



## **Metropolitan Police Authority**

**Domestic Violence Board – 4 November 2008**

### **Newham Borough Response to Domestic Violence**

This report has been compiled at the request of the MPA Domestic Violence Board to give information on how Newham BOCU in partnership with others responds to domestic violence.

The report will describe how the BOCU works to

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

Areas of best practice and innovation will be highlighted, as will the challenges that the Borough faces in providing an effective response to domestic violence.

## **SUPPORTING INFORMATION – INDEX**

### **Introduction**

- A Domestic Violence Data provided by the MPS**
- B Tackling Domestic Violence**
- C Keeping Survivors Safe and Holding Perpetrators Accountable**
- D Preventing Domestic Violence**
- E Working in Partnership**
- F Training**
- G Employee Domestic Violence**
- H Continuous Improvement**
- I Equality and Diversity Implications**
- J Financial Implications**

## Introduction

### Overview of Newham Borough

1. Comprising approximately 39 square kilometres in the East of London and three miles from the City of London, the London Borough of Newham sits just north of the River Thames. Overlooking the Millennium Dome and Greenwich, Newham has the London boroughs of Tower Hamlets, Hackney, Waltham Forest, Redbridge and Barking and Dagenham as its neighbours. Newham is described as an inner London borough although still retains its designated outer London borough status set when the Greater London Council was formed in 1965
2. Newham has the youngest and most richly diverse population in the UK. 60.6% of the residential population being non-white and with 24.3% declaring themselves as holding the Muslim faith, which is notably higher than the national average of just 3%. Over 40% of the 254,000 people in Newham are under 25 years old and more than 100 languages are spoken locally -from Albanian to Zhuang. However, Newham is also the 11th most deprived area nationally out of 354 regions.
3. The borough is an exciting area rich in culture, flavour and atmosphere. There is great pride in the borough's ability to fuse all the many communities with the traditional East End values of warmth, friendliness and community spirit. Throughout the year there are many events in the Borough designed to recognize individual cultures and also to bring all residents together in a celebration of all cultures. This makes Newham a welcoming place for both residents and visitors alike.
4. There are major shopping centres in Beckton, Stratford and East Ham. In Forest Gate there is Green Street - dubbed 'the Bond Street of the East End'. This area has over 400 independent shops representing cultures from around the world, selling food, jewellery, designer saris and a multitude of cafes and restaurants serving authentic international cuisine. The Borough has recently seen the opening of ten brand-new hotels, including a hotel at the West Ham United football ground with rooms overlooking the football pitch at Upton Park. As stated, West Ham United, a Premiership football club is located on the Borough and regularly attract crowds in the region of 35,000.
5. Newham takes in much of London's revitalised Docklands, including City Airport, the ExCel international exhibition centre and luxury homes overlooking the Thames. The ExCel centre has developed into a major exhibition centre and has hosted the International Car Show and Boat Show as well as major sporting events, including international boxing and the London Triathlon.

6. The borough is at the centre of London's plans for the 2012 Olympic games. The Games will see an 80,000-seater stadium built in Stratford - which will also be at the heart of a prestigious new development, Stratford City, comprising 4,500 new homes, nearly half a million square metres of office space, hotels, schools and a shopping centre to rival any in the country. The opening of the Channel Tunnel Rail Link International Station at Stratford will also result in a significant rise in the number of persons visiting Stratford. The regeneration of this area will see a large influx of workers into the Borough over the next 6 years. Canning Town and West Ham are also subject to major regeneration schemes.
7. The BOCU is well served by public transport with an extensive coverage via mainline, tube and bus services. There are seven suburban railway stations at Stratford, Maryland, West Ham, Forest Gate, Wanstead Park, Woodgrange Park and Manor Park. There are also six London Underground stations at Stratford, West Ham, Canning Town, Plaistow, Upton Park and East Ham including a major section of the Docklands Light Railway.
8. Newham has many areas of relative poverty. On three summary measures for local authority districts in 2004, the Indices of Deprivation rank Newham as the fourth (of 33) most deprived area in London and as the eleventh (of 354) most deprived nationally.
9. The unemployment rate is at 11% (compared to 7.9% for London as a whole) and 34% of the population are economically inactive compared to 24% for London as a whole (ONS and GLA 2006).
10. The borough is also densely populated with statistics showing 68 - 72 persons per hectare where the London average is 48. (ONS and GLA 2006)
11. Newham has some 18,000 secondary school pupils with 53% achieving GCSE A\* - C grades (compared with 59% Nationally). 24% of those at working age have no formal educational qualifications (compared with 14% for the whole of London)

### **Diversity – Minority Ethnic Groups in Newham**

12. Newham is a multi-cultural Borough with a diverse ethnic, faith and language mix. 60.7 % of Newham's total population are either Asian (including Asian British) or Black (including Black British). Amongst the Asian community 12.3% are Indian, 9.6% Pakistani, 9.6% Bangladeshi and 4.3% others. Of the Black and Black British population 14.7% are African, 7.1% Caribbean and 3% others.

