



Metropolitan Police Authority

Domestic Violence Board Annual Report

2006-07

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Foreword

Domestic Violence is an abuse of power by those we trust most and is often perpetrated where we should feel most safe. It is a pattern of abuse which can persist over time and end in murder. Domestic violence can take the form of emotional, psychological and financial abuse, as well as physical and sexual violence. It is a form of torture, a fundamental abuse of human rights and against the law.

In London domestic violence accounts for 1 in 3 Common Assaults, 1 in 4 cases of Actual Bodily Harm, and 1 in 8 cases of Grievous Bodily Harm¹ and yet the conviction rate remains just over 10%.

While the approach by the police may have changed over time, and fundamental to this progress has been the shift of responsibility for the progression of a case away from the survivor to the state, further improvements still need to be made.

One of the Metropolitan Police Authority's (MPA) roles is to hold the Commissioner rigorously to account for improving operational performance. The MPA Domestic Violence Board was established to scrutinise police performance and ensure that the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) and its 32 Borough Operational Command Units (BOCUs) across the capital have the opportunity to learn from partners, to showcase good practice and access support. It is an example of true partnership working. It is what police authorities were set up to do.

"The MPA are fulfilling their duty of holding the MPS to account."

"An essential tool in tackling domestic violence in London."

"Excellent way of engaging with voluntary sector and community groups and providing an opportunity to support them give their opinions on their and other police force area's activities."

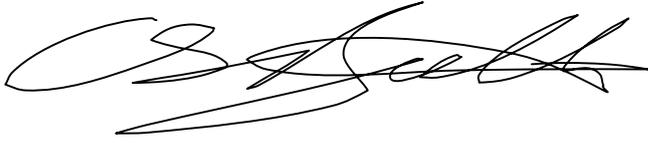
"The dogged following-up afterwards means that changes continue to happen."

These are just some of the comments describing the work of the MPA Domestic Violence Board made by both my colleagues who join me on the Board and our voluntary and statutory sector partners who take part. On their behalf, I am delighted to present the first annual report of the MPA Domestic Violence Board. I am immensely proud of what it has achieved in its first year.

I would like to thank my Board colleagues for their commitment and dedication over the year; every voluntary and statutory sector organisation which has given their time and shared expertise that has so powerfully informed the questioning and debate during meetings; and MPS colleagues for taking part

¹ 'Getting Away With It': A profile of the domestic violence sexual and serious offences and offenders, MPS, 2004

in the process. Finally I would like to thank MPA staff for their hard work, in particular Kim Webster, Michael Wadham and Hamida Ali.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Cindy Butts', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Cindy Butts
Chair, Domestic Violence Board
Deputy Chair, Metropolitan Police Authority

Executive summary

Following the Domestic Violence Board's first year of activity, this Annual Report considers the reports submitted, the questions asked and the discussions that have taken place. Based on this information the MPA Domestic Violence Board makes the following recommendations to the MPS:

1. Currently officers are required to complete the 124D a CRIS entry, a CRIMINT entry and possibly a MERLIN entry. Explore simplifying these reporting and monitoring systems to ensure that all relevant information is captured
2. Evaluate the use of head gear camera technology (as described by Brent) and if successful roll-out across the service
3. Promote the use of weekly positive action days as used by Tower Hamlets to promote improved, appropriate arrest practice
4. Dip sample caution decisions, as practiced in Hammersmith and Fulham, on domestic violence cases regularly
5. Review what is accessible to officers on risk identification, assessment and management and consider whether there is more assistance which can be provided
6. Consider establishing Domestic Violence Case Trackers based on the model within Project Sapphire to assist with quality of data and response
7. Conduct an independent evaluation of the Form 124D as part of the review of the MPS Domestic Violence Standard Operating Procedures
8. Ensure all Community Safety Units are appropriately staffed and have dedicated administrative support
9. Enable BOCUs to recruit Community Safety Unit Managers according to skills and experience
10. Issue clear policy on the role of Safer Neighbourhoods Teams in tackling domestic violence
11. Consider developing domestic violence-specific training for officers of Chief Inspector rank and above, including Association of Chief Police Officer (ACPO) ranks, to encourage and promote leadership on domestic violence
12. Address the anecdotal concerns raised at the Board about the negative implications of the implementation of Metcall² for the response to domestic violence
13. Ensure referrals are made available routinely to domestic violence advocacy services
14. Extract data on dual arrests to investigate the prevalence of inappropriate practice
15. Enable BOCUs to share MPS Performance Directorate data on domestic violence with local partners, in particular advocacy services, to assist with maintaining safety
16. Develop other performance indicators to complement the existing measure on arrest rate, e.g. repeat victimisation and include qualitative measures e.g. survivor satisfaction

² MPS initiative to install 3 call-centres to manage all 999 calls to the MPS, moving away from the previous system of 32 BOCU based control rooms

In order to inform the annual report, a questionnaire was sent to everyone who had taken part in the Board over the course of the year whether member agency, police officer presenting to, or attending the Board, or community organisation representative. The purpose of the questionnaire was to seek views on the Board and its effectiveness. We received 16 responses from a range of Board member agencies, voluntary organisations and police colleagues. Their views included recommendations to the MPA as a monitor of MPS performance, and to government responsible for setting national policy on domestic violence. As a result, the MPA Domestic Violence Board makes the following recommendations to government:

1. Introduce domestic violence as a governmental priority which reflects the attention attributed to other crimes such as robbery
2. Give all police authorities a responsibility to develop a Domestic Violence Board
3. Develop a national web based monitoring database and risk assessment tool
4. Hold Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs) accountable for local work on, and funding allocated to, domestic violence
5. Ensure all sections of the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004 (DCVCA) that relate to domestic violence are enacted
6. Ensure that Domestic Violence Homicide Reviews are independently chaired
7. Roll out fully integrated courts, linking together criminal and civil courts, extend the link to crown courts and ensure judges attend partnership domestic violence training
8. Prioritise work to prevent domestic violence
9. Address accessibility to services for homeless women and women with no recourse to public funds³
10. Ensure substantive, coherent and long term funding for Independent Domestic Violence Advice (IDVA) services is available in every borough
11. Set realistic targets for IDVA services which ensure there is sufficient provision to manage caseloads linked to a Specialist Domestic Violence Court
12. Commission and fund a national training agency for the violence against women sector with sufficient capacity
13. Fund Family Justice Centres
14. Ensure that face to face support / counselling services for children living with domestic violence are available
15. Acknowledge and fund co-ordinated, community responses to domestic violence
16. Ensure sufficient provision of the Integrated Domestic Abuse Programme
17. Promote Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC)

³ "People with 'no recourse to public funds' are those who, due to their immigration status are allowed to be in this country but are not eligible for many of the public funds that other UK residents can claim such as benefits and council housing. Upon entry to the UK as a partner or a spouse of a British national, there is often a condition attached to leave prohibiting 'recourse to public funds'. Public funds in immigration rules describes those welfare benefits which applicants need to show that they will not claim and that they can be adequately maintained without them." *How can I support her? Domestic Violence, Immigration and Women with no Recourse to Public Funds*, Southall Black Sisters, Women's Resource Centre, 2006

18. Develop performance indicators which reflect survivor safety and satisfaction with services provided and which are consistent across agencies
19. Take a broader violence against women approach which includes prostitution and violence against girls
20. Cover domestic violence as a mainstream element of the national curriculum
21. Name domestic violence and be proud of what is being done to combat it
22. Implement routine questioning for domestic violence backed by advocacy support in all health care settings especially General Practice and Accident and Emergency.

The MPA Domestic Violence Board has had a successful first year. We hope the information contained in this report is useful to practitioners, police colleagues and community members alike. We think the Domestic Violence Board has proved to be a useful model which could be applied elsewhere.

Introduction

We know that:

- A survivor of domestic violence will experience on average 35 incidents before they call the police for help⁴
- One call to the police every 6 minutes reports an incident of domestic violence in London
- Only 35% of domestic violence incidents are reported
- 2 women are killed each week by a current or former partner⁵
- 101,199 incidents of domestic violence were reported in London last year
- £142.29 million is spent by the criminal justice system each year in London on domestic violence⁶

For these reasons and more, it is imperative that the police respond to people experiencing domestic violence is right, first time, in every way.

