



**Metropolitan Police Authority**

## **Domestic Violence Board Annual Report**

**2008-09**

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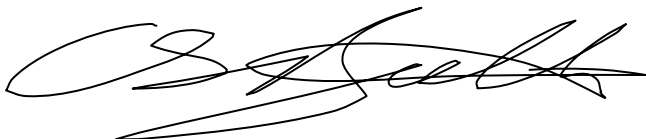
## Foreword

I am delighted to present the second annual report of the Metropolitan Police Authority (MPA) Domestic Violence Board (DVB or Board). Domestic violence has continued to be the focus of much attention, as work continues to prevent and confront abuse. Awareness has been raised across issues such as forced marriage, so-called 'honour' based violence and legislation. This has led to guidelines which have direct implications for policing such incidents being issued. These guidelines will ensure a network of support across relevant agencies and greater powers to protect victims or suspected victims of such crimes.

Further progress has been made in London over the last 12 months. Within the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS), pilots are taking place to evaluate new risk assessment procedures which will more accurately identify risk of so called 'honour'-based violence and stalking. The use of digital and video camera technology is being explored to capture evidence more efficiently when responding to incidents of domestic abuse. So whilst domestic violence remains a high priority for both the MPA and the MPS, statistics as shown in the report demonstrate a need to build on this work and the needs of victims of domestic violence are as great as ever.

The Board is also developing, in line with the upcoming mayoral London Violence Against Women Strategy, in 2009 it will expand the remit of its oversight to include sexual violence and re-launch in 2009 as the Domestic and Sexual Violence Board. This is an exciting and challenging step forward which I hope will not only have the same success with supporting the development of the MPS response to sexual violence as the Board has achieved with domestic abuse, but also support partnership work across the MPS and with partner agencies to ensure safety for victims and increase public confidence that domestic and sexual violence will be dealt with most seriously by the MPS.

I hope the report demonstrates the good work the Board has undertaken in the past year, and also outlines a vision for its future. I would like to thank my Board colleagues for their commitment and dedication over the year; the voluntary and statutory sector organisations; and our MPS colleagues for taking part in the process. Finally I would like to thank MPA officers for their hard work, in particular Laurence Gouldbourne, Lynne Abrams, Michael Wadham and Gemma Deadman.



**Cindy Butts**  
**Chair, Domestic Violence Board**

## **Executive summary**

Following the Metropolitan Police Authority (MPA) Domestic Violence Board's second year of activity 2007-8, this Annual Report considers the reports submitted, the questions asked and the discussions that have taken place. 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/ attending the Board, or community organisation representative. The purpose of the questionnaire was to seek views on the Board and its effectiveness.

We received 12 responses, which included recommendations to the MPA as a monitor of MPS performance and to government with a view to influencing national policy and decision-making on domestic violence. From these, recommendations to both the MPS and the government are outlined below.

### **Recommendations to the MPS**

The MPA Domestic Violence Board makes the following recommendations to the MPS:

1. Expand upon and disseminate the learning from Domestic Violence Homicide Reviews by producing an annual report on the Reviews with recommendations across the service.
2. Review the performance indicators in terms of 'what does success look like' – sanctioned detections are not necessarily the most accurate or appropriate sole measure.
3. Introduce performance indicators on reduction of repeat victimisation, reduction in domestic violence homicides, and reduction in most serious violence in incidents of domestic violence.
4. To improve the policy and performance measurement (conviction rate) with respect to 'victimless prosecutions'.
5. Include performance on domestic violence and other forms of violence against women as part of the assessment process for Borough Commanders.
6. Violent Crime Directorate to ensure greater consistency across London in response to domestic violence.
7. Extend the availability of digital cameras to improve evidence capture to all 32 boroughs

8. Increase the frequency of pan-London Operation Athena days to quarterly.
9. Violent Crime Directorate to explore implementing the recommendations from the Kingston problem profile and Kensington and Chelsea CSU report into forced marriage and so-called 'honour' based violence.
10. Funding from the MPS to specialist domestic violence services to be for a minimum of 2 years

## **Recommendations to government**

The MPA Domestic Violence Board makes the following recommendations to government:

1. Make the connections with other forms of violence against women and devote significantly more effort to changing the culture that perpetuates and condones violence against women. This could be achieved by more prioritisation (for example via central coordination, benchmarking/monitoring of service standards), of domestic abuse or violence against women. A further domestic violence media campaign to raise the awareness and profile of domestic violence, forced marriage and 'honour' related crime would also support this goal.
2. More financial support for victim support services, to be commensurate with the scale of the problem, as well as continuity of funding in order to offer sustained reliable services such as 3-year funding programmes. Make national funding streams available, supported by a framework of required services at a local level rather than it being left up to local areas to decide whether to have any provision at all.
3. Combat the over-reliance on the criminal justice system by making domestic violence a cross-government issue and locating it in a department such as the Standards and Effectiveness Unit or the Prime Ministers Delivery Unit. This could be further supported by a mechanism for monitoring progress that is independent of the civil service and involves non-governmental organisations that specialise in the area. This could be achieved by adopting a fully coordinated response, for example by ensuring a full rollout of the Coordinated Community Response<sup>1</sup>.
4. Ensure a robust criminal justice system response, for example by pursuing the full enactment of the Domestic Violence Crime and Victims Act 2004, introducing dedicated Crown Prosecution Service lawyers based on Borough, and ensuring training for judges in the dynamics of domestic abuse.

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<sup>1</sup> The Coordinated Community Response (CCR) model of domestic violence illustrates the inter-relationship of agencies and levels of response for tackling domestic violence. It recognises and makes explicit that no one agency can deal effectively and safely with the effects of domestic violence.

## **Restructure of the Domestic Violence Board to a Domestic and Sexual Violence Board**

In line with the move from a second mayoral London Domestic Violence Strategy to a mayoral London Violence Against Women Strategy, the MPA DVB is undergoing a restructure and re-launch in 2009. It is hoped that the tangible successes of the Board and positive developments in the field of domestic violence can be replicated and improved upon so that the performance of the MPS on sexual violence can benefit.

As outlined in the Map of Gaps 2007<sup>2</sup>, service provision in London aimed at addressing violence against women issues other than domestic abuse is poor, despite the prevalence of sexual violence. Within the preceding year 2,215 offences of rape alone have been recorded by the MPS<sup>3</sup>. Other sexual offences brought the overall recorded total of reported sexual violence to 8975. Though this report will make note of the chronic under-reporting of sexual and domestic violence, it is worth noting that these figures will only represent a small fraction of the violence experienced this year. London will undoubtedly experience increases in sex trafficking prior to the Olympics<sup>4</sup>, placing increased pressure on the police and other agencies to combat sexual violence in this particular area.

Consultation with current Board members and questionnaires to community guests and presenting BOCUs outlined overwhelming support for an expansion of remit, though tempered by awareness that the Boards' work on domestic violence has by no means reached its natural conclusion. In particular, scrutiny of the 32 London Boroughs approach to domestic violence remains incomplete. However, this expansion is not designed to replace or reduce the focus on domestic violence, but rather to add to it and ensure that Board oversight recognises the conjoined nature of these areas of work.