13. Newham has a diverse religious population including Christian 46.8%, Muslim 24.3% (compared to National average of just 3%), Hindu 6.9%, Sikh 2.8% and Buddhist 0.7%.
14. A significant emerging community in Newham is within the Eastern European communities. This has been recognised within Newham and research was undertaken by the Borough's Higher Analyst (authorised by Det Supt and DCI Public Protection) culminating in the production of a 56-page Problem Profile report in June 2008. This has highlighted many of the issues and links to crime in general and specifically in relation to Domestic Violence.
15. Two main findings were that there was a large and increasing Eastern European population in Newham and that Domestic Violence within this community was increasing. Estimates for the size of this population vary but, for Newham, it would appear to be in the region of 25,000-30,000.

### **Newham's Achievements tackling Domestic Violence**

16. The London Borough of Newham is a challenging inner city environment and has faced a mix of policing challenges, which go significantly beyond that of tackling volume crime. Despite this Newham's performance within DV has significantly improved over the last two years.
17. Newham Borough exceeded its sanction detection target for domestic violence offences in 2007/08 (by 3% above the MPS target) and improvement is continuing with the BOCU exceeding its sanction detection rate for domestic violence in the year to date (currently at 46% and at it's highest in June 2008 at 49%). The DV offence arrest rate for 2007/08 was 66.3% and now is 71.2% representing just under a 5% increase. There has been a year-on-year increase in both the SD and arrest rates. This represents a significant improvement on the 2006/07 arrest rate of 35.77%.
18. The BOCU has a very close working relationship with the London Borough of Newham (LBN) Domestic Violence Unit and other partner agencies. This includes a link between Police and Independent Domestic Violence Advocates working with NAADV (Newham Action Against Domestic Violence). Regular operational and strategic meetings are held between Newham Community Safety Unit (CSU) and the LBN team to discuss management of cases, referrals and risk management issues.

19. The BOCU has a well-established Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) system and has a dedicated MARAC officer. The CSU Detective Inspector chairs the MARAC in Newham and there is significant representation from a wide range of partner agencies. Meetings are held monthly and individual cases are discussed with the objective of reducing the risk to repeat DV victims. The success of Newham's MARAC system is evidenced by the reduction in reported DV offences (including DV Homicide) and reduce repeat victimisation in Newham for 2007/08. In respect of DV offences there was a 4.4% reduction in Newham whilst the MPS saw a 7% increase. In relation to DV offence reduction Newham showed the fourth best figures in this area. A neighbouring borough, Redbridge, saw a 45% increase in reported DV offences during the same period.
20. Furthermore, the BOCU has good supervision systems in place to ensure high standards in domestic violence reporting and compliance with the positive arrest policy.
21. The MPS domestic violence offences sanction detection target of 40% for 2007/8 was exceeded; a detection rate of 43.1% was achieved. This achievement is being exceeded this year where the current rate is 46% (2% above the MPS average).
22. For 2007/08 the arrest rate for domestic offences was 66.3% and this is now at 71.2% (representing a 5% increase).
23. The BOCU's achievements are due to a number of factors including:
  - Significant drive by the Borough Senior Management Team (SMT) from Borough Commander down through Daily Management Meetings, CDRP, Strategic Assessment, and Borough Control Strategy
  - Timely response to DV calls (high Immediate "I" call rate)
  - Effective evidence gathering at scene
  - Adherence to positive action arrest policy

