



**METROPOLITAN
POLICE**

Working together for a safer London

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METROPOLITAN POLICE SERVICE

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Dear Cindy,

Thank you again for giving Hackney Borough the opportunity to present our work on Domestic Violence to the MPA Domestic Violence Board. I found the opportunity to examine this area in greater depth and in a more holistic way with our partners particularly useful.

Vision

As you are fully aware, addressing domestic violence can only be done in partnership with key agencies, particularly the Local Authority. The community safety team of the Local Authority is going through a root and branch 'shake-up' with an external consultant brought in to deliver an action as to the way forward. I was fortunate to be involved in the review and the final report is due to be discussed with the Chief Executive, Mayor and myself any day now. This has had an impact on any immediate work on developing a strategic vision. I can assure you that I have not ignored this. As chair of the Safer Cleaner Board (the Hackney CDRP) I agreed to a quick and dirty review of how the borough delivers on domestic violence. I have also had the opportunity to meet with Anthony Wills again to discuss the way forward. Finally police have been the leaders in calling for a 'planning day' for the strategic partnership, which will take place on 7th March, and Domestic Violence is a key part of the agenda. The Borough wishes to create a robust vision that will be forward looking and is underpinned by local services that are able to deliver the partnership's goals.

124Ds

Improved completion rates for 124Ds have been achieved since the report was made to the Board. An 18% improvement was made in November, December and the OCU intends to build on that achievement. Closer supervision of DV incidents by uniform Sergeants has been a key element in this success. As part of Operation Athena, an internal information campaign was held highlighting Domestic Violence issues, good practice, and where improvement was needed. Inspectors, Sergeants, and Constables have all been reminded of the importance of the 124D form, and how it assists the BOCU in providing a better service to all DV victims, and in achieving our sanctioned detection targets.

As we mentioned in our report to the board, spreadsheets were created recording all DV incidents and whether a 124D was completed and received in the CSU, these helped supervisors to identify failings and intervene. The spreadsheets have been further revised and improved for 2008 so that they can better assist Inspectors to monitor compliance by their teams. Qualitative improvements will be achieved through improved supervision but good and poor examples of 124Ds will be

highlighted at Daily Management Meetings and at Inspector's performance meetings, so that additional evidence based feedback can be passed on to teams.

Rape

Having examined MPS data we can identify no correlation between the reporting of rape or the proportion of rape offences that are Domestic Violence related, and the completion of 124Ds. In 2007/8 Hackney remains above the MPS average for the proportion of rape offences that are identified as domestic violence related.

Police Staff

All cases of DV involving police staff are fully investigated. The borough commander is also made aware of incidents where Hackney staff are involved through a confidential docket from Directorate of Professional Standards (DPS). Victims are given support by the CSU and by their line managers who will put in place any additional welfare measures that may be needed on a case by case basis. Victims are provided with contact information for partner organisations and encouraged to seek support/counselling.

Perpetrators are subject to the same processes of investigation as other DV suspects and where evidence is available the CPS will be consulted with a view to charging. Liaison with the DPS takes place for internal perpetrators and we will ensure that cases are also identified to the CSU Service Delivery Team.

Links between Gangs and DV

Research into gang related murders is taking place at a strategic level and is ongoing; this may reveal any links to DV for suspects or victims in these cases. Further research into any link that may exist between DV and Gangs would have to be commissioned at a strategic level and is not the type of work that would be done on a borough.

Operation Hof in North London is bringing the good practice set in South London by Operation Alliance to Hackney and other Boroughs. Operational tactics aimed at disrupting gang related crime do not appear to be applicable to domestic violence. We are working with our YOTs team to see how key messages about domestic violence prevention can be delivered in an effective way to the youths and their families who involved in their programmes.

Involve community organisations which do not have a focus on DV

As part of Operation Athena our Safer Neighbourhoods teams (SNTs) took part in a joint exercise with the CSU and other partners to offer a one stop DV advice bus on a Hackney estate. We will be working together to build on this initiative in 2008. Our SNTs also distributed leaflets and advice pamphlets to community organisations, doctors' surgeries and other community focus points where Hate Crime and Domestic Violence issues may be reported. SNT officers are aware of Domestic Violence best practice and will offer immediate advice or liaise with the CSU to provide more in depth assistance to victims who approach them during community surgeries.

I have also asked my lead on SNTs to examine if there is a role or opportunity to utilise SNT officers in secondary arrest investigations for domestic violence. I am of the view there is but this is receiving some resistance from the centre.

Through our Communities Together meetings we are creating a manageable and sustainable programme of work that involves CSU officers and communicates key messages on DV. For example we are assisting with personal safety training for young Muslim women, mothers and staff

through the North London Community Centre and taking the opportunity to build domestic violence advice and support.

Our MARAC involves professionals from housing, health, social services and education who are helping to improve understanding of DV and responses to it within their own organisations.

Raising public awareness

Hackney Borough's communications team recently ran a domestic violence awareness campaign through the local media, centred around Operation Athena. The aim of this campaign was to educate the local community about the role of the CSU team and the wider support services available to victims (and perpetrators) of domestic violence. Several articles appeared in the local press, including a feature on the CSU, a round-up of the borough's achievements on the Athena 'Day of Action' and a powerful interview with a 20 year old victim of domestic violence, whose ex partner had been jailed as a result of her coming forward to Hackney's Community Safety Unit.