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<sup>2</sup> Map of Gaps, EVAW 2007

<sup>3</sup> Metropolitan Police Performance Information Bureau, November 08

<sup>4</sup> The Independent, 24 March 2007, London Olympics targeted by trade in sex trafficking

## Introduction

Since its inception in 2006, the MPA Domestic Violence Board has supported and challenged the MPS to improve its response to domestic abuse. The MPS have made excellent strides through the positive action policy, implementing Public Protection Units and the development and integration of partnership work through Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARACs) and with Independent Domestic Violence Advocates (IDVAs).

Presenting to the MPA Board still provided a new opportunity to evaluate the approach we take and identify gaps within our procedures and processes. This was particularly relevant when considering hard to reach and minority groups and the service and support that is offered to them.

MPS BOCU attendee, 2008

The MPS supports the continuance of a MPA forum, which supports and assists the MPS in improving its performance and service delivery to victims of DV and other forms of Violence Against Women

MPS Violent Crime Directorate, 2008

The Metropolitan Police Service has utilised progressive techniques to protect victims and bring perpetrators to justice, such as the use of digital camera technology to improve evidence capture, Witness Protection programmes for vulnerable victims of so-called 'honour' crimes and the continuation of Project Athena, in which during international 'End Violence Against Women' day on Nov 25<sup>th</sup>, over 250 perpetrators were arrested. Many boroughs within London have extended this model of good practice and hold monthly or even weekly 'clear-up' days to proactively follow up and arrest perpetrators of domestic abuse. They have developed partnership work with front line services for victims of abuse such as Independent Domestic Violence Advocates and the National Centre for Domestic Violence which will ensure that any victim of domestic abuse in the capital is provided with specialist support.

However it is recognised that there is more work to be done. Domestic abuse remains a pervasive and powerfully destructive part of many Londoners' lives.

- 108,197 incidents of domestic violence were reported in London between November 2007 and November 2008. This equates to almost 300 calls per day. However, it is estimated only 35% of domestic violence incidents are reported<sup>5</sup>.
- £142.29 million is spent by the criminal justice system each year in London on domestic violence<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Map of Gaps, EAW 2007

<sup>6</sup> Mayor's Second London Domestic Violence Strategy, 2004

- One in four women and one in six men will experience domestic violence in their lifetime, and one in ten women will experience abuse at any given point<sup>7</sup>.
- Domestic violence accounts for 20% of violent crime within London<sup>8</sup>.
- Within London, more than 10% of all the murders that have occurred within the last 12 months are domestic violence homicides<sup>9</sup>.
- Between October 2007 and November 2008, there have been 28 domestic violence homicides, a concerning increase from 19 in the previous year<sup>10</sup>.

Concerning trends have been brought to light, such as ‘family wipe-outs’<sup>11</sup>, in which entire families are murdered, usually following the breakdown of a relationship. However incidents such as these are often the most extreme examples of much more pervasive and widespread abuse which still affects an extraordinary number of women, men, and children in our society.

Although these figures are disturbing, the true proportion of domestic violence is likely to be much higher – for example a limitation of the British Crime Survey is that it records a maximum of 5 crimes per person. When viewed with the knowledge that a survivor of domestic violence will experience on average 35 incidents before they call the police for help<sup>12</sup>, even these concerning statistics cannot demonstrate the true extent of domestic abuse.

The MPA Domestic Violence Board has had a successful second year. We hope the information contained in this report is useful to practitioners, police colleagues and community members alike.

The Domestic Violence Board is very effective and has a very important scrutiny function that is not duplicated by any other MPS or GLA<sup>13</sup> processes. It keeps Domestic Violence on the agenda for both Territorial Policing and for the individual Borough Commanders.”

MPS Guest, 2008

<sup>7</sup> Women’s Aid, womensaid.org.uk

<sup>8</sup> Metropolitan Police Performance Information Bureau, November 08

<sup>9</sup> Metropolitan Police Performance Information Bureau, November 08

<sup>10</sup> Metropolitan Police Performance Information Bureau, November 08

<sup>11</sup> Guardian, ‘Ending it all’, 24 September 2008

<sup>12</sup> Peter Jaffe, 1982

<sup>13</sup> Greater London Authority



## **MPA Domestic Violence Board membership**

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

- Cindy Butts (Domestic Violence Board Chair), MPA
- Baroness Helena Kennedy (co-chair)
- Kirsten Hearn, MPA
- Dru Sharpling, Crown Prosecution Service
- Davina James-Hanman, Greater London Domestic Violence Project
- Jo Gordon, Government Office for London
- Helen Bowes, Greater London Authority
- Anni Marjoram, Greater London Authority
- Hilary McCollum, London Councils
- Anthony Wills, Standing Together Against Domestic Violence

Of all the meetings I attend (and I attend a lot!) it is the one which effects the most change.
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MPA Member, 2008

In addition to the membership of the Board, a range of voluntary sector organisations were routinely invited 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 Borough Operational Command Unit (BOCU) was presenting to the Board; and
- Organisations working on domestic violence, specialising further on the range of equality and diversity issues: age, disability, ethnicity, gender (including transgender), religion and/or belief, and sexual orientation.

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

## MPA Domestic Violence Board structure

The Board is made up of a combination of MPA members and other specialists within the statutory and voluntary sector. Meetings are currently held quarterly, three meetings focus on borough specific issues, the fourth focuses on policy areas as outlined below.

The Board operates by requesting BOCUs to report their response to domestic violence within their borough. Each BOCU invited to attend the Board receives a detailed written commissioning brief<sup>14</sup>, in advance of the meeting detailing the subject areas required in the report.

Community organisations from across London are also invited to take part in each meeting. These include organisations working pan-London in addition to those working within the boroughs where the relevant BOCU is attending the Board. They also include organisations working within the field of domestic violence and who specialise further.

Following a closed session for members, BOCUs are invited to present their report to the board and then answer questions on issues identified by members as areas of possible development or concern. Areas of good practice are also identified.

Six BOCUs have attended this year;

- Bromley
- Newham
- Kensington and Chelsea
- Camden
- Kingston
- Hackney

In addition, two policy areas or areas of special interest were scrutinised by members;

- Domestic Violence and Child Protection
- Arrest Rates and Cautions

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<sup>14</sup> See appendix 1 for commissioning brief

## Update on recommendations from Annual Report 06-07

The 2006-2007 Annual report made 16 recommendations to the Metropolitan Police Service which arose out of discussions taking place at DVB meetings. Some developments linked to these include;

- Pilots are underway in other London boroughs to establish the possibility of expansion in this area. Initial research on this work indicates that they have proved influential in securing early guilty pleas by perpetrators.
- Positive action days have been promoted across the MPS and many boroughs use them in addition to the bi-annual 'Project Athena', in which the MPS targets violent and prolific offenders as part of ongoing work to reduce serious violence.

As a result various partnerships have provided support and funding to enable Athena Days to take place bi monthly. This has continued to improved performance.

MPS BOCU attendee, 2008

- A new risk assessment tool is already being piloted in some London boroughs and nationally, which aims to expand on the success of the 124D and identify more successfully elements of domestic abuse which relate to so-called 'honour' based violence and other risk factors.
- Community Safety Units are undergoing developments to ensure effective information-sharing and partnership working within the MPS.