## **A. DOMESTIC VIOLENCE DATA PROVIDED BY THE MPS DIRECTORATE**

24. This data covers the period 1 April 2007 to 31 March 2008.
25. There were 5337 domestic violence incidents of which 2649 were substantive criminal offences. 49.6% of domestic violence incidents were criminal offences.
26. A sanction detection rate of 43.1% was achieved. The MPS target was 40%. Newham's SD rate is currently (as of 7 September 2008) 46% against an MPS target of 44%..
27. The domestic violence offence arrest rate was 66.3%. This is currently at 71.2% (7 September 2008) against an MPS target of 67%.
28. The total number of persons who were charged with domestic violence related offences was 362 out of 1142 sanction detections, this relates to a 31.7% charge rate. 17 of these charges relate to GBH.
29. The total number of persons who were cautioned with domestic violence related offences was 776 out of 1142 sanction detections, this represents 67.9% of the overall sanction detection rate. (see section H – Continuous Improvement regarding Caution issues).
30. There were 3 domestic violence homicides during the period.
31. The MPS Critical Incident Advisory Team undertakes DV Homicide reviews although BOCU support is provided particularly with the link with partnership agencies and established local information sharing protocols (mainly via the MARAC membership).
32. Thirteen offences were flagged as forced marriage. There is no separate flag for 'Honour' based violence at present. Such cases are discussed at the Borough Daily Management Meetings and also the daily Public Protection Meetings chaired by the Borough Detective Chief Inspector. Such incidents are brought to the attention of the CSU Detective Inspector who determines an appropriate investigative strategy. A specific flag for 'Honour' based violence is likely to be introduced imminently within the MPS.

## **B. TACKLING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**

33. Newham BOCU together with the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships has made tackling domestic violence a Borough priority. Domestic Violence is highlighted within the Local Area Agreements and the CDRP Violent Crime Group chaired by the Borough Detective Superintendent responsible for Crime.
34. The Borough Commander Nick Bracken and Detective Superintendent, Crime, Simon Letchford have ensured that DV and Hate crime continues to be a focal point for improvement and good practice.
35. Within the BOCU Violent Crime Action Plan a number of DV specific objectives are included:
- To identify High Risk Victims and repeat victims.
  - To identify the top 20 perpetrators/repeat suspects.
  - Identify peak DV occurrences to assist in allocating resources.
  - Work with DV Forum to reduce victims through partnership activity.
  - Identify repeat victims and engage DV intervention/advocate to prevent reoccurrence.
36. Detective Inspector Tony Lynes, Community Safety Unit, attends the Borough DV Forum and Specialist Domestic Violence Steering group meetings as well as the monthly MARAC meetings.

### **Policy Compliance, Implementation and Quality Assurance**

37. As can be seen from the notable domestic violence reduction in 2007/8, supervisors from the Community Safety Unit make every effort to ensure calls classified as domestic violence on the Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) system are given a CRIS number. CAD to CRIS conversion rate for the period April 2007 to March 2008 was 87.1%. This was above the MPS average of 78.2%.

### **DV Incident Recording**

38. All incidents of domestic violence within Newham BOCU are investigated and recorded in accordance with the MPS Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) relating to domestic violence. Leadership, training and supervision ensure that the standards that are laid out in the SOP are understood and adhered to.

39. Once any call has been identified as a domestic incident then it must be marked as Class 29. Before any Class 29 calls can be shown as complete on the CAD system, a crime report number (CRIS) must be entered or an explanation recorded as to why a crime report was not necessary. The reasons for not achieving 100% are due to multiple calls to the same incident or due to the lack of understanding by control room staff. There have been a number of interventions implemented to reduce this discrepancy and these now form part of daily procedure. Firstly, the Uniform Core Team Duty Officer has the responsibility to account for all domestic incidents that have been classified as Class 29. All such incidents are reviewed at the Daily Management Meeting and cases of non-compliance will be identified and resolved. Second, there is an internal audit process carried out daily by the CSU supervisor. Every CSU Detective Sergeant can gain access and browse CAD and ensure that DV incidents are converted to CRIS. Lastly, the completion of CAD report is the responsibility of the Integrated Borough Operations unit (IBO) and a dip sample process for compliance with National Crime Recording Standards is used. DV awareness training is provided by BOCU training unit and CSU staff in identifying a DV incident and the response required as set out by the DV Standard Operating Procedure.
40. Newham Borough policy stipulates that any officer attending a DV incident between 8am – 10pm must contact the CSU. This will enable an experienced CSU officer to provide guidance to the initial response by the service. This is essential in terms of gathering evidence and promoting compliance with the positive action strategy. Outside these hours the matter will be referred to the Night Duty CID team. Initial advice is recorded and the appropriate strategy agreed upon. Since this implementation, the working relationship between CSU and uniform officers has been enhanced, as has the standard of evidence.
41. In accordance with the DV SOP all domestic violence incidents are recorded in a 124D. It is BOCU policy that officers will record the fact that they have completed the 124D on the CRIS. The CSU have a system in place to ensure these 124D booklets are recorded onto a database register managed by the Administrative Officer within the CSU. The 124D's are supervised by front line supervisors and also are checked by the CSU DS's ensuring it's content meets the required standard. Failure to comply is noted their line supervisor informed and the officer concerned spoken to by the CSU DS to avoid repetition and to improve individual development and performance. Where patterns of poor performance have been identified this is addressed through the Borough training cycle.