The MPA's purpose is to ensure an efficient, effective and fair police service for *all* Londoners. The MPA Domestic Violence Board was set up to scrutinise and monitor the police response to domestic violence in London. This is the first annual report of the Domestic Violence Board and provides a review of the ground covered this year.

The Domestic Violence Board is the MPA's response to the Mayor's Second London Domestic Violence Strategy. The strategy makes a number of recommendations for both the MPA and the MPS. The recommendations made to the MPA are centred on monitoring policy implementation and availability of resources for effective investigation of domestic violence (see Appendix 1).

The MPA Domestic Violence Board is run by the police authority but brings together other pan-London organisations working to tackle domestic violence in order to harness their specialist skills and expertise. The Domestic Violence Board is a mechanism for holding the police to account for its performance on domestic violence and allows scrutiny at both Borough Operational Command Unit (BOCU) and corporate levels.

⁴ Peter Jaffe, 1982

⁵ Homicide Statistics, 1998

⁶ Mayor's Second London Domestic Violence Strategy, 2004

MPA Domestic Violence Board – membership and mechanics

The Board is made up of a combination of MPA members and other specialists within the statutory sector⁷:

- Cindy Butts (Domestic Violence Board Chair), MPA
- Kirsten Hearn, MPA
- Elizabeth Howlett, MPA
- Anneta Prem, MPA
- Dru Sharpling, Chief Crown Prosecutor for London
- Anni Marjoram, Mayor’s Adviser on Women and Women’s Issues
- Davina James-Hanman, Greater London Domestic Violence Project
- Doreen Sangster, Government Office for London
- Hilary McCollum, London Councils
- Anthony Wills, Home Office Expert Panel

In addition to the membership of the Board, a range of voluntary sector organisations were invited routinely to every meeting to ensure that questioning on police performance and practice was grounded in local experience including:

- organisations working pan London on domestic violence
- organisations working in the boroughs where the BOCU is presenting to the Board
- organisations working on domestic violence, specialising further on the range of equality and diversity issues: age, disability, ethnicity, gender, religion and non-belief, and sexual orientation.

A list of every organisation that has taken part in a Domestic Violence Board meeting is listed at Appendix 2.

During 2006-07 the MPA/MPS Policing Plan⁸ performance measure to assess the response to domestic violence was the sanction detection rate⁹. A snapshot against this performance indicator was taken in January 2006 in order to set a work programme for the Domestic Violence Board and to establish which BOCUs would attend in the first year. BOCUs from both ends of the table were selected i.e. highest and lowest performing. We were keen that the Domestic Violence Board should be presented with variety and not only the higher end of performance, or the opposite. Despite that, the course of the year has demonstrated the lack of correlation, in most instances, between the rate of performance and how the BOCU was received by the

⁷ The Greater London Domestic Violence Project is the sole voluntary sector organisation represented on the Domestic Violence Board in recognition of their co-ordination role of the Second London Domestic Violence Strategy on behalf of the Mayor.

⁸ The MPA/MPS Policing Plan describes our arrangements for policing London over the year and gives details of our, priorities and objectives; past performance and future performance targets; funding and use of resources, and work to support continuous improvement.

⁹ A “sanction detection” is one in which a person was charged, reported for summons, cautioned or issued with a penalty notice for disorder, or the offence was taken into consideration by a court. Sanction detections are expressed as a percentage of offences reported.

Board. One of the most impressive presentations was given by a BOCU at the lower end of that performance table. This is important in supporting the case made by many working in the domestic violence field – statutory and voluntary alike - that a single quantitative measure cannot reflect the totality of the quality of service being delivered by police on the ground in response to domestic violence.

Each BOCU invited to attend the Domestic Violence Board received a detailed written commissioning brief¹⁰, in advance of the meeting detailing the subject areas required in the report. This was constructed on the basis of the recommendations set out in the Mayor's strategy outlining the elements of the police response to domestic violence which the MPA should be monitoring consistently. A copy of the Commissioning Brief is attached at Appendix 3.

Staff from the MPA were able to hold a meeting with officers from 3 of the 6 BOCUs to inform the report writing process. Draft reports were then received by the Equality and Diversity Unit at the MPA, feedback given to the report authors, and any final revisions made by those authors, before a final report was circulated to attendees in advance of the meeting. This meant that only a short introduction was needed from police colleagues at the beginning of each session ensuring that the maximum time was available for questioning. Following discussion any issues of concern were summarised by the Chair followed with a letter to the BOCU from the Chair requesting a written progress report to the next Domestic Violence Board meeting. After that point, any ongoing issues are taken up with the Commander of the Violent Crime Directorate where central responsibility for the MPS response to domestic violence sits.

The Domestic Violence Board agreed a series of objectives for its first year:

- To scrutinise and monitor the activities of central MPS directorates and 6 BOCUs in relation to domestic violence by June 2007
- To make a series of recommendations for improvement that will lead to increased performance in sanction detection rates, survivor and witness care and community engagement by BOCUs
- To liaise with community and voluntary groups and to make recommendations to Government on improving women's and children's safety in relation to domestic violence
- To scrutinise and monitor MPS involvement in Project Umbra¹¹, commissioned by the London Criminal Justice Board (LCJB) and designed to improve London's response to domestic violence

¹⁰ The commissioning brief is a written request for a report from the MPS and enables the MPA to specify exactly what the report should cover. A copy is attached at Appendix 3.

¹¹ Project Umbra is a London Criminal Justice Board initiative, led by the MPS designed to improve London's response to domestic violence by tackling the most significant challenges: performance and data sharing, advocacy, children, perpetrator management, integrated laws and courts, domestic violence homicide reviews.

The Board has met four times since its inception:

- 5 April 2006
- 19 September 2006
- 6 February 2007
- 12 June 2007

Six BOCUs have attended the Board:

- Havering
- Croydon
- Tower Hamlets
- Brent
- Hammersmith and Fulham
- Sutton

In addition to that, in line with the Board's objectives, two policy areas were also presented by the MPS Violent Crime Directorate Operational Command Unit and discussed:

- Domestic violence-specific training within the MPS
- Potential conflict of investigation policies around domestic violence, rape and sexual offences and child abuse.

The Chair of the Board also formally writes to the Commander of the Violent Crime Directorate following each Domestic Violence Board meeting. The response is then considered in an early closed session of the Board with the Commander of the Violent Crime Directorate ensuring recommendations made either at borough or corporate level are addressed.

Following the closed session, the meeting is then opened to a wide range of voluntary and community organisations working in the field of domestic violence to hear the presentations and take part (see Appendix 2). Their participation at the Board and their (sometimes unheralded) interventions at a local level, have often been crucial in giving power and depth to the dialogue between the Board and the police.

A presentation giving an overview of Project Umbra was made during the first meeting. The MPA Equal Opportunities and Diversity Board (EODB) meeting on 16th November 2006 had Project Umbra and the MPS' contribution to the initiative as its 'focus item'¹². A follow up report to this item was submitted to, and discussed at, the Domestic Violence Board. Project Umbra will continue to be monitored by the Board to ensure that sustained resources are committed. Closed sessions of the Domestic Violence Board have also spent time looking at the disproportionality on the grounds of ethnicity of victims of domestic violence homicide.

¹² Equal Opportunities and Diversity Board is the MPA's equalities focused sub-committee. Each meeting's agenda contains a 'focus-item' where a particular equality area or aspect of police business forms the basis of discussion in which community members are invited to take part.

Domestic Violence Board findings

The commissioning brief included the following areas in relation to domestic violence:

- Policy compliance, implementation and quality assurance
- Police resources
- Working in partnership
- Accessibility of response – promoting equality and diversity
- Internal response – employee domestic violence
- Performance management

This section goes into greater detail to reflect the Board's findings against each of these themes.

Policy compliance, implementation and quality assurance

Compliance with MPS Domestic Violence Standard Operating Procedures

The MPS Domestic Violence Standard Operating Procedures are designed to establish "*clear guidelines and accountability*" for investigation. Key elements of this policy include:

- Form 124D¹³
- Risk identification, assessment and management using the MPS SPECSS+¹⁴ and RARA¹⁵ models
- Inputting case information onto CRIS¹⁶, CRIMINT¹⁷, MERLIN¹⁸

Scrutiny of routine completion of the Form 124D was one of the recommendations to the MPA in the Mayor's Second London Domestic Violence Strategy because the form is designed to improve the quality of investigation – acting like a checklist which, once completed, allows the Community Safety Unit (CSU) to conduct a risk assessment.