A Public Protection Unit has been implemented and established – This once again has enhanced the response to Domestic Violence. There is now a dedicated Public Protection Group intelligence focus desk, and a greater number of officers to respond to domestic violence.

MPS BOCU attendee, 2008

- Safer Neighbourhoods Teams across London support and enhance the work of Community Safety Units in tackling domestic abuse. They are offered DV training and afforded same access to a Tactical Menu of Options which is available to Public Protection Units.

Provided a training package for SNT and PCSO<sup>15</sup> officers – This included SPCSO<sup>16</sup> who now perform the role as Station Reception officers who regularly come into contact of victim's of DV

MPS BOCU attendee, 2008

<sup>15</sup> Police Community Support Officers

<sup>16</sup> Special Police Community Support Officers

- Expansion of services such as Independent Domestic Violence Advocates who are often located within Community Safety Units and Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences which are often chaired by a senior police officer have been rolled out in line with the National Domestic Violence Action Plan and second London Domestic Violence Strategy.

There has been an increase in the number of staff/ Independent Domestic Violence advocates who provide an enhanced service to ALL medium and high-risk victim's of DV

MPS BOCU attendee, 2008

Some recommendations have been partially implemented as part of MPS organisational development, such as the proposal that the MPS explore simplifying reporting and monitoring systems to ensure that all relevant information is captured without duplication. It is hoped the introduction of CRIMINT Plus will go some way toward this recommendation.

Other recommendations, such as the establishing Domestic Violence Case Trackers based on the model within Project Sapphire to assist with quality of data and response, and the extraction of data on dual arrests to investigate the prevalence of inappropriate practice were not possible due to limitations in the resourcing of such a project.

The report also made a number of recommendations to government. A number of these have been taken forward to some extent, though it is recognised the MPA has no oversight role in relation to the government.

## 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
- Internal response – employee domestic violence

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 (SOPs) are designed to establish “*clear guidelines and accountability*” for investigation. Key elements of this policy include:

- Form 124D<sup>17</sup>
- Risk identification, assessment and management using the MPS SPECSS+<sup>18</sup> and RARA<sup>19</sup> models
- Inputting case information onto CRIS<sup>20</sup>, CRIMINT<sup>21</sup>, MERLIN<sup>22</sup>

Reports from the 6 BOCUs who attended the Board in its second year of business all showed a commitment to 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 Community Safety Unit (CSU) to ensure that cases are accurately ‘flagged’ according to the Association of Chief Police Officers

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<sup>17</sup> An initial reporting form introduced in 2004. The form seeks to improve victim safety by identifying those at particular risk and in need of positive intervention.

<sup>18</sup> 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.

<sup>19</sup> MPS DV Risk Management Model – Remove the risk, Avoid the risk, Reduce the risk, Accept the risk.

<sup>20</sup> Crime Reporting Information System.

<sup>21</sup> Criminal Intelligence System. This system is being phased out and replaced with an enhanced system known as CRIMINT Plus.

<sup>22</sup> “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.

(ACPO) definition of domestic violence<sup>23</sup>, 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. Many boroughs have begun to use the new CRIMINT Plus system. This refined system does not require the automatic generation of a CRIMINT Plus report for domestic violence if there is no intelligence or crime to record. 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

The Board previously recommended that the MPS explore simplifying these reporting and monitoring systems to ensure that all relevant information is captured without duplication. It is hoped the introduction of CRIMINT Plus will go some way to toward this recommendation.

The MPS domestic violence SOPs are due to be updated in the latter part of 2008. These will include maximising evidential, witness, forensic and intelligence opportunities to help ensure investigations are not solely reliant on a victim statement. The updated SOPs will also outline borough commander accountability across a range of disciplines including performance, partnership, resourcing and homicide reviews.

All boroughs were keen to point out that they implemented positive action policy as defined in the SOPs on domestic violence. Kingston's arrest rate of 56.3%, at that time the third highest in the MPS, was put forward at their presentation as evidence that positive action is being applied and enforced. Boroughs were also reliant on positive action to provide an effective service to victims where perpetrators fall outside the standard definition of domestic violence; for example cases affecting those under 18 or perpetrated by extended family members.

However it is recognised that the current targets and performance measurements may skew response efforts towards such targets rather than outcomes which improve safety.

**Recommendation:**

Review the performance indicators in terms of 'what does success look like' – sanctioned detections are not necessarily the most accurate or appropriate sole measure.

It is worth noting that changes are already underway to ensure that performance is measured against the number of arrests made and the number of offences brought to justice<sup>24</sup>.

<sup>23</sup> 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.

<sup>24</sup> Critical performance areas 2009/10 for the Policing London Business Plan 2009/12, [www.mpa.gov.uk](http://www.mpa.gov.uk)

**Recommendation:**

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

Several boroughs spoke of how the implementation of form 124D and its accompanying risk assessment tool has led to an increase in positive action.

In addition to standard operating procedures, 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:

- A book of non-compliance with regards to 124D forms kept to identify repeat offenders and patterns of poor performance to be rectified through training.
- CSU supervisors attending team briefings to remind officers of their responsibilities as initial investigators, the evidential opportunities available to them and why it is important to fully exploit them.
- Administrative officers checking every morning that there is a 124D form attached for every CRIS report.
- Random dip sampling to ensure compliance with SOPs and completion of 124Ds.
- Independent patrol supervision to provide robust day-to-day supervision across a range of minimum standards and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).
- Holding weekly Borough Coordinating Tasking Group<sup>25</sup> meetings to enable the requesting of specific resources or pro-active targeting campaigns.
- Implementing a policy whereby officers failing to complete 124D forms more than once are directed to complete a week long CSU attachment.
- Instances where the power of arrest exists but is not made must be justified to the CSU 'gatekeeper' who is contactable on a dedicated mobile phone.

**CAD to CRIS conversion**

All calls relating to domestic violence should be flagged as 'Class 29' calls on the CAD<sup>26</sup> system. Before any Class 29 call can be shown as complete on the CAD system it must be assigned a CRIS number. This is to ensure that the incident is 'flagged' as domestic violence. There should therefore be a 100% conversion from CAD to CRIS but the average across the MPS stands at around 75%. Although several of the boroughs reporting to the Board did cite above average performance for example Kingston and Hackney CAD to CRIS conversion was 77% and 87%<sup>27</sup> respectively. Kensington and Chelsea 84% (2006/07) and

<sup>25</sup> Meeting attended by senior managers and department heads to discuss outcomes of domestic violence incidents reported in the previous week.

<sup>26</sup> Computer Aided Despatch

<sup>27</sup> For the period of April 2007 to July 2007

Camden 85% (April 2007 - November 2007). Bromley 87% and Newham 87% (April 2007 – March 2008)<sup>28</sup>.

**Recommendation:**

Violent Crime Directorate to ensure more consistency across London in response to domestic violence.

Some of the reasons given by boroughs for not achieving 100% included:

- Multiple calls to the same incident;
- Lack of understanding by control room staff; and
- Kensington & Chelsea reported that CAD entries could be closed prematurely and overwritten if another entry is made cross referencing the CAD. Kensington & Chelsea is further investigating the issue.