## Crime Recording/Management

42. Appropriate flagging of domestic violence cases on CRIS is ensured through training and supervision. The Crime Management Unit checks that all CRIS reports are appropriately DV flagged before screening the crime into the CSU. CRIS reports are further checked by the CSU DS when reports are screened into the CSU for further investigation. This is then again checked at a later stage by the CSU Service Delivery Team at Territorial Policing Headquarters. This identifies any apparent errors by examining relationship codes shown between victims and suspects and produces a list that may be in error. This list is then checked by the CSU DI to remove or implement flags where appropriate. The main discrepancy is normally around age, where one of the parties involved, for example the perpetrator, is a youth under the age of 18. Although this offence does not meet the ACPO definition of domestic violence it will still be investigated by CSU officers but will not retain the flag. There are very few cases of DV that will be investigated outside the parameters of the CSU due to the unit's clearly publicised remit.

## 20 Point Plan

43. The BOCU has developed and issued a Borough Instruction for officers to adhere to a 20-point plan when completing Crime Reports for DV offences. This represents a list of practical considerations and also reminders regarding positive arrest policy, risk assessment, forensic and administration issues. This acts as a further re-enforcement of the BOCU's approach and positive policies. Officers are required to address each point separately and this ensures that all possible action is taken or considered.

## Viper Car

44. In addition to this the BOCU has implemented a Violent and Priority Crime Evidence Retrieval Car (VIPER) which operates daily from 2pm until midnight staffed by 2 experienced investigators of which at least one officer is from the CSU. This is an added resource responding to violent incidents and in relation to DV incidents lends support to front line officers in respect of victim/witness care, identification of and seizure of evidence, management of scenes and advice regarding positive action. This vehicle is equipped with a high quality digital camera, camcorder and laptop and portable printer in order to effectively capture witness and physical evidence.

45. To support initial evidence gathering, all response vehicles are equipped with form 124Ds and Polaroid cameras for immediate evidence capture, ensuring that the scene and any injuries are

photographed. The CSU also have access to digital cameras sponsored by the Tackling Violent Crime Programme. This provides early tangible evidence to the investigator, which can be used during interview, and provides evidence upon which the CPS can charge.

46. There are plans to develop the Viper Car further with the proposed inclusion of the NAADV IDVA's with officer's on this vehicle to provide immediate support to victims at the time of the incident.

### Risk Identification and Management

47. In respect of Risk Identification and Management all reporting officers conduct and record an initial risk assessment based on the MPS SPECSS + model. This highlights any relevant risk factors related to Separation (child contact), Pregnancy (new birth), Escalation, Cultural issues, Stalking and Sexual Assault. Additional factors are now also included: Child Abuse, Use of or access to weapons, Strangulation, Suicide/Homicide, Controlling/jealous behaviour, Abuse of pets/animals, Abuse of alcohol/drugs, Mental health, Victim's views. Once the investigation has been screened in to the CSU a further secondary risk assessment will be conducted. This is a further review of the risk and will include details regarding the current situation (particularly if factors have changed since initial assessment, details of children/dependants, DV history (5-year checks made of reports to identify historic incidents), details of abusers and any other relevant factors. Supervisors then record and ensure a Risk Management plan is implemented utilising the RARA model: Remove, Avoid, Reduce, Accept. This outlines the risk management strategy depending on the individual circumstances.
48. Where there are incidents of threats to life, this is brought to the attention of the Duty Officer who will carry out a risk assessment and bring it to the attention of the CSU/CID. The Detective Inspector will then conduct a secondary RA and tactics will be deployed to remove, avoid or reduce that risk. Victims and family members also at risk are taken to a comfort suite based at Plaistow, where matters can be discussed without fear of compromise.
49. Newham work closely with the London