



**Metropolitan Police Authority**

**Domestic Violence Board – 6 February 2007**

**Summary**

**Project Umbra**

**A. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 1. That the MPA accepts the contents of this report.**
- 2. That the MPA continues to support Project Umbra.**

**B. SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

1. This report follows on from the MPS Equal Opportunities and Diversity Board meeting conducted on 16 November 2006.
2. A review of the problems emanating from Project Umbra was conducted by the DCI leading the Violent Crime Directorate's (VCD) Community Safety Unit (CSU) Service Delivery Team who was also subsequently appointed as the temporary Project Manger. The status of the current project Manager will be reviewed no later than 1<sup>st</sup> March 2006.
3. The principle problem lying at the heart of the project was that the level of resources required to support it were under-estimated at the time of scoping and inception. This lack of administrative support then had a disproportionate impact on other aspects of business, which led the project to almost reaching 'stalemate' status. However, I can report this did not affect strategic policy development nor negatively impact on front line service delivery or performance outcomes as can be evidenced by current statistics. The sanctioned detection rate financial year to **24 December 2006 is 36.4%, which represents an increase of 8.5%** compared to the same period for the **2005/06**-performance year. That said, the MPS doesn't believe that sanctioned detections should be the sole performance measure in this field (**please see para 16**). A domestic violence abuser is more likely to be arrested, charged or otherwise brought to justice than at any other time in the history of the Metropolitan Police Service.

4. A resource plan, which is attached at **appendix 1** has been developed to refocus and re-energise Project Umbra. Essentially this plan deals with four main areas;
- **Support** (including admin support resource, strands meeting Structure, briefing note re responsibilities for all partners involved in Umbra, project contact list and the submission of quarterly work returns etc)
  - **Communication Strategy** (including marketing and Consultation. In cludes the development of a tool kit for each strand to market strands and conduct community consultation processes. Also prioritises the commission of Equalities Impact Assessment)
  - **Service Delivery** (Development of strand 6, Strand 6 terms of reference and review of other Strand action plans).
  - **Revenue Support** (Initiation of resourcing debate with LCJB colleagues).

Each of the strands identifies the action to be delivered against, named person with accountability for delivery, key milestones and desired outcome.

5. The current Project Manager is satisfied that there is sufficient resource support in place to assist the Project Manager, provide the administrative support for the six strands and for the wider aspects of the project. Furthermore the Project Manager is satisfied with the high level of leadership support provided.
6. Project Umbra has been re-energised and all strands' members are looking forward to the challenges of 2007 and how Umbra can develop in a more meaningful way to improve service delivery to victims and hold perpetrators to account. This has been evidenced by the positive meetings held since the EODB meeting on November 16 – clearly there is vibrancy and a motivation to take the work programmes forward.
7. As previously stipulated domestic violence homicide statistics for 2005/2006 showed BME women represented a disturbing **60.6%** of victims. Of the **33** DV homicides in **2005/06**, **6 victims were male, 27 were female of which 20 (victims) were BME women/men (figures revised in light of recent review process)**. This has highlighted and reinforced the need for more meaningful analysis to gain a better

understanding of the problem and where necessary identify and address gaps in service delivery to BME women. In addition the analytical product will further inform the thinking around the need to work with men's groups. Furthermore this area of work is being considered and addressed through Strands 2 (Advocacy and Support) and 6 (DV Homicide reviews) of Project Umbra. This is work in progress and will take at least another 4 weeks to come to an aspect of fruition. A brief summary of the homicides, which contains de-personalised data, is attached at **appendix 2**.

8. The current review process has highlighted a number of factors including;
  - The timeliness of receiving homicide review reports
  - The lack of equalities data included in the homicide reviews
  - The common use of knives in several of the cases reviewed
  - The issues regarding spouses newly arrived in the UK – what information/advice are they provided with on entry? If such information is provided, which agencies/organisations (voluntary/statutory) are listed as useful contacts?
  - How are the needs of those for whom English is not the first language, met?
  - What is the understanding of cultural isolation/awareness of service providers?
  - How can shortfalls be addressed?
9. Project Umbra Strand Six will manage Domestic Violence Homicide reviews. The MPS and its strategic partners do not propose to await the outcome of the Home Office's consultation relating to statutory Domestic Violence Homicide Reviews as determined by section 9 Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004. This HM Government consultation and consideration continues to take place. The MPS submission to this consultation is attached at **appendix 3**. The MPS and the London Domestic Violence Forum Steering Group (LDVFSG) are keen to make progress on this subject matter now given its importance to saving lives and making a difference. A draft terms of reference (including details of proposed membership) has been prepared as per **appendix 4**, which will be presented to the LDVFSG for ratification. In addition a work plan will be developed in due course, to co-exist with the other 5 Umbra work plans. The first scheduled meeting for Strand 6 will take place on 14 February 2007, although work will be developed with strand members before this meeting date.
10. The VCD CSU Service Delivery Team activates the current Domestic Violence Homicide Review process after a DV homicide takes place. The following process is adopted;
  - VCD CSU team generate a letter and briefing pack, which is despatched to the BOCU Commander and the CSU Detective Inspector;