Boroughs have taken steps to improve their conversion rates by providing additional training, raising issues of non-compliance at daily management meetings or assigning the Uniform Core Team Duty Officer the responsibility to account for all incidents classified as Class 29.

The borough of Hackney reported to have conducted a dip sample in September 2007 that indicated that there may be several other reasons for lack of conversion including:

- Calls may not be given a CRIS number if 72 hours passes before a CRIS number became available as the system could not be updated after this time;
- Police may be unable to trace individuals involved when attending a street incident;
- When individuals are located they may deny any incident has taken place and there may be no evidence to suggest otherwise; and
- If the incident took place in another police force.

**Domestic Violence Murder Reviews**

Questions around domestic violence murder reviews were routinely asked at Board meetings. The Board heard how the new MPS protocol had been developed to make the review process more independent and less demanding for the CSU – the report and review is now completed by Territorial Policing headquarters. However it was often found that the reviews themselves were long drawn out processes and on more than one occasion the review resulted in ‘no recommendations’. The Board does not accept that in a murder review there is no learning or room for improvement.

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<sup>28</sup> These figures are accurate as of the date the boroughs respectively presented to the Board, and of course may have altered since then.



**Recommendation:**

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

**Proactive BOCU-based initiatives**

Each report to the Board uncovered a range of activity that was being undertaken. These were primarily centred on:

- Digital camera technology
- Positive action
- Dedicated response vehicles
- Quality assurance systems
- Risk Management
- Advocacy referral
- Multi-agency working

Digital camera technology

More than one BOCU reported making use of *immediate capture of evidence for front line officers* (ICEFLO) cameras, ensuring all response vehicles were equipped. Hackney reported that it had 16 cameras available to patrol officers with further equipment held at police stations. Camden also highlighted its use of cameras within its report.

Kensington & Chelsea reported however that they found the ICEFLO system inadequate, not providing clear images of victims' injuries which led to the photos being prone to challenge in court. The borough successfully applied for Home Office funding to have the cameras replaced with high quality digital camera packs and for the purchase of CPS approved copying and printing systems. The new image system was reported as manipulation proof, with a full audit trail and is backed by Crown Prosecution Service. The project cost approximately £6,600 (£4,000 Home Office funded and £2,600 local funded).

Kensington and Chelsea reported feedback from Magistrates at the Court Management Group that provision of high quality images at court significantly assists in the early and appropriate disposal of cases reaching the Special Domestic violence Court (SDVC). The photo evidence is also useful in continuing prosecutions when victims withdraw their support. Cameras can also assist in the reporting/investigating by non-CSU officers at the scene of incidents. Since the implementation of the system Kensington & Chelsea reported improved conviction rates at its SDVC, particularly with regards to repeat perpetrators, and that the domestic violence sanctioned detection rate for the borough had increased by 10%.

Kensington & Chelsea also reported that, in line with their continuous improvement measures, they were exploring the use of head mounted video cameras to record accurate and precise footage of domestic violence.

The Board welcomes the continued development of digital technology and looks forward to all boroughs having such resources.

**Recommendation:**

Extend the availability of digital cameras to improve evidence capture to all 32 boroughs

Preventing attrition

Kingston reported that its CSU Detective Inspector had regular meetings with the Borough Head Prosecutor to obtain feedback on the quality of file submissions and the reasons for discontinuances. In an effort to reduce discontinuance a policy was implemented whereby a victim must be seen in person by a CSU supervisor or a Crisis Intervention Worker to discuss the reasons for withdrawing their support before taking a statement.

Other boroughs cited problems with witness withdrawal and one borough expressed an interest in considering alternative options that might provide an effective sanction that did not involve court proceedings. The Board heard that legislation does not allow the use of conditional cautions for common assault at present but in some cases, with an appropriate programme aimed at rehabilitation and prevention of further offending, it might be an option for the MPS to consider for the future. Hackney offered to conduct some exploratory work on this possibility if it was supported by its partnership agencies and the Board. One borough was clear that the main problem was in getting victims to court due to the level of support needed. However once the case arrives at specialist court there is a good success rate, which supports the case for specialist service provision throughout the criminal justice process.

Operation Athena

All boroughs reported their commitment to the London wide initiative known as Operation Athena. The objectives of the operation are to improve detection rates, reduce repeat offending, offer specialist support to victims and improve arrest rates. The day of the operation itself involves arrest enquiries being conducted at numerous addresses, multiple offenders being detained and victims being visited and offered support.

Operation Athena days are held twice a year. Some boroughs expressed a wish to hold these days more often as they were very successful, with over 240 arrests made in the last day of action in November 2008<sup>29</sup>. They advised that if additional funding was available Met wide the operations could run more regularly (e.g. quarterly).

**Recommendation:**

Increase the frequency of pan-London Operation Athena days to quarterly.

Dedicated Response Vehicles

Kensington and Chelsea reported that the borough had an enforcement car dedicated to quick response. This vehicle was equipped with specialist digital

<sup>29</sup> [www.viewlondon.co.uk](http://www.viewlondon.co.uk), 25 November 2008, Hundreds Arrested in Violent Offender Operation

imaging equipment as well as a range of evidence gathering kits, first aid kits and support information leaflets.

This vehicle became available as part of the Domestic Violence Enforcement Campaign which began during the 2006 World Cup. Kensington and Chelsea reported an increase in domestic violence incidents being reported to the police and a positive impact on sanction detection rates during the operation of this vehicle.

Other boroughs reported making use of dedicated response vehicles. Camden invested in a hate crime car and reported that it was joint funded by the local authority and police (£6,000 each).

### Risk Management

Each BOCU was asked questions on how officers use the risk assessment tools available to them to maintain survivor safety. Kensington and Chelsea where the initial risk assessment has been shown as medium or high, the supervising Detective Sergeant will instruct the investigating officer to conduct a secondary risk assessment.

Kingston also gave information on Special Schemes whereby if a supervising officer believed there was a significant or likely risk a special scheme application would be made to the Borough Crime Manager. The special scheme application provides information and details necessary for officers to be appropriately informed should they be called by a victim or witnesses to ensure an appropriate response.

Several BOCUs informed the Board that they made use of panic alarms (either level one or level two systems) in order to help manage risk. Level two alarms were monitored over 24hrs by private companies that would inform the police immediately if activated. Level one alarms are monitored locally and were used where cases are deemed higher risk. A smaller number of Emergency Alarms were used for high risk cases. If activated all local police units would be alerted by radio for an immediate response. Local authorities were also able to provide community panic alarms and these were sometimes used in domestic violence cases. Boroughs also spoke of mobile phones being issued if individuals did not already have them, or if the original phone was taken for examination of evidence, to ensure the CSU could keep in regular contact.

The Board heard that all of the six 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. Several of the boroughs were developing or in the process of transforming their current system to a MARAC model.

### Raising Awareness

A number of activities were listed by BOCUs as a means to raise awareness of domestic violence. These included:

- CSU presentations to various forums and boards (e.g. Kingston Interfaith Forum) highlighting extent and severity of domestic violence.
- A CSU stall at university Fresher's Fair.
- Work with Extended School Summer Road Shows.