¹³ An initial reporting form introduced in 2004. The MPS state that it is a risk assessment tool to improve initial investigation and effective evidence gathering. The form seeks to improve victim safety by identifying those at particular risk and in need of positive intervention.

¹⁴ High risk factors that may be present are identified using the SPECSS+ risk assessment model – Separation (child contact), Pregnancy / New Birth, Escalation (attacks becoming worse and happening more often), Cultural issues and sensitivity, Stalking and Sexual assault.

¹⁵ MPS DV Risk Management Model – Remove the risk, Avoid the risk, Reduce the risk, Accept the risk.

¹⁶ Crime Reporting Information System

¹⁷ Criminal Intelligence System

¹⁸ "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.

Reports from the 6 BOCUs who attended the Board showed clear commonality in following the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). For example:

- Crime Management Units screening all domestic violence incidents onto the Crime Reporting Information System (CRIS) to check the officer has activated the 'flag' which denotes that it is a domestic violence incident, and ensuring that national recording standards are met.
- Following a Crime Management Unit check, all reports are further quality assured by the CSU¹⁹ to ensure that cases are accurately 'flagged' according to the ACPO definition of domestic violence²⁰, and whether in addition to reporting onto the CRIS system, the officer has also inputted the same information onto both the CRIMINT and MERLIN MPS information systems storing intelligence and information involving children respectively. Other quality assurance checks include recording whether the individual is a repeat victim, whether the power to arrest was available and whether this was used, and, if not, why.
- Form 124Ds are checked by the officer's line manager
- Daily Senior Management Team meetings where domestic violence is a standing item during which all incidents reported in the previous 24 hours are discussed

RECOMMENDATION: Currently officers are required to complete the 124D a CRIS entry, a CRIMINT entry and possibly a MERLIN entry. Explore simplifying these reporting and monitoring systems to ensure that all relevant information is captured

In addition to examples of standardised procedure, there were also examples of practice that more than one BOCU discussed in their report but which was not stated by all 6 BOCUs. These included:

- Tower Hamlets CSU Manager conducts regular dip samples of CRIS reports
- Tower Hamlets holds monthly meetings for supervisors where performance issues are discussed
- Hammersmith and Fulham conducted an audit of CRIS reports of domestic violence which led to a fundamental review of their approach to domestic violence investigation

One factor which more than one BOCU implicitly associated with successful policy implementation was the positive attributes of their Community Safety

¹⁹ A specialist unit based in every MPS BOCU with responsibility for the investigation of domestic violence and hate crime

²⁰ Any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults aged 18 and over, who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender and sexuality.

Unit Manager where words such as “*dynamic*“, *enthusiastic*” and “*committed*” were used to describe the post holder. However, a key challenge to ensure consistent policy implementation will be to move towards a situation where every supervisor raises issues of quality of completion of the Form 124D systematically, versus ‘the system’ being personal intervention by the CSU Manager.

Proactive BOCU-based initiatives

Each report uncovered a range of activity that was either unique to that particular BOCU or not referenced by all reports. These were centred on:

- Advocacy referral
 - Digital camera technology
 - Multi-agency working
 - Positive action
 - Dedicated response vehicles
 - Quality assurance systems
-
- Advocacy referral - Immediate and automatic referral to the local advocacy scheme within the local Victim Support Scheme based in Havering which has a part-time advocate. Whereas in other Boroughs the Board heard from, those advocacy schemes independent of Victim Support were not receiving every referral despite agreement by the police in principle for this to take place.
 - Digital camera technology - More than one BOCU reported using resources from the Government Office for London’s *Domestic Violence Enforcement Campaign* to fund more digital cameras for *immediate capture of evidence for front line officers* (ICEFLO):
 - Brent obtained 4 digital cameras, a laptop and photo printer.
 - Brent also funded 2 head camera kits designed to capture the real-time response to incidents to support evidence gathering, and which has proved successful in a pilot project in Devon and Cornwall. Sutton reported that all response vehicles are equipped with digital cameras and that the CSU has a digital camera and photo printer.
 - The local authority in Havering funded 30 digital cameras for the BOCU

Systematic access to digital camera technology is important because it enables fast transfer of photographic evidence to the Crown Prosecution Service to support the possibility of prosecution, particularly in those cases that are not supported by survivors.

<p>RECOMMENDATION: Evaluate the use of head gear camera technology and if successful roll-out across the service</p>

- Positive action - Tower Hamlets operates a weekly 'positive action' day which involves following up outstanding arrests in order to track down domestic violence offenders. This initiative was not quoted by any other BOCU and was commented on very positively by Board members and voluntary sector organisations as best practice. Tower Hamlets' arrest rate was, at the time of the meeting, the highest of the BOCUs which attended at 95%, more than 30% higher than any other BOCU which attended the Domestic Violence Board during the year.

RECOMMENDATION: Promote the use of weekly positive action days as used by Tower Hamlets to promote improved, appropriate arrest practice

- Dedicated response vehicles - More than one BOCU used Government Office for London's *Domestic Violence Enforcement Campaign* funding to resource a dedicated response vehicle solely for domestic violence incidents, and in one instance for both domestic violence and rape and sexual offences.

Brent, Hammersmith and Fulham and Sutton referenced dedicated response vehicles in their reports:

- Brent and Hammersmith and Fulham were considering making a dedicated car a core response resource
- Sutton stated that they could not dedicate this level of resource on a permanent basis but instead were looking at making one available at particular times based on intelligence. For example local intelligence during the FIFA World Cup 2006 tournament pointed towards an increase in domestic violence incidents, particularly during matches involving England, and as a result a temporary dedicated response vehicle was funded through the Superintendent's Contingency Fund
- Quality assurance systems - Certain initiatives of note involved a level of quality assurance not set out in the MPS Standard Operating Procedures to ensure their implementation. For example:
 - Requiring the initial investigation officer attending a domestic violence incident to make contact with the CSU on a dedicated mobile phone for expert advice. Brent argue that this has resulted in a higher arrest rate and a higher quality of risk assessment. Tower Hamlets were also operating a similar policy although it was a facility that was available and not a requirement.
 - In Hammersmith and Fulham the CSU Manager has established a named contact on each of the Response Teams, enabling her to raise easily any concerns around policy compliance, investigation or Form 124D quality assurance issues

- Hammersmith and Fulham took a snapshot of all domestic violence incidents during a 24 hour period in order to highlight issues of concern and service improvements
- Audit of all domestic violence CRIS report entries to highlight any system input issues including the accurate ‘flagging’ of incidents. For instance, Hammersmith and Fulham identified 100 incidents incorrectly flagged as domestic violence during this process.
- Hammersmith and Fulham conducted a dip sample of 25 cases resulting in a caution decision together with local domestic violence organisations including the advocacy service.
- Hammersmith and Fulham had also identified a Domestic Violence Field Intelligence Officer and a Domestic Violence Problem Profile

RECOMMENDATION: Dip sample caution decisions on domestic violence cases regularly

- Risk Management - Each BOCU was asked questions on how officers use the risk assessment tools available to them to maintain survivor safety. Four of the six reports talked explicitly about the SPECSS+ and RARA models, both set out in the MPS Domestic Violence Standard Operating Procedures. For example, Havering’s and Croydon’s reports outlined what practical steps would be put in place following identification of medium and high risk including:
 - Medium risk – signposting to local services; taking steps to arrest the perpetrator
 - High risk – immediate steps to arrest the perpetrator; referral to the local advocacy project; issuing panic alarms; treating all calls as urgent

Measures indicating action beyond what is set out in the Standard Operating Procedure included:

- Croydon have a “*high-risk victim liaison officer*” based in the CSU. The CSU and the advocacy service make visits to survivors where a civil injunction has already been issued in order to identify any cases where injunctions have been breached.

The MPA Domestic Violence Board supports and promotes Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARACs) as an efficient and effective tool to assist police and partner agencies to save lives. The Board was encouraged that 4 of the 6 BOCUs outlined in their reports that a form of multi-agency case review process is in place where practitioners are able to discuss cases identified as higher risk. The MARAC model, first developed in Cardiff, is now identified by the Home Office as the system of multi-agency risk management in domestic violence cases which should be developed nationally. 3 BOCUs were in the process of moving from what was in place to a MARAC model, another was working to develop a

MARAC process and in another the report stated that an aim was to establish a MARAC.