- The CSU DI will convene a meeting of the Borough DV Forum where they will set and agree a terms of reference for the review;
  - The review should be conducted within one month of coming to the DV Forum Chair (usually non-police) – this is a challenging time frame, which is rarely if ever achieved;
  - Each agency should undertake a separate management review of its involvement;
  - The DV Forum then complete a composite report and accompanying action plan, which is submitted to the VCD CSU Service Delivery Team;
  - The VCD quality assure actions plans against the findings of the DV Homicide review report;
  - Action plan progress is dip-sampled for compliance and progress. Learning is distilled fast time via e-mail communication to CSU DI and then at the 6 weekly CSU Managers meetings.
11. The VCD has concerns about membership objectivity, the perceived lack of ownership of action plans, the lack of family involvement and the lack of victim representation at the current review process. These are all factors which will receive active review (and where necessary change) and be led by Strand Six.
12. To the future the MPS would like to see the following changes to the DV homicide review process (**see also appendix 3**);
- a. The review process should be chaired by a suitably CDRP senior representative;
  - b. VCD will be taking the lead as the principal MPS representative during the review process to satisfy questions and concerns about objectivity. This staff member will research, assess and present the MPS's findings during any review process;
  - The action plans which arise from an objective and transparent review process should be 'signed off' by the CDRP chair to secure accountability and 'buy in' for the effective and meaningful delivery of the plan across the statutory agencies;
  - Victim and Victim's family (ies) [chosen, biological etc] representation at the review process.
13. There is a performance management framework for CSU service delivery and performance outcomes, which also impacts on how Umbra is progressed locally. This framework includes performance reviews at Borough Daily Management Meetings, Borough Tactical Tasking & Coordinating meetings, Borough Senior Management (SMT) Performance and separate Link Commanders meetings, Crime Control Strategy meetings (these have just concluded with a showcase event featuring best practice on 14 December 2006), MPA DV Scrutiny Board

and the focussed performance interventions conducted by the VCD Service Delivery Team.

14. In addition a significant part of the performance management structure is the 6 weekly meetings with the Community Safety Unit (CSU) Detective Inspectors conducted by the VCD CSU Service Delivery Team. Performance, good practice, barriers to success, and VCD support are standing agenda items. A copy of the product used to inform this meeting is attached at **appendix 5**. This product provides a borough-by-borough breakdown relating to sanctioned detections performance against bespoke targets (and comparative historical data), arrest rates (SPi 8a data), percentage charge rate against overall sanctioned detection rates etc. This will be developed further to review issues of 'quality and substance' – for example No Crime rates and the use of adult cautions as a disposal outcome. In addition work is continuing with the CPS to expand on this data to include other qualitative data including percentage number victims/witnesses attending court and the volume of offenders brought to justice.
  
15. As reported on 16 November 2006 there is now a more co-ordinated approach to the gathering of Criminal Justice data between the MPS and CPS. This is allowing both organisations to develop more sophisticated data capturing tools that look behind the headline figures for 'quality and substance' data e.g. relating to percentage of witnesses attending court, volume of offenders brought to justice etc. What this means in real terms is an ability for greater interrogation of individual borough's performance not only around quantitative but also qualitative data. A further piece of work is being developed and progressed between the MPS and CPS to undertake a more in depth review of both police, prosecutors and courts practises in highlighting areas of vulnerability and areas of good practise. This work is being progressed through Strand One and through the MPS/CPS meeting structure.
  
16. The Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) believes that sanctioned detections are not always the most meaningful sole performance indicator to measure success when challenging or otherwise managing domestic violence. The MPS believes that further performance measures should also include;
  - Improving victim satisfaction levels
  - Reducing Repeat Victimisation
  - Reduction in seriousness (in terms of crimes committed) and homicide rates
  - Volume of offenders to justice.

### **C. RACE AND EQUALITY IMPACT**

17. An Equality Impact Assessment has been commissioned for Project

Umbra, which is still being compiled. This assessment will transcend and encompass the 6 equalities groups. Each of the six strands will also be required to complete an Equality Impact Assessment bespoke to their own strand.

#### **D. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

18. This is subject to the Umbra resource plan strand entitled **'Revenue Support' and will be carried forward by Commander Allen**. The MPS currently employs 1 staff members to provide administrative support for the project, and is accountable for paying

her respective agency for her services. There has been further staff time made available to provide resilience around administration support should it be required. Further costs, in addition to opportunity costs, are incurred for provision of administration, meeting rooms and refreshments for all six strands.

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#### **Background Papers**

There are no background papers attached to this report.