Lesbian Gay Bisexual and Transgender Communities (LGBT)

Hackney BOCU is committed to revitalising links with and between local LGBT organisations within the borough. As we said in our original submission these networks have fallen out of use and need all parties to work together to rebuild them. A number of events are taking place for LGBT history month with involvement from local LGBT organisations, the Council, other partners, our LGBT Liaison officers, and the CSU. We will build on the networks created and reinforced in this month to engage more effectively with the LGBT community and to raise awareness of our positive response to DV within all communities.

Right first time project

It has become apparent that in a number of areas officers in Hackney are not completing tasks to a satisfactory standard. This includes a concern around first line supervision. Key in this is 'getting it right first time' and a new performance regime, coupled with utilising the Leadership Academy initiative, LA Local, for which Hackney is a leading pilot site. A number of initiatives will make sure officers do 'get it right first time'.

Challenging performance targets are being set (domestic violence initial arrest rate of 67%!) and the BOCU wants to ensure ownership of these across units, and functions, and from the bottom to the top of the Borough. We will ensure that our performance regime allows us to drill down to key issues that are inhibiting or enhancing performance. This will help us to consider what can be changed, where we need to work around difficulties, and where we have good practice that we should share with other BOCUs. Domestic Violence performance will be a one of our key target areas.

The NE Link of Boroughs is also piloting a peer review process where a theme is selected by the BOCU to have examined as well as a theme across all 7 BOCUs. I have determined that Hackney will have officers from another good performing Borough in the area of domestic violence (likely to be Tower Hamlets) carry a peer review of Domestic Violence on the borough.

Men's advice line

The CSU have sign posted this service to male victims of domestic violence, and also to perpetrators who appear willing to seek help, since the Board Meeting. The Domestic Violence and Hate Crime team at the council also offer a local service to male victims, and following contact with our DV Co-ordinator, the organisations will be liaising further with each other.

Gender distribution

We have identified that gender distribution reported to the meeting is not greatly influenced by counter allegations. Offences that may be cross allegations account for less than 5% of our Domestic Violence total, they are reported by both men and women and do not have a significant impact on the gender distribution.

Counter allegations

All teams have been reminded of service policy on the recording of counter allegations and on how to respond to these situations. This was one of the key internal messages during Operation Athena. CSU officers were able to explain this at briefings and to answer concerns raised by response team officers. Frontline officers have been encouraged to contact the CSU at incidents where they could benefit from advice and are doing so for most of counter allegations.

Outstanding Murder Review

This review is nearing completion. To date it does not seem that the victim has had contact with local services.

Olympic Borough

We acknowledge that major sporting events can be linked to a rise in domestic violence and careful consideration will be given to this issue nearer to the date of the Olympics in 2012. However we believe that increased domestic violence is more likely to be associated with events that create greater partisan fervour, such as international football tournaments rather than athletics. No British Isles team is taking part in the European championship this year. However environmental scanning will take place nearer to the event so that any particular matches that are likely to generate tension within Hackney's diverse communities can be identified and appropriate control measures put in place.

The Olympic Security Directorate is very much alive to this and has it as a strand within their programme under crime.

Change Siege Mentality

The BOCU has been working to improve our customer service ethos and to make officers more focused on positive interactions with members of the community and meeting their needs. The focus has been on providing a professional response that keeps customers up to date with what is happening and explains what we intend to do.

Quality call back procedures ensure that supervisors across all teams and units check on the service that is being delivered to members of the public and that any failings are addressed at an early stage. Customer satisfaction has improved and this in turn has helped officers feel that local people appreciate their work. I have written to all staff to highlight the importance of improving our customer service, thanking them for the good work that has been done so far.

Safer Neighbourhoods teams have also had a positive impact, as there are more officers and staff involved in this area of policing than ever before. Interaction between frontline officers involved with the many positive community projects within Hackney helps to create a greater understanding of the rich tapestry within the borough, that officers focused on response work might not know about otherwise. Officers and staff also have a greater opportunity to become involved in this type of work.

The use of volunteers who live and work on the Borough and who are our greatest ambassadors are working in key frontline delivery areas such as victim and witness focus desks and front office triage services. This allows for greater opportunities for officers to be released to spend that extra few minutes in an interaction with the public as well as allowing the volunteers to witness the commitment and dedication officers have to delivering a professional service. It is worth noting that at the start of 2007 Hackney didn't have any volunteers. We now have over 50 from a variety of ethnic backgrounds and Hackney won the MPS award for the best volunteer programme for 2007.

I don't underestimate the challenge this change in mindset brings - something that the MPA Chair, Len Duvall, has made reference to, but already I can see a change in attitude of officers in the increase in confidence level ratings the Borough is currently experiencing.

I hope that I have been able to demonstrate that Hackney Borough has not been sitting on its laurels but has been working extremely hard to improve the service it delivers to the communities and particularly in the area of domestic violence.

Yours sincerely,

Chief Superintendent Steve Dann
Borough Commander Hackney