Interestingly, when asked (as most BOCUs were during their presentation) what form of organisational support they identified they needed in relation to tackling domestic violence, 3 of the 6 BOCUs identified risk assessment and risk management, in particular:

- Concerns when offenders are released from prison without notifying the police who then cannot notify the survivor whose safety is in jeopardy. Prior notification already exists with sex offenders.
- Enhancing access to information for Response Team Officers attending incidents of domestic violence, e.g. case history and previous allegations, in order to keep those experiencing, and those attending, domestic violence incidents, safe.

RECOMMENDATION: Review what is accessible to officers on risk identification, assessment and management and consider whether there is more assistance that can be provided.

MPS Investigation Policies on Domestic Violence, Rape and Sexual Offences and Child Abuse – public concern that they conflict

The Mayor's Second London Domestic Violence Strategy made a recommendation to the MPS to:

“Review and change as necessary the current MPS policy clashes between domestic violence, child protection and rape and sexual assault policies and guidance and integrate gender-based violence issues into these.”

Consequently the Board selected this issue as one of two policy areas on which to base discussion, in line with the Domestic Violence Board's objectives.

In its report, the MPS confirmed that:

- a review of each policy individually would be taking place by the year's end
- the review of the Standard Operating Procedure on rape investigation was the first of the three to be reviewed
- the Domestic Violence Board would be involved in the consultation process.

The MPS report recognised that there were concerns among domestic violence and rape practitioners about inconsistencies between the investigation policies on domestic violence and rape. For example, while the approach to the former is to build cases that can progress without the support

of the witness, the approach to rape is the opposite as cases can rarely be prosecuted without evidence from the complainant.

The MPS sought to account for this situation by presenting historical perspectives of the MPS on these issues. For example, the typical critique of the MPS response to domestic violence used to be an over reliance on the survivor for the progression of their case. Equally, in relation to rape the traditional criticism of the police response was a lack of sensitivity to the rape complainant, leaving them peripheral to the investigative process.

The MPS stated further that the reason rape complainants were more fundamental to conviction was because of the legal concept of consent. Whereas offences associated with domestic violence such as Common Assault, legally, cannot be consented to, the absence of consent must be demonstrated to prove rape.

The Domestic Violence Board was concerned that given the concerns among specialist practitioners that there was continuing conflict between the three sets of investigation policy, the reviews of those three policies were nevertheless being conducted individually and separately from one another.

It was also of note that the specialist rape investigation team within the MPS Violent Crime Directorate incorporated a dedicated Case Tracking Officer which ensured that accurate data on rape cases was possible, particularly because of the smaller volume of rape casework compared to that of domestic violence. Voluntary sector specialists who attend the Domestic Violence Board have commented repeatedly on the benefit of case tracking to maintaining survivor safety.

RECOMMENDATION: Consider establishing Domestic Violence Case Trackers based on the model within the Project Sapphire to assist with quality of data and response

Discussion during the meeting raised issues linked to the review later this year of the Domestic Violence Standard Operating Procedure including:

- The need for an independent evaluation of the Form 124D
- That the Board would be included in the consultation process

Police resources

Community Safety Units

A CSU is in place in each BOCU. It is a specialist unit where officers investigate only domestic violence and hate crime. Officers working in a CSU should have attended a 5-day training course run by the MPS' Crime Academy. Trainee Detective Constables who are on shorter postings have access to a 1-day version of the same course.

The Domestic Violence Board discovered that:

- Sutton, Hammersmith and Fulham and Brent had combined the CSU with the Sapphire Team, the Child Abuse Investigation Team, Missing Persons and public protection specialisms into either a *Public Protection Unit* or a *Vulnerable Persons Unit*. One other BOCU had stated this configuration as an objective.
- The size of the CSU varied between the 6 BOCUs from 11 – 26 people which may reflect the size of the BOCU itself.
- Only 4 BOCUs had dedicated administrative support – 2 BOCUs stated that their resources did not allow for this facility
- Hammersmith and Fulham committed to adding 4 extra posts to its CSU in April of this year.

RECOMMENDATION: Ensure all Community Safety Units are appropriately staffed and have dedicated administrative support

Local BOCU-based initiatives which are in place and were reported to the Domestic Violence Board but which were not referenced by every BOCU's report, included:

- Havering's Borough Intelligence Unit has a focus desk for domestic violence
- Croydon's CSU is co-located within the Family Justice Centre²¹
- Tower Hamlets' CSU has a dedicated Partnership Officer
- Brent has a post in its CSU which is part Office Manager and part MARAC Co-ordinator
- In Hammersmith and Fulham Trainee Detective Constables are required to spend longer than 6 months in post – although the report did not state the minimum length of tenure. Similarly in Sutton the minimum length of posting for any CSU member is 12 months

²¹ Croydon's Family Justice Centre is the only one of its kind in Europe. It is based on successful American models in San Diego and New York where people experiencing domestic violence and seeking help have access to a range of service providers including police officers, probation officers, doctors, counsellors, advocates, social workers, housing providers, benefit advice, education providers, children's services and adult education groups in a single location.

A significant concern Board members raised with more than one BOCU was succession planning for the CSU Manager post. The Hammersmith and Fulham Superintendent informed the Board that such a crucial post could not be recruited to locally and was instead subject to central posting potentially resulting in someone of the appropriate rank, but not necessarily the requisite abilities being appointed to the post.

RECOMMENDATION: Enable BOCUs to recruit a Community Safety Unit Manager according to skills and experience

Safer Neighbourhoods Policing and Domestic Violence

There were clear differences between BOCUs in how Safer Neighbourhoods Teams (SNTs) are used in supporting the response to domestic violence. For instance:

- Hammersmith and Fulham have worked with their partner agency, Standing Together, to deliver a domestic violence-specific training course, tailored to the role of SNTs, to every Police Community Safety Officer (PCSO) in the BOCU
- SNTs also attend the Operations Meeting (a multi-agency operational meeting which discusses those cases identified as higher risk) in Hammersmith and Fulham because the view taken locally is that there are clear and positive tasks SNTs can undertake to monitor and maintain safety
- Croydon's position was that SNTs could not appropriately be deployed for either prevention or reassurance. Hammersmith and Fulham were also clear that face-to-face visits described as "*welfare visits*" were not taking place for health and safety reasons

The Board has consistently raised concerns around the general lack of use of safer neighbourhoods policing in this area given the resource it offers London, for example making people aware of local services responding to domestic violence and rape.

RECOMMENDATION: Issue clear policy on the role of Safer Neighbourhoods Teams in tackling domestic violence

Domestic violence-specific training in the MPS

The other policy area that the Domestic Violence Board examined, in addition to potential conflict between the three relevant standard operating procedures, was domestic violence-specific training across the MPS.

The MPS explained through their report that domestic violence-specific training is delivered to:

- Police officer roles:
 - Newly recruited Police Officers
 - Ranks of Constable, Sergeant and Inspector
 - Community Safety Unit officers
 - Detectives

- Police staff roles:
 - Station Reception Officers
 - Police Community Support Officers –although not tailored to the SNT role
 - Sexual Offences Liaison Officers
 - Borough Forensic Managers
 - Criminal Justice Liaison Officers – although this is not mandatory
 - Call Handlers

Trainee Police Constables receive a 2-day training module at Hendon which has been delivered since May 2006. In addition, before a police officer completes their 2 year probationary period, there is a further domestic violence training session which incorporates elements on:

- ‘So-called’ honour-based violence
- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) domestic violence
- Partnership working

This session is due for review and the Board was informed that partners would be invited to take part in this process.

