERLIN system is used to record all incidents of children coming to the notice of police, in particular when present at venues where DV has occurred. Sandra said the language used here is a concern. Children might not be hit but they are exposed to DV and may be at risk. How do you prioritise children and follow up on these cases. Sandra wanted to make the point that police forces should be institutionalised in practise and not rely on personality when thinking of succession planning.
86. Mark stated that Brent's charging rate was 10.4%, which is low. Cautions are given to 8.5% of cases. Brent data accuracy is not too bad but checking data and having all the details of victims and witnesses can improve it. Neil said Brent has in place systematic approaches to DV and violence across the board. These approaches will not be abandoned if the Detective Inspector (DI) leaves. We need to make sure DIs have the right staff and resources. Pete agreed children are often silent witnesses to DV and are subject to abuse. The MPS needs to strike a balance of dealing with the child as a witness and a victim. Do we make them give evidence? To ensure the child abuse aspect of DV is covered, Brent use the MERLIN³ system to feed them into the child protection system.
87. Davina said independent DV advocates need access to CRIS and the MPS needs an MPS-wide response to this (at the moment there is variations at borough level).
88. Cindy said the Brent report shows great progress against a background of poor performance. She admires that the report acknowledges coming from a poor base and has displayed thoughtfulness over how to take things forward. Cindy said she would like to see progress on the specific issues raised.

³ "Missing Persons Enquiries and Related Linked Indices" (MERLIN) is a police networked computer system providing a database across London used to trace children and families where concerns have been registered. It holds all missing persons' reports within the Metropolitan Police Service and a national database of all persons missing for more than seven days. It covers children/young people coming to notice, youth non-recordable offences, prostitute cautions and children/young people taken into police protection.