- Publicity campaigns (e.g. Kingston ‘Domestic Violence, There’s No Excuse’ on the back of pay and display parking tickets, Kensington & Chelsea campaign involving beer mats with information for both perpetrators and victims, and the international White Ribbon Day<sup>30</sup>).
- Assigning CSU staff to work with particular communities.
- Provision of information to statutory and voluntary agencies (e.g. domestic violence education packs for schools).

#### Reduction in offences

Interestingly Camden reported a 34% reduction in substantive domestic violence offences from April 2007 to December 2007. The Camden Domestic Violence Working Group proposed several reasons for the reduction:

- Excellent partnership service practice including the recent implementation of the MARAC system has prevented domestic violence offences by protecting victims.
- Positive action strategy has impacted on the behaviour of perpetrators
- Working in partnership to implement an Integrated Domestic Abuse Programme is believed to be impacting on perpetrators through education
- Internal police procedures have been scrutinised and there is no evidence that recording policy or practice is different from previous years

Exact reasons behind the reduction were not available but at the time of the meeting Camden was in the process of commissioning an academic study to establish an explanation. The Board looks forward to the results of this study.

#### Forced Marriage Action Plan

Kingston developed a Forced Marriage Action Plan from a problem profile report that identified high risk groups and gaps in intelligence from underreporting. The action plan has served to raise awareness amongst police and partner agencies to enable the identification of possible cases and assist in providing an effective response.

Other boroughs also shared their concern that Forced Marriage and so-called ‘honour’ based violence is underreported. Kensington & Chelsea CSU conducted a local review of procedures and guidance for police officers in an effort to raise awareness and fill gaps in intelligence. A report was produced that detailed recommendations on prevention, intelligence, enforcement, partnership and training<sup>31</sup>.

#### **Recommendation:**

Violent Crime Directorate to explore implementing the recommendations from the Kingston problem profile and Kensington and Chelsea CSU report into forced marriage and so-called ‘honour’ based violence.

<sup>30</sup> International White Ribbon Day takes place on 25<sup>th</sup> November, where people wear a white ribbon to show that they do not condone men’s violence against women.

<sup>31</sup> See appendix one of Kensington & Chelsea report to Domestic violence Board, 4th March 2008. [www.mpa.gov.uk/downloads/issues/dvb/080304-04-kensington.pdf](http://www.mpa.gov.uk/downloads/issues/dvb/080304-04-kensington.pdf)

## 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:

- Kingston had combined the CSU with the Sapphire and Jigsaw Teams into a Public Protection Unit. Newham also combined Sapphire<sup>32</sup>, Jigsaw<sup>33</sup> and Mispers<sup>34</sup>.
- Kensington & Chelsea combined its CSU, sapphire and missing persons unit
- The size of the CSU varied between the six BOCUs from 12-29 people which partly reflected the size of the BOCU itself.
- Four boroughs had dedicated administrative support.
- Some boroughs cited lack of experience within the CSU as a previous issue and that this had been resolved by setting minimum tenures and a programme of staff development and training.

Several boroughs found the co-location of the Sapphire, Jigsaw and CSU and their management by one Detective Inspector, i.e. the formation of a Public Protection Unit (PPU) in line with the Met Modernisation Programme, to be important in ensuring good communication and cooperation between the units. At least one borough also thought that it would be advantageous, given its links to domestic violence, to also include the management for the investigation of child abuse within the PPU. This development is in its early stages and the Board looks forward to undertaking an assessment of its success in the coming year.

As was previously identified in the Domestic Violence Board Annual Report 2006-07 the commitment and enthusiasm of CSU staff and particularly CSU managers was a vital component of the domestic violence response. Nevertheless the Board continues to encourage boroughs to adopt systems and compliance therein rather than rely unduly on the personal commitment of individuals. It is clear to the Board that the specialism required; importance and nature of the work make the roles within the CSU very demanding. Adequate resourcing of the CSU is therefore seen as paramount in securing a good response to domestic violence, and one way of achieving this is to ensure that domestic abuse is seen as an important element of police work rather than a specialist area and developments have strategic and senior leadership.

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<sup>32</sup> Sapphire Units investigate sexual offences

<sup>33</sup> The Jigsaw Unit is responsible for managing registered sex offenders and potentially dangerous offenders

<sup>34</sup> Missing Persons Unit

**Recommendation:**

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

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:

- In Kingston Police Constables have a minimum tenure of two years and Detective Inspector and Detective Sergeants one year within the CSU. Kensington & Chelsea also reported that its officers would remain with the CSU for a minimum of 1 year.
- Kingston has a Crisis Intervention Worker within the CSU 4 days a week. The post is funded jointly by the police and through the Local Authority Agreement domestic violence stretch target funding.
- Camden CSU contained a dedicated MARAC coordinator

The continued funding of Crisis Intervention and Advocacy services was highlighted as an issue by several boroughs. Hackney also reported on the importance of ensuring there is some degree of in year flexibility with regards to funding streams to enable emerging issues to be addressed quickly and not limit opportunities for intervention.

**Recommendation:**

Funding from the MPS to specialist domestic violence services to be for a minimum of 2 years

**Safer Neighbourhoods Policing and Domestic Violence**

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

- Kingston made good use of its SNTs to perform intelligence gathering roles, tasking them with visiting lower risk victims. Its SNTs have received domestic violence awareness training and are equipped with crisis cards providing basic information on Community Safety Unit, Domestic Violence One Stop Shop and national domestic violence help lines. The SNTs also perform weekly drop in sessions at the local Mosque and have conducted leaflet drops in identified domestic violence 'hotspots'.
- Kensington & Chelsea SNT representatives attended multi agency meetings where action plans relating to victims are discussed and agreed. Their officers were also equipped with contact cards for the Woman's Advocacy Trust. These cards were attached to the 124D book along with details for assistance from victim support and Eaves Woman's Aid.
- Hackney reported utilising its SNTs to carry out arrests on warrants for domestic violence. Camden SNTs are provided with details of individuals who have been referred to MARAC in order to conduct visits and respond

to calls. They are also issued with cards supplying information on local services.

### **Violent Crime Directorate support to BOCUs**

The Violent Crime Directorate leads for the organisation overall on domestic violence. 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 new 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 to act as a single point of contact
- Weekly performance data on sanctioned detections and arrest rates
- Six weekly DI meetings CSU Delivery Team where data on CAD- CRIS conversion and ratio charges -cautions is provided
- Review of all domestic violence incidents
- Holds monthly meetings for all CSU Managers in order to share best practice and address issues
- Intranet website for a central reference point on policies, guidance, legislation etc relating to domestic violence
- Weekly performance indicators
- Comparative data with other boroughs

### **Internal Partnership**

The importance of Child Abuse Investigation Team, Sapphire and Jigsaw Team being closely located was highlighted as important by several boroughs to ensure cooperation and efficient flow of information. Several boroughs are already adopting such a setup ahead of the planned introduction of Public Protection Desks.

## **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.

Three of the 6 BOCUs who attended the Board stated in their reports that domestic violence is a priority for their Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP), or in Kingston's case Safer Kingston Partnership (SKP), and had allocated funding towards domestic violence-specific projects.