Constable – Inspector mandatory training: The MPS provided training to local borough trainers who were then responsible for arranging training to all response officers up to the rank of Inspector in partnership with a relevant organisation locally. Data as of January 2007 stated that just over 10% of officers locally have yet to receive this training. Consequently, further ‘train the trainer’ sessions were due to take place in January 2007 with “*a push for all mandatory training to be completed by mid-year*”. This 1-day course delivered to all response officers covers:

- Awareness of domestic violence
- Barriers to reporting and supporting the criminal justice process
- Support provided by partner agencies
- Form 124D
- Risk identification and management
- ‘So-called honour’-based violence and forced marriage
- LGBT domestic violence

Community Safety Unit officers attend a 5-day course (a 1-day module is available for those waiting to attend the 5-day course and / or those who may be on a posting lasting no more than 6 months). This course covers the full remit of the Community Safety Unit which includes the response to hate

crime, in addition to domestic violence. The report stated that there is no focus during the course on either risk assessment or the Form 124D as it assumes that previous domestic violence training for any officer of Constable to Inspector rank will have already covered these two areas. This training course is also accessible to police staff.

Trainee Detectives - The MPS report stated that domestic violence is “*interwoven*” through training for trainee detectives. However, newly promoted detective supervisors receive a 3-week course and the MPS Violent Crime Directorate is currently working to ensure an “*enhanced domestic violence input*” is integrated.

Local approaches - 4 of the BOCUs who attended the Board stated that a domestic violence-specific training course existed for police officers run in partnership with the local refuge service, specialist domestic violence organisation or advocacy service.

Alternative pathways to information were listed as:

- Monthly CSU Managers meetings
- Day-long seminars designed for Community Safety Units held every 6 months
- Community Safety Unit intranet site
- Domestic Violence Virtual Academy

The MPS report recognised that there were areas requiring further development and where it was accepted that current domestic violence-specific training provision is not sufficient:

- Newly promoted uniformed supervisors
- Newly promoted detective supervisors
- Response Team and Safer Neighbourhoods Team Sergeants
- Safer Neighbourhoods Teams
- Detectives in specialists units in MPS Specialist Crime and Specialist Operations Directorates
- Directorate of Professional Standards
- HR Managers
- Metcall

The Domestic Violence Board commented in particular on the importance of:

- Domestic violence-specific training for officers of Chief Inspector rank and above, including ACPO ranks, to encourage leadership on this issue. For example, only Brent’s report stated that members of the BOCU’s Senior Management Team attended the mandatory domestic violence training
- Quality assurance and follow-up assessment
- Disability and age equality related domestic violence-specific training
- Setting domestic violence-specific training in the wider context of violence against women
- Promoting a non-hierarchical approach to partnership working

- Role of Safer Neighbourhoods Teams in tackling domestic violence
- Comprehensive domestic violence-specific training for call handlers

RECOMMENDATION: Consider developing domestic violence-specific training for officers of Chief Inspector rank and above, including Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) ranks, to encourage and promote leadership on this issue.

RECOMMENDATION: Address the anecdotal concerns raised at the Board about the negative implications of the implementation of Metcall

Violent Crime Directorate support to BOCUs

The Violent Crime Directorate leads for the organisation overall on domestic violence and is a relatively new structure within the MPS. It seeks to bring together all the disciplines from across MPS directorates charged with tackling violent crime. The Domestic Violence Board looks forward to consolidating its relationship with the Commander of the Violent Crime Directorate.

The Violent Crime Directorate has a Community Safety Unit Delivery Team which, offers the following support to the BOCUs on a daily basis:

- A liaison officer
- 6-monthly visits from the team offering a regular review process to highlight success and necessary improvements
- Review of all domestic violence incidents
- Review of all CRIS reports for quality assurance purposes
- Holds monthly meetings for all CSU Managers in order to share best practice and address issues

Requests for organisational support from the front line

In addition to detail on their response to domestic violence locally, BOCUs were invited to consider what further organisational support they thought would be beneficial. BOCUs identified a number of issues including:

- Quality of risk assessment and risk management (this was the most often referenced with 3 BOCUs quoting this issue). In particular:
 - Concerns when offenders are released from prison without notifying the police who cannot notify the survivor and whose safety could then be in jeopardy. Prior notification exists with sex offenders – why not with domestic violence offenders?
 - Enhancing access to information for Response Team officers attending incidents of domestic violence, e.g. case history, previous allegations,

in order to keep those experiencing, and attending domestic violence incidents, safe.

- Evaluation of performance management regime
- Introduction of a victim satisfaction survey where issues around reporting, police contact and being kept informed can all be assessed
- Managing diversity in relation to domestic violence, particularly:
 - ‘So-called honour’-based violence
 - Equality category recording (e.g. age, disability, ethnicity, gender, religion and sexual orientation)
 - Mental health
 - Ensuring that Disability Liaison Officers and LGBT Liaison Officers receive domestic violence-specific training, tailored to their liaison role
- Provision of greater resources for BOCUs, specifically digital cameras, a dedicated staffed response vehicle equipped with mobile Achieving Best Evidence²² equipment
- Guidance on using Safer Neighbourhoods Teams more effectively in tackling domestic violence
- Guidance on improving the quality of the completion of the Form 124D
- Setting up a Specialist Domestic Violence Court

²² Achieving Best Evidence refers to good practice in interviewing vulnerable and intimidated witnesses, adults and children, in order to enable them to give their best evidence in court.

Working in partnership

Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs)

Each BOCU made clear during their presentation that the police are not the sole organisation involved in responding to domestic violence and that it is vital that they work closely with their voluntary and statutory sector partners.

5 of the 6 BOCUs who attended the Board stated in their reports that domestic violence is a priority within the local Crime and Disorder Strategy. Every Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) had allocated funding towards domestic violence-specific projects. This figure ranged between 3% and 27% of the overall CDRP budget with an average of 13%. The range of projects supported by CDRPs included:

- Sanctuary schemes²³
- Independent Domestic Violence Advice (IDVA) services²⁴
- Conferences
- Publicity campaigns
- Mobile phones for survivors to contact the police
- Family Justice Centre
- MARAC schemes
- Specialist Domestic Violence Court
- Schemes to give access to work for those with no recourse to public funds
- Borough Domestic Violence Co-ordinator post
- Schools based prevention programmes
- Domestic Violence Forum

The role of Independent Domestic Violence Advisers or Advocates

One of the community representatives who took part in Board meetings stated that:

“We know that the difference has been made by advocates”

Advocacy or Independent Domestic Violence Advice (IDVA) has been defined by Co-ordinated Action Against Domestic Abuse (CAADA) as:

“Independent Advocacy involves the professional provision of advice, information and support to survivors of intimate partner violence living in the community about the range, effectiveness and suitability of options to improve

²³ A sanctuary type scheme must provide security measures to allow the woman to remain in her home where she chooses to do so, where safety can be guaranteed and the violent partner no longer lives within the home. It must be available across tenures where the landlord of a property has given permission for the work to be carried out. It must consist of additional security to any main entrance doors to the accommodation and locks to any vulnerable windows. Wherever possible it must provide a safe room in the home secured with a solid core door and additional locks. It is essential that this service is only provided where it is the clear choice of the victim. The scheme should be implemented through partnership with the police and/or the voluntary sector that could provide supplementary support. It may be provided directly by the local authority or through a third party funded as part of the local authority's homelessness prevention work through grants that may be available for crime reduction initiatives.

²⁴ Independent Domestic Violence Advisers

their safety and that of their children. This advice must be based on a thorough understanding and assessment of risk and its management, where possible as part of a multi-agency risk management strategy or MARAC process. Independent advocates typically provide short to medium term casework, focusing on safety advice covering improved physical security as well as remedies available from the civil and criminal justice systems. An independent advocate provides this service both at the point of crisis and in relation to medium and long term safety and support. The work of such advocates has clear and measurable outcomes in terms of improved safety and a reduction in repeat offences. The service should be provided in such a way as to be sensitive to all cultural and other differences and needs. The advocate also helps to ensure that all agencies involved in an individual case fulfil their obligations.”

Availability of IDVA services varied across boroughs from one part-time advocate to a service available around the clock. Police contributions to finance IDVA services also varied across BOCUs. In one case the BOCU funded a part-time advocate (£17,500). In another the BOCU granted £40,000 to the local domestic-violence strategic partner. Other BOCUs were contributing to advocacy services although the extent to which they were doing so, was not clear as this often came directly from CDRP resources.

Board members and voluntary sector organisations were unequivocal that domestic violence advocacy is a highly trained and skilled specialism. Indeed there were concerns regarding one BOCU report where there were proposals to use “*trained volunteers*” to manage a lack of comprehensive IDVA provision in the borough.

BOCUs themselves discussed IDVA services in very positive terms. Their view was that partners providing these services enabled them to focus on case building supported by higher quality evidence.

The most significant issues brought up in discussion by the Board in relation to IDVAs were:

- Funding – this was often raised by IDVA services themselves as a perennial concern. There was much frustration at the absence of core-funding for advocacy services in spite of overwhelming evidence that IDVA services have a dramatic impact on safety, client satisfaction and case outcomes.
- Access to referrals - in those instances where Victim Support provides the IDVA service, access to referral in every case was not of concern. However, where the advocacy service was independent of Victim Support, referral of every domestic violence case was not, in practice, even if in principle, automatic.
- Access to data – access to information was a common concern raised by both IDVAs and voluntary sector organisations. The ability to track cases

was discussed by one organisation as fundamental to monitoring and maintaining safety.

RECOMMENDATION: MPS should ensure referrals are made available routinely to domestic violence advocacy services

RECOMMENDATION: Enable BOCUs to share Performance Directorate data on domestic violence with local partners, in particular advocacy services, to assist with maintaining safety

The internal response - employee domestic violence

The Domestic Violence Board's intention was to address police performance not just in terms of the service it provides externally to people experiencing domestic violence but also its response to police officers and staff who are survivors or perpetrators.

3 BOCUs gave comparable responses on this topic giving the Board an awareness of the processes involved:

- The CSU where the incidents are reported would be responsible for investigation
- The Borough Commander(s), both where the individuals involved work, and where the incident took place, would be informed
- Mediation would not be considered
- Occupational Health services would be offered to the individual reporting the incident
- The DV Standard Operating Procedure would apply to the investigation
- The local support function of the Directorate of Professional Standards would be responsible for any suspensions of police officers

Brent reported that 3 cases in the last 12 months had been reported, investigated by Brent and then again by Westminster BOCU where:

- one member of police staff had been charged
- one member of police staff had been suspended
- one member of police staff had been charged, found guilty and dismissed
- one member of police staff had been cautioned, was suspended from work, and the Senior Management Team had recommended dismissal.

In each case, the individuals reporting those incidents had been referred to the local advocacy service.

There was concern, which was raised with the MPS Violent Crime Directorate, that while there were policies in place to deal with perpetrators, either police officers or police staff members, there was no guidance in place corporately for those reporting incidents. Consequently, during the course of the year a draft policy was published and is currently being finalised. Board members were consulted on their views.

The Board will continue to monitor this issue during any future discussions.

An accessible response – promoting equality and diversity

The equality and diversity dimensions of the police response to domestic violence prompted some debate within the Board. Every BOCU stated that they strove to meet the needs of every individual coming forward reporting domestic violence. While the Board recognised that to be true, on closer examination a number of issues were raised which suggest this would be difficult to demonstrate.

For example:

- Data recording - Currently only age, ethnicity and gender of an individual reporting crime or a suspect are recorded routinely. Disability, sexual orientation and religion are all categories which *can* be recorded but which are not mandatory and consequently are much less likely to be collected. Even within those three mandatory categories (age, gender and ethnicity), ethnicity often represents a significant portion of a data sample which is in fact recorded as “*unknown*”. This issue is not limited to the investigation of domestic violence, but relevant to most areas of police activity.

The Board was clear that if the BOCU do not know who a large proportion of the people reporting domestic violence are, they are not in a position to know, strategically, if they are meeting the needs of people reporting domestic violence locally. For instance, if the ‘flag’ for disability is not even required to be collected, and if the officer does not ask that question, how can they be sure that they are meeting every individual’s need?

Brent’s Progress Report to the Domestic Violence Board stated that a local disability ‘flag’ had been added to their system so that they would be better able to identify the needs of their caseload. Tower Hamlets informed the Board via their Progress Report that they had worked with MapSquad, a local organisation working with people with learning difficulties, on a training initiative.

- Recording LGBT Domestic Violence - The Board commented a number of times that there was no specific sexual orientation ‘flag’ on the Crime Reporting Information System (CRIS) to denote a LGBT domestic violence incident (although the point was made that that intelligence could be extracted if the system were interrogated). The Board was informed that from December 2006 this flag had been created and added to CRIS. This will ensure that the number of LGBT domestic violence incidents will be more readily accessible via the CRIS system.
- Proportionality of domestic violence homicides on the grounds of ethnicity - As part of the Domestic Violence Board’s oversight of the MPS contribution to Project Umbra, one of the issues raised during Board discussions with the MPS Violent Crime Directorate was the ethnicity of

domestic violence homicide victims. 2005-06 data shared with the Board during the year indicated an apparent disproportionality on the grounds of ethnicity with 20 of 32 victims being from a black or minority ethnic background. The number of domestic violence homicides is down overall for 2006-07 which should be commended, as is the degree of disproportionality. However, the MPS are in the process of conducting further work on this issue to analyse the extent of the disproportionality over time to enable them to identify meaningful trends, possible explanations and necessary action.

Performance management

Charge vs. caution

The topic of meaningful performance management of domestic violence was a recurrent debate during Domestic Violence Board meetings. During 2005-06 the sanction detection rate of domestic violence incidents was the sole performance measure in the MPA/MPS Policing Plan. The Domestic Violence Board requested detail from each BOCU on performance against this measure. Over time the Board became increasingly concerned that the proportion of cautions making up sanction detections achieved by any BOCU was high. The percentage of cautions as a proportion of the sanction detection rate ranged from 37% to 85% among the BOCUs which attended the Board.

The MPS has argued that a caution is appropriate in certain circumstances, for example to establish 'bad character evidence' (under the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004) ensuring that future offences can be brought to justice. As Hammersmith and Fulham's report states:

"This is where the tactic of using a caution where a charge was not possible can enhance the chances of a successful prosecution at a future incident."

However, the Board's concern is that domestic violence is the one crime pattern where the perpetrator is known, and yet, given that fact, the proportion of convictions is very small. Questions have been raised about what the Board consider to be a worryingly high number of cautions generated by each of the BOCUs discussed, and whether the sanction detection rate generally was concealing this fact as a caution would be classified as a 'sanction detection' technically signifying 'good performance'. In fact data for financial years 2005-6 and 2006-7 shows an increase in the numbers of cautions as a proportion of the sanction detection rate of 10%.²⁵

The Board considers that while a caution may be appropriate in certain circumstances, it should not form the currently high proportion of outcomes. This view is supported by government. In answer to a written parliamentary question on this issue the response from the Home Office was:

"There is not a specific indicator of the effectiveness of the use of cautions in domestic violence cases. However, our view is that cautions are generally not a suitable alternative to charging in cases of domestic violence. They are only used in cases where, with due consideration to all of the evidence and the relevant charging criteria, there is no other alternative."

Home Office, June 2007.

More than one BOCU questioned the ability of the sanction detection rate to reflect accurately the BOCU's response to domestic violence. For example, Croydon stated that while their sanction detection rate was low, they were

²⁵ MPS Performance Information Bureau data, 2007

working closely with the local authority and the multi-agency Family Justice Centre, prioritising safety. The BOCU, the local authority and the IDVA service argued that the criminal justice system could not guarantee that for survivors.

Dual Arrests

This year (2007-08), the performance measure in the MPA/MPS Policing Plan on domestic violence is the arrest rate²⁶. Again, a single, albeit different, performance indicator has been selected to judge the police response to domestic violence and could be vulnerable to concerns about the potential to conceal poor practice.

Concerns have already been raised in relation to arrests following domestic violence incidents. One of the Second London Domestic Violence Strategy's recommendations to both the MPA and the MPS was monitoring dual arrests²⁷. Anecdotal feedback through survivor consultations has raised this issue repeatedly. MPS policy is clear that this is "*rarely appropriate*". The Board has not been shown any data to either prove or disprove this. However, it will be part of the 'end to end review' planned by the MPS as this is an example of data which the MPS were not able to extract routinely.

One community member asked whether there should be a pro-charge culture rather than a pro-arrest culture.

The Chair of the Domestic Violence Board is clear that this issue should receive further focused attention next year.

RECOMMENDATION: MPS should extract data on dual arrests to investigate the prevalence of inappropriate practice

Survivor Satisfaction

Police colleagues, voluntary sector organisations and Domestic Violence Board members were all agreed that a quantitative measure of the police response to domestic violence was not sufficient and that some form of qualitative assessment, including the perspective from the people involved ought to be sought.