The SKP funding for domestic violence in 2006-07 was £52,225.64<sup>35</sup>. Of the borough of Hackneys funding £275,000 was specifically targeted at domestic violence interventions. Kensington & Chelsea CDRP allocated £145,000 to fund domestic violence projects and services (2007/08). It should be remembered that boroughs receive different amounts of total funding and their response to domestic violence should not be judged solely on monies reported to have been committed.

The range of projects supported by CDRPs included:

- Sanctuary schemes<sup>36</sup>
- Independent Domestic Violence Advice (IDVA) services<sup>37</sup>
- 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 and Crisis Intervention Workers
- Schools based prevention programmes
- 3 level Multi-Agency Domestic Violence Training Programme
- Domestic Violence Forum
- Perpetrator focused programmes

### Sanctuary Schemes

Sanctuary schemes were referenced by all boroughs but Kensington & Chelsea further reported that rather than simply 'target-hardening' a single room, which is often the method employed, it went further and target hardened the whole property, providing additional reassurance to the occupant. This had the additional benefit of reducing the risk of burglary.

Kensington & Chelsea also highlighted its Safe as Houses Security Project a joint project between the Environmental Health Department and Community Safety Unit to harden vulnerable occupiers living in fear of crime – many of which were victims of domestic violence.

Board members commented that they had seen sanctuary houses involving mobile CCTV and that in some cases this had been so successful that very few individuals were in emergency housing, although it was accepted that there are always some occasions where victims do need to get out of the property.

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<sup>35</sup> Figure does not include initiatives funded from partner agencies' main stream sources.

<sup>36</sup> 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.

<sup>37</sup> Independent Domestic Violence Advisers



## IDVAs, MARACs, and SDVCs

All Boroughs were unequivocal in acknowledging the support and importance of advocates in tackling domestic violence, and reported positive feedback from users of the IDVA services. Partnership work and advocacy were seen as key to ensuring a wide range of actions is available in tackling domestic violence.

Kensington & Chelsea frequently highlighted the importance of Women's Advocacy Service in dealing with offenders if the victim has requested assistance on obtaining an order against the offender and is unwilling to seek the assistance of police at the time. Kensington & Chelsea reported exploring providing training to members of the Woman's Advocacy Trust to enable them to provide impact statements<sup>38</sup>. Kensington & Chelsea commissioned a Domestic Violence Advocacy Service jointly funded from the Local Public Servants Agreements, reward grant and community safety partnership funding. The service receives £80,000 per annum. Several IDVA posts have been recruited in Hackney to specifically work with and reach out to new communities. Hackney also reported a good working relationship with City and Hackney Mind who provide counselling and support to victims who suffer from mental health problems. The Safer Kingston Partnership worked jointly with Hestia Housing and support to put together an IDVA service. Advocates were also flagged as important in providing additional information around risk assessment. For example the Advocacy Trust in Kensington & Chelsea receives large numbers of referrals from a range of sources and conducts their own risk assessments which can yield additional information due to the independent relationship between the Trust and their clients.

All six BOCUs either had in place or were in the process of establishing MARACs. Very often the boroughs had mechanisms already in place, such as Kensington & Chelsea's Domestic Violence Incident panel (DVIP) that would be superseded by borough MARAC based on the CAADA model, the MARAC being implemented and developed by Standing Together.

Unusually, in Camden the local authority has funded (£30,000) a police officer to fulfil the role of MARAC coordinator. Camden has also introduced a local MARAC CRIS flag to enable MARAC implemented actions to be referenced on crime reports. The MARAC coordinator maintains a file on vulnerable repeat victims to build up evidence and bad character information against perpetrators in order to assist with victimless prosecutions or to charge offenders on historic incidents.

Kensington & Chelsea police are founder members of the SDVC at West London Magistrates Court, the first SDVC in London. This court has now been running for over 4 years at the time of presenting to the Board. Kensington & Chelsea reported that the court had been of great value in resolving delays and avoiding unnecessary remands. The BOCU CSU sends a dedicated officer to the SDVC which has improved continuity and relationships with the partners who support the court.

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<sup>38</sup> Impact statements are a means to formally tell a court at the conclusion of a hearing of the effect the overall incident has had on the victim.

Camden reported that they are applying for funding to implement a Special Domestic Violence Court in conjunction with Islington. The Board offered to support their application.

Regardless of the presence or otherwise of an SDVC, presenting boroughs highlighted the importance of close working relationships with CPS lawyers to maximise borough performance on domestic violence, in particular the improvement of evidential presentation at court. Several boroughs noted the difficulty in securing 'victimless prosecutions' despite the positive action policy, and noted that outcomes could be measured in terms of victim safety rather than criminal justice outcomes.

**Recommendation:**

Consider developments in policy around measurement (conviction rates) in respect of 'victimless' prosecutions

**Borough-specific partnership work**

Following a scrutiny of domestic violence services within the borough of Kingston a proposal was made for a computerised information sharing system between partner agencies. This was aimed at facilitating communication and reducing repeat victimisation. The project has been funded and is being led by the Safer Kingston Partnership.

The Kensington and Chelsea Partnership funded a weekly support group provided by Victim Support for women affected by domestic violence. This group provided women the opportunity to share experiences, build up support networks and learn new skills.

Several boroughs made use of so called 'Domestic Violence One Stop Shops'. These aimed to provide a one stop shop service to victims of domestic violence regardless of whether they have reported to the police or not. Many partnership agencies are involved in these initiatives and a comprehensive service of advice is available regarding injunctions, housing, health, welfare benefits, and drug/alcohol issues. Kingston reported that its one stop shop had supported 191 victims over a period of 6 months and had been particularly successful in encouraging reporting from men and BME groups. The Board heard that the presence of private consulting room and the facility for victims to remain anonymous was important.

Several boroughs had their own Domestic Violence Forums where Refuges, police, local authority and the voluntary sector met regularly.

The issue of receiving input from the health service was routinely raised at Board meetings. It appeared that most boroughs were struggling to receive sufficient input from this sector. Camden reported that £25000 had been invested in a local area sharing information resource but this was not as successful as it might be due to the Health Department unwillingness to share information with the police.

## **The internal response - employee domestic violence**

As in the previous years' work 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.

Several boroughs provided information on the processes adopted:

- The DV Standard Operating Procedure would apply to the investigation
- The case would be investigated by the CSU Detective Sergeant and overseen by the CSU Detective Inspector
- TP Crime and the directorate of Professional Standards would be informed and kept abreast of the investigation
- The CSU where the incidents are reported would be responsible for investigation
- Mediation would not be considered
- Occupational Health services would be offered to the individual reporting the incident
- The local support function of the Directorate of Professional Standards would be responsible for any suspensions of police officers

Camden reported that it had conducted an internal advertising campaign on reporting domestic violence that was well supported. Camden reported that in the eight months preceding its presentation to the Board that it had dealt with six internal incidents.

## **Policy Focus Areas**

As well as the borough scrutiny the Domestic Violence Board also investigated two central areas of MPS policy. These were domestic violence arrest rates and cautions and domestic violence and child protection. These reports were presented by the MPS Violent Crime Directorate (VCD).

### **Arrest Rates and Cautions**

The VCD reported that from the financial year April 2007 – March 2008 the MPS recorded and investigated 102,227 domestic violence incidents of which 52,212 were recorded as crimes. This led to 22,598 sanction detections<sup>39</sup> of which 55.7% were for adult cautions.