4 of the BOCUs attending the Domestic Violence Board had clear routes to feedback from survivors through formal consultation conducted by specialist organisations or advocacy services in the borough:

- London Borough of Croydon conduct 6-monthly focus groups with survivors and also arrange separate meetings to discuss new initiatives that are planned
- London Borough of Tower Hamlets have conducted user consultation

²⁶ Statutory Performance Indicator 8a showing the percentage of domestic violence incidents where an arrest was made.

²⁷ Where the police attend a domestic violence incident and arrest both individuals involved

- Brent Domestic Violence Advocacy Project (DVAP) set up service user consultation and a service user group for the Domestic Violence Forum. Client satisfaction with the advocacy service itself has revealed further information, for example, cases of forced marriage within gypsy and traveller communities
- Hammersmith and Fulham's local domestic violence strategic partner Standing Together run consultations with survivors. Any feedback on police response is passed to the BOCU. Case reviews with survivors can also generate useful information for the police which is also relayed.

RECOMMENDATION: Develop other performance indicators to complement the existing measure on arrest rate, e.g. repeat victimisation, including qualitative measures e.g. survivor satisfaction

Conclusion

The success of the Domestic Violence Board is underpinned by collaboration, recognition of progress by police and resolution to drive further improvement. This report provides a powerful case to the MPA to continue its support.

If agreed by the MPA in July 2007, the Domestic Violence Board will continue, with vigour, its programme of inviting BOCUs to discuss their local response to domestic violence and of identifying corporate policy areas on domestic violence which demand inquiry.

“The reality is that domestic violence work does not get a Borough Commander promoted.”

This comment was made by one of the Board members and reflects an organisational cultural reality that the Domestic Violence Board is working, with others, to change.

The MPA Domestic Violence Board offers other police authorities a proven approach to follow. Participants in this process have identified the Domestic Violence Board as an initiative all police authorities should be encouraged to adopt.

One of the MPS’ objectives is to make London the safest major city in the world. If agreed, the MPA Domestic Violence Board will continue to work to ensure that this becomes a reality for survivors of domestic violence.

**APPENDIX 1: Second London Domestic Violence Strategy MPA
Recommendations**

**LONDON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE STRATEGY (2nd edition)
RECOMMENDATIONS**

METROPOLITAN POLICE AUTHORITY

Priority
Identify funding towards the cost of a research study into the needs of BME women
Establish mechanisms to monitor: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The implementation of MPS domestic violence personnel policy• The implementation of domestic violence standard operating procedures• The availability of administrative support to Community Safety Units (CSUs)• The availability of cameras to officers to ensure effective evidence gathering can take place• Domestic violence arrests with a special focus on:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- reasons given as to not arresting when the power existed to do so- the inclusion of the Victim Personal Statements within files submitted to the CPS- the number and validity of dual arrests (i.e. when both parties are arrested)- undertake an annual analysis of domestic violence data collected by MPs.• Engage with CPS to make domestic violence data collected by both organisations more coterminous• Request twice yearly reports from the MPS on Domestic Violence Murder Reviews

APPENDIX 2: Voluntary and statutory organisations that took part in the MPA Domestic Violence Board

Action on Elder Abuse
Advance
Ashiana Network
Barts and The London NHS Trust
Brent Domestic Violence Advocacy Project
Brent Domestic Violence Forum
Broken Rainbow LGBT Domestic Violence Service UK
Croydon Domestic Violence Advocacy Service (CDVAS)
City of London Corporation
Domestic Violence Intervention Project (DVIP)
Eaves Housing for Women
Everyman Project
Government Office for London
Greater London Authority
Greater London Domestic Violence Project
Haven Whitechapel
Hertfordshire Constabulary
Independent & Contract Researcher on Disability and Domestic Violence,
School for Policy Studies, University of Bristol
Imkaan
Jewish Women's Aid
London Borough of Brent
London Borough of Camden
London Borough of Croydon
London Borough of Haringey
London Borough of Havering
London Borough of Kingston Upon Thames
London Borough of Lambeth
London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham
London Borough of Kensington and Chelsea
London Borough of Merton
London Borough of Newham
London Borough of Richmond Upon Thames
London Borough of Tower Hamlets
London Borough of Waltham Forest
London Borough of Wandsworth
London Centre for Personal Safety
London Councils
London Metropolitan University
Men's Advice Line
Metropolitan Police Authority
Metropolitan Police Service Disability Independent Advisory Group
Muslim Women's Helpline
Refuge
Respect
Safer Bromley Partnership
Sapphire Independent Advisory Group

Standing Together Against Domestic Violence
Sutton Women's Centre
Tower Hamlets Victim Support
Westminster Domestic Violence Forum
Victim Support London
Victim Support Wandsworth
Women's Aid
Women's National Commission

APPENDIX 3: MPA Domestic Violence Board Commissioning Brief



Metropolitan Police Authority

REQUEST FOR REPORT TO THE MPA DOMESTIC VIOLENCE BOARD

The purpose of this commissioning brief is to:

- *clarify the authority's requirements and deadlines;*
- *ensure members receive the advice they need;*
- *minimise unnecessary effort.*

On completion the brief should be forwarded to the MPS via the MPA board administrator or copied to him/her if sent directly to the MPS.

The brief is not intended to set out all requirements in detail nor is it 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

SUGGESTED TITLE:

MPA COMMITTEE / DATE:

OPEN OR EXEMPT ITEM: Open

DRAFT WITH MPA BY:

FINAL REPORT WITH MPA BY:

MPA OFFICER:

TEL

MPA BOARD ADMINISTRATOR:

TEL

SOURCE OF REQUEST:

BRIEF PREPARED BY:

DATE:

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

This section summarises the content of the report and the purpose of submitting it to members.

A report is required which:

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

- Keep survivors safe
- Tackle domestic violence
- Hold offenders to account
- Prevent domestic violence
- Work in partnership with organisations and communities to continuously improve the BOCUs response to domestic violence

Support to BOCUs will be provided by:

- ***MPS Performance Directorate***
 - Professor Betsy Stanko, Senior Advisor - Strategic Analysis, DCC2(1) Strategic Planning & Risk
Tel: 020 7161 3329 (783329)
Email: Betsy.Stanko@met.police.uk
or contact Jane Probert on 020 71613320 (783320)
- ***MPS Racial and Violent Crime Task Force, Violent Crime Directorate***
 - Yasmin Rehman, Director of Partnerships and Diversity
Tel: 020 7231 (67980)
Email: Yasmin.Rehman@met.police.uk
Or contact Amanda Glennon (Amanda.Glennon@met.police.uk)
- ***The MPA Race and Diversity Unit also offer support to the BOCU compiling their report:***
 - Hamida Ali
Tel: 020 7202 0226 (57226)
Email: Hamida.Ali@mpa.gov.uk
 - Kim Webster
Tel: 020 7202 0182 (57182)
Email: Kim.Webster@mpa.gov.uk

Section C: SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS

This section lists any additional requirements with respect to content, presentation or timing. Detailed information (if required) should always be placed in appendices and the main report should concentrate on describing the key issues relevant to members' interests and role.

Please note that every report must include a paragraph that addresses the equality and diversity implications of the proposal or information contained in the report, including the impact on the promotion of race equality. 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 drafting MPA reports and identifying such implications. Please contact the MPA Secretariat if for any reason the guidance note is not attached.

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

Data

This set of data will be provided to the local BOCU by the MPS Performance Directorate and does NOT need to be prepared separately by the BOCU

- Number of incidents flagged as domestic violence over the last 12 months (August 2005 – July 2006)
- Number of incidents resulting in an arrest where the power existed
- What proportion of incidents of domestic violence represents repeat victimisation?
- Sanction detection rate.
- Proportion of sanction detections that are cautions.
- Number of incidents charged by the CPS.
- Proportion of all domestic violence cases brought to justice where there are charges of GBH and 'above'.
- Number of domestic violence incidents also 'flagged' as honour-based violence and / or forced marriage.
- Number of domestic violence incidents where survivors have been identified as having mental health issues.
- Number of domestic violence homicides over the last 12 months
- Number of domestic violence homicide reviews undertaken
- Can the data above be presented according to the identity of survivors and offenders in terms of equality categories where available such as their age, ethnicity or gender?

Policy compliance, implementation and quality assurance

- Is there a discrepancy between the number of domestic violence incidents that the BOCU has responded to, and the number of those domestic violence incidents that are subsequently 'flagged' as such on CRIS? If so, what are the reasons?

- What work is done locally to ensure data quality and that all domestic violence cases are appropriately 'flagged' on CRIS?
- What processes are in place to support officers and ensure that they are effectively implementing Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) 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 form is being used consistently across the borough and that the information it collects is being entered onto the relevant MPS intelligence systems e.g. CRIS, MERLIN, CRIMINT
- How effective is the BOCU finding the 124D form?
- How does the BOCU use the risk assessment and risk management tools to ensure survivors are made safer, and that perpetrators are made accountable for their behaviour?
- What processes are in place to review domestic violence homicide cases? Are there examples of learning which the BOCU is able to share with the Board?

Resources

- Number of posts within the Community Safety Unit (CSU).
- Demographic profile of CSU officers.
- Proportion of Trainee Detective Constables (TDCs) in the CSU on a 6 month placement
- Number of vacant posts within the CSU.
- If there are a number of posts vacant within the CSU, is this related to lack of specialised training available to officers? What training on domestic violence issues do CSU officers receive?
- What level of dedicated administrative support does the CSU have?
- Does the BOCU have a domestic violence champion? If so, what is their name and function?
- How would the borough describe the perception of the work of the CSU held by other officers within the BOCU?
- What equipment and training is available to support officers to collect the best evidence at the crime scene at the time of response?
- What systems are in place to enable the BOCU SMT to fulfil their responsibilities regarding performance management of domestic violence?
- What systems and / or initiatives are in place to ensure a proactive leadership of a robust response to domestic violence?
- What support does the BOCU receive from TP to assist its performance on domestic violence?

Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRP)

- What is the overall budget of the CDRP?
- What is the funding dedicated to tackling domestic violence from within this figure?
- Is domestic violence a priority within the Crime and Disorder Strategy?
- Are there any CDRP domestic violence projects in progress?

- What preventative work is being done by the CDRP?
- What level of consultation is being done with advocacy organisations and survivors of domestic violence to inform this work?

Partnership working

- What voluntary and statutory organisations is the BOCU working with locally?
- What referral systems to external support services and partnerships are in place?
- Is any crisis intervention provision co-located?
- What feedback does the borough receive from victims/survivors of domestic violence, their families and community voluntary agencies?

Training

- What domestic violence training do police staff and officers receive at all levels, whether front-line staff or senior management within the BOCU?
- Can a brief overview of the training be provided? What areas/issues are covered?
- Who provides the training? Is this training delivered in partnership with the community?
- How long does the training take to complete? What follow-up training is provided to build on and update information for staff and officers?
- What percentage of officers and staff are *currently* trained?

Employee Domestic Violence

- How is the internal domestic violence policy being implemented within the BOCU? What support is offered to police staff and officers who are victims of domestic violence? Is the CSU Manager or Borough Commander aware of any feedback in relation to the BOCU's response to police staff and officers who are survivors of domestic violence?
- What training and awareness is provided to all levels to police staff and officers in relation to the internal policy?
- Does the CSU Manager feel that police staff or officers are confident to report their experiences to the BOCU or is a civil remedy preferred? If there is a lack of confidence, why does the CSU manager think this is the case? What changes could be made to restore staff confidence?
- How are police staff and officers who are perpetrators of domestic violence held accountable for their behaviour within the BOCU?

Project Umbra

- Has the BOCU engaged with Project Umbra?
- If so, how?

Interface with the Met Modernisation Programme

- How does the BOCU think that the MPS response to domestic violence can be improved through the Met Modernisation Programme?

APPENDIX 4: Summary of issues raised with the MPS Violent Crime Directorate

The Domestic Violence Board has an ongoing dialogue with the Violent Crime Directorate which leads for the MPS on domestic violence. A number of issues were raised during 2006-07, many of which, will be revisited during any future discussions:

Data and information gathering

- An End to End Review Available data in order to capture a snapshot of data which is not easily available and which could then give a broader picture of the organisation's response to domestic violence
- Policy on response for MPS police officers and police staff reporting incidents of domestic violence
- Review of CRIS regarding data collection on equality and diversity categories
- Availability of data analysts based in BOCUs
- Access to information for IDVAs by the MPS]

Use of resources

- Clearer policy on the role of Safer Neighbourhood Teams in relation to domestic violence Support for BOCUs by the Violent Crime Directorate

Domestic violence-specific training

- Domestic violence specific training for Chief Inspector and above including ACPO ranks
- Monitoring the quality assurance of domestic violence specific training
- Equality and diversity element of domestic violence specific training
- Training on partnership working
- Domestic violence specific training for call handlers
- Domestic violence specific training to be mandatory for Witness Care Unit staff

MPS Policy

- Concerns regarding conflict between MPS SOPs on domestic violence, rape and sexual offences, and child abuse
- Rape SOP – progress on DV Board contribution
- Independent evaluation of the 124 D form
- Engagement of Primary Care Trusts by BOCUs

APPENDIX 5: Summary of issues raised by the Domestic Violence Board with the MPS:

Havering:

- Equalities monitoring
- Disproportionality on the grounds of ethnicity of victims
- Community engagement
- Procedures of case tracking
- Advocacy funding
- Analysis of cases involving witness summonses
- Succession planning of the CSU Manager role
- Impact of Safer Neighbourhoods Teams on domestic violence incidents

Croydon:

- Equalities monitoring
- Employee domestic violence
- Analysis of civil and criminal cases outcomes analysis belying an over reliance on the civil system
- Analysis of repeat victimisation data
- Clarification of 'other accepted crime'
- The role of Safer Neighbourhoods Teams
- Analysis of arrest rate data
- Violence Focus Desk – feedback on how this is enhancing the police response
- Prevention work in schools

Tower Hamlets

- Independent scrutiny of caution decisions
- Domestic violence work within specific communities especially disabled people
- Proportion of domestic violence casework which is family oriented
- Strand 6 contribution
- Succession planning

Brent

- Domestic violence cases involving disabled people

Hammersmith and Fulham

- Staffing in the CSU
- Automatic referral to the local advocacy services
- Community engagement with black and minority ethnic communities, in particular the Polish community

Sutton

- Caution rate
- Recording of rape and sexual offences within a domestic violence context
- Multi-agency domestic violence training
- Survivor-oriented services available locally
- Community engagement
- Survivor satisfaction with police response

Violent Crime Directorate

- Data available on domestic violence
- Potential conflict between MPS Standard Operating Procedures on investigation of domestic violence, rape and child abuse
- Crime Reporting Information System (CRIS) capacity to record equality categories
- Analyst capability at BOCU level
- MPS policy for survivors of domestic violence who are MPS officers and staff
- Support from the Violent Crime Directorate to BOCUs attending the Domestic Violence Board
- Safer Neighbourhoods Teams and their role in tackling domestic violence
- Engagement with Primary Care Trusts
- ACPO representation at Domestic Violence Board meetings
- Domestic violence-specific training for ranks of chief inspector and above, including ACPO ranks
- Quality assurance monitoring of impact of domestic violence-specific training
- Integrating equality and diversity into domestic violence-specific training
- Training on partnership working
- Impact of Metcall on the response to domestic violence 999 calls
- Possibility of mandatory training for Witness Care Unit staff
- Consultation with Domestic Violence Board on the review of the MPS Standard Operating Procedure on rape investigation
- Disproportionality of domestic homicide victims on the grounds of ethnicity and progress against work to investigate this further
- Potential for local specialised recruitment to the post of CSU Manager
- Obtaining a CRIS machine for the offices of a local strategic domestic violence partner
- Potential for exploring 'near miss' incidents as part of the terms of reference for Project Umbra Strand Working Group 6 examining domestic homicide reviews

**APPENDIX 6: Finances for 4 Domestic Violence Board meetings
April 2006 – June 2007**

Itemised costs:

Catering	£1298
Attendee Expenses	£480.9
GRS Facilities Support Services (Porters)	£384
Minute Taker	£1246 ²⁸
Security	£TBC
<u>Total Costs:</u>	£3408.90 ²⁹

²⁸ Awaiting final invoice to finalise this figure

²⁹ Awaiting information to finalise this figure