The VCD informed the Board that only an officer of Inspector rank or above can authorise a caution and that the VCD has issued robust guidelines detailing how domestic violence cautions can be undertaken with integrity and sound rationale. Nonetheless the Board remains concerned by the high level use of cautions. During the financial year 07-08 the MPS utilised a Home Office Statutory Performance Indicator (SPI) which related to the percentage of arrests made from the total number of incidents (SPI8a). The MPS Performance Directorate

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<sup>39</sup> Sanction detections are cases disposed of by means of charge (or prosecution authorised by the CPS), cautions, summons or taken into consideration [rare in domestic violence cases]

calculates the measurement from a complex process of examining data using CRIS 'flags', relationships between the victim and suspect or accused and examining if an arrest had been recorded. From this process it was found that SPI defined incidents amounted to 84,026 and SPI defined incident arrests to 35,355 giving an SPI arrest rate of 42.1%

It should be noted that while the MPS have collated SPI8a data at the request of the Home Office, it has been voiced that this SPI is not a sufficiently robust performance measure - specifically because an arrest cannot be made if no crime has been committed. The MPS have therefore also collected offence related data. Following a similar calculation to above the MPS reported the number of offences as 52,212 and the number of offence arrests as 33,559 to give an offence arrest rate of 64.3%.

The Board sought information on repeat victims and further information from the VCD revealed that there were 77,388 victims aged 18 or over involved in domestic violence incidents. Of these victims 33,471 were recorded in one incident and 23,633 were recorded in two or more incidents. This data has its limitations however and is reliant on individual's names being spelt identically across separate reports.

The MPS recorded that there were 9,903 domestic violence offences that were disposed of by means of a charge. However the CPS revealed that only 6,688 cases were flagged as domestic violence. The difference in the two figures is thought to reflect the high attrition rate from the point of charge. It may also however be as a result of data input and/or retrieval problems.

The Board heard that the VCD continues to work with the CPS to identify areas of vulnerability and disproportionality in the charging process. The CPS and MPS are undertaking the development of new MPS/CPS Service Level Agreement (SLA) to enhance joint learning and cooperation.

19 domestic violence homicides were recorded in 07-08, the same number as the year before. A review was commenced by the Critical Incident Advisory Team on each of these but as of July 2008 only six have been completed.

The MPS reported that domestic violence performance is measured by a range of statistics including:

- Domestic violence sanctioned detection rate
- Power of arrest for domestic violence offences
- Percentage of domestic violence CAD to CRIS conversion
- Repeat Victimisation measures and checks
- Dip sampling of Risk Assessments completed

However the MPS also suggested to the Board that further performance measures may help to enhance the response to domestic violence. These were:

- Victim satisfaction levels
- Reduction of repeat victimisation
- Reducing seriousness (in terms of crimes committed) and homicide rates

- Volume of perpetrators brought to justice

The Board has been concerned at the practice of dual arrest<sup>40</sup> for some time. It is MPS policy that all domestic violence incidents should be professionally and efficiently investigated and the primary aggressor identified and positive action taken. However police data as it is currently recorded does not allow for dual arrest incidents to be easily identified and the Board was advised to treat with a high degree of caution the only figure presented to it (calculated at 100 incidents for 2007/08).

The Board recognised that statistical data is very much subject to correct identification and flagging of domestic violence defined incidents and noted that the MPS Directorate of Information (DOI) is adding a further mandatory flagging system to CRIS reduce human errors and inaccuracy in data recording.

### **Domestic Violence and Child Protection**

The second area of policy that was brought to the Board by the VCD was Domestic Violence and Child Protection. Children are often victims and/or witnesses of domestic violence<sup>41</sup>. The MPS was clear that children must be viewed as victims of domestic violence whether they directly or indirectly witness actual assaults or other crimes and that if a child is abused there is high likelihood that the child's mother will also be subject to abuse. The MPS also informed the Board that domestic violence within the family was one of the most prevalent factors apparent in reviews of child deaths where abuse or neglect is suspected.

The MPS response to children involved in domestic violence and other forms of gender based violence is managed by the VCD and the Child Abuse Investigation Command (CAIC). The VCD has the responsibility of owning and developing the domestic violence policy and the accompanying SOPs while the CAIC is accountable for the investigation<sup>42</sup> of all suspicions or allegations of crime that come within the scope of the term 'child abuse'.

The domestic violence and Child Abuse investigation SOPs have clear remits for who will take primacy in any investigation where there may be a cross-over between domestic violence and child abuse. The updated SOPs due out in late 2008 remind officers of their duties under the Adoption and Children's Act 2002 "for example impairment suffered from seeing or hearing ill-treatment of another". The SOPs in respect of children are driven by legislation, notably the Children's Act 2004 - the legal framework for the Government's national change programme 'Every Child Matters (ECM).

Children who come to the attention of the MPS officers must be assessed against five key outcomes (Be Healthy; Stay safe; Enjoy & Achieve; Make a Positive Contribution; and Achieve Economic Well-Being) and actions and decisions must

<sup>40</sup> Whereby the victim and suspect are both arrested at an alleged incident.

<sup>41</sup> Mullender, A. and Morley, R. 'Children living with domestic violence' (London: Whiting and Birch).

<sup>42</sup> The term 'investigation' includes those matters regarded as investigations into allegations or suspicions of crime (including common assaults; minor neglects and home alones etc) whether or not they attract social services interest under the Children Act, and not to investigations or assessments carried out solely by social services under section 47 Children Act 1989.

be recorded on the MERLIN database. The MPS reported that the MERLIN system is being further developed to ensure it is able to capture the additional information required by the five key outcomes.

The Board found that the MPS ACPO definition of domestic violence is limited in that it does not include victims and suspects under 18 years old whether partners, young married couples of 16-17 or a young person abusing a parent. The MPS however was keen to point out its commitment to victims of domestic under 18 or perpetrated by extended family members in line with its positive action policy and that such cases would be investigated by domestic violence specialists.

The Board was presented with the following data (for financial year 2007-08) from the Performance Information Bureau (PIB), but was advised to treat such statistics with caution due to the complexities of the MPS recording systems. The MPS was not able to provide equalities data within these figures.

The data indicated there were:

- 3647 domestic violence incidents where one or more victims were aged 1-18 years.
- 2356 domestic violence offences where one or more victims were aged 1-18 years.
- 1722 sanction detections where the victim was aged 1-18 years.

These figures can only relate to CRIS reports where children where children are recorded on the relevant 'Victim Informant, Witnesses' pages. To add context there were 102,227 domestic violence incidents recorded in the financial year 2007-08 and anecdotal evidence suggests a notable proportion of these involved children.

The VCD reported that it is investigating incorporating a mandatory section on CRIS if children are part of a domestic violence incident in order to improve its data accuracy.

## Restructure to Domestic and Sexual Violence Board

The current DV Board should widen its remit to Violence Against Women, which would also support the Mayor's proposed VAW Strategy.

MPS Violent Crime Directorate, 2008

The MPA DVB has, over the two years it has been running, seen significant developments affecting powerful change in the field. These include the further rollout of Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences, Independent Domestic Violence Advocates and Specialist Domestic Violence Courts. Many of these were recommendations from the Mayors Second London Domestic Violence Strategy, which was launched in 2005. As such, service provision for domestic violence was improved. However Rape Crisis Centres within the capital have suffered cuts in funding to the extent that only one remains in London. Given that it represents 12.4% of the UKs population, London is under served in terms of service provision to victims of abuse<sup>43</sup>.

On 25 November 2008 the Mayor of London, Boris Johnson, announced the development of a London Violence Against Women Strategy. The strategy is designed to prevent and reduce violence against women in the capital and have a positive impact on service provision. In order to appropriately ensure that the MPA is supporting the implementation of the strategy and to oversee the MPS response not only to domestic abuse but sexual violence, it follows that the DVB will expand its remit to include sexual violence. The Domestic Violence Board will become a Domestic and Sexual Violence Board (DSVB). Like the Mayoral Strategy, it is proposed that the Board focus on domestic and sexual violence as the two main areas of interest, with particular issues such as forced marriage or the use of sexual violence within gangs to fall under these two headings.

It is important to note that whilst there are considerable links between different types of violence against women, there are also areas of difference and these need to be responded to appropriately. Sexual violence is, like domestic violence, often a hidden crime. Sexual violence is an even more gendered crime than domestic violence, with women representing over 92% of victims of reported rape in London over the last 12 months<sup>44</sup>. The attrition rate between reporting of rape and conviction of a perpetrator is often held up as an example of the failure of the criminal justice system to support survivors and challenge violence against women<sup>45</sup>.

It is proposed that an increase in the frequency of Board meetings will allow more boroughs to present to the board and a drive to rollout good practice and support organisational learning across the MPS will be part of the new DSVB. Changes in

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<sup>43</sup> Map of Gaps, EVAW 2007

<sup>44</sup> Domestic Violence Offence and Incident data, Nov 07 – Nov 08, MPS Performance Information Bureau data.

<sup>45</sup> The Guardian, Tuesday 4 March 2008, Rape cases: police admit failing victims

the terms of reference, commissioning briefs, and membership will allow for a broader oversight capacity, a more focussed scrutiny process, and a wider bank of expertise to draw from. A proposed example of the new structure is located at Appendix 4.

MPA Members could visit Community Safety Units and speak to Advocates within the workplace and make judgments based upon informed firsthand knowledge rather than relying on hard testimony and gain appreciation that each borough need to tailor its own solutions rather than a one solution fits all.

MPS BOCU attendee, 2008



## 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 to support the work of the Board and indeed its expansion into other areas of violence against women.

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.

The MPS has worked to support increased reporting of domestic violence, and the findings of the Board indicate that in many boroughs this is paying dividends. However, work remains to be done across several areas. Home Office<sup>46</sup> and Greater London Authority<sup>47</sup> statistics still state that only approximately 35% of domestic violence incidents are reported to the police, so work should be undertaken to build upon the confidence in policing domestic violence in the capital. We hope that the open nature of the DVB and the new DSVB to allow Londoners to hold the police to account continues to support the improvement of service delivery and the increase of confidence that violence against women will not be tolerated in London.

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<sup>46</sup> Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault and stalking, Home Office

<sup>47</sup> Women in London, capitalwoman 2007

## APPENDIX 1: 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.***

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#### 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](mailto:Betsy.Stanko@met.police.uk)  
or contact Jane Probert on 020 71613320 (783320)

- ***The MPA Race and Diversity Unit also offer support to the BOCU compiling their report:***

- Michael Wadham  
Tel: 020 7202 0145 (57145)  
Email: [Michael.Wadham@mpa.gov.uk](mailto:Michael.Wadham@mpa.gov.uk)
- Lynne Abrams  
Tel: 020 7202 0163 (57163)  
Email: [Lynne.Abrams@mpa.gov.uk](mailto:Lynne.Abrams@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 2: Voluntary and statutory organisations that took part in the MPA Domestic Violence Board**

Aanchal  
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  
Bromley Homestart  
Croydon Domestic Violence Advocacy Service (CDVAS)  
City of London Corporation  
Domestic Violence Intervention Project (DVIP)  
Eaves Housing for Women  
East London Black Women's Organisation  
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 Barnet  
London Borough of Brent  
London Borough of Bromley  
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  
Newham Action Against Domestic Violence  
Newham Domestic Violence and Hate Crime Team  
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  
Victim Support Newham  
Women's Aid  
Women's National Commission



## **APPENDIX 3: Summary of issues raised by the Domestic Violence Board with the MPS Borough Operational Command Units:**

### **Kingston:**

- Revisit the Domestic Violence Homicide Review to extract recommendations
- Clarity on arrest rate figures
- Quality assurance and supervision around Form 124D
- Work to be undertaken on DV in LGBT communities
- Awareness and prevention work in schools
- SNT good practice to be shared with VCD

### **Hackney:**

- Outline the aims for the borough and the plans and structure by which they will be achieved.
- Compliance with 124D
- Low reportage of rape
- Undertake work on an internal domestic violence policy
- Exploration of links between gangs and domestic violence
- Involvement of non-DV specific agencies in the response to DV
- Exploration of large proportion of male victims and appropriate service provision
- Work to be undertaken on DV in LGBT
- Clarity on recording and investigation of counter allegations
- Complete outstanding domestic violence homicide review and update VCD
- Preparation for impact of Olympics
- Progress toward attitudinal change

### **Camden**

- Data on 'victimless' prosecutions
- Strategic involvement of the CDRP
- Strategic involvement of health services
- DV training for SNTs
- Exploration of significant reduction in recorded offences
- Succession planning
- Data on effectiveness of hate crime car
- Effectiveness of Integrated Prosecution Teams

### **Kensington & Chelsea**

- Utilisation of SNTs for intelligence gathering
- Violence against women involved in prostitution
- Issues facing the DV Advisory Support Group
- Direct engagement with Moroccan community

### **Bromley**

- Engagement of health and education services with partnership work.

- Identification of incidents of 'honour'-based violence
- Inclusion of CAFCASS and drug and alcohol agencies in MARAC process
- Referral process to the MARAC
- Revisit the Domestic Violence Homicide Review to extract recommendations
- Explore increased reporting from Somali community following engagement efforts
- Outline plan to meet stretch targets

### **Newham**

- Breakdown of domestic violence data into diversity strands
- Engagement work with East European communities
- Engagement of health and education services with partnership work.
- Structure within borough and placement of domestic abuse
- Caution rate

**APPENDIX 4: Proposed Structure of the MPA Domestic and Sexual Violence Board 2009-10**

	April 2009 Month 1	June 2009 Month 3	August 2009 Month 5	October 2009 Month 7	November 2009 Month 9	January 2010 Month 11
09.00	Closed Session	Closed Session	Closed Session	Closed Session	Closed Session	Closed Session
09.50	Break	Break	Break	Break	Break	Break
10.00	Borough 1	Borough 1	To be confirmed	Borough 1	Borough 1	Borough 1
11.25	Break	Break	Break	Break	Break	Break
11.35	Borough 2	Borough 2	To be confirmed	Borough 2	Borough 2	Borough 2
13.00	Close	Close	Close	Close	Close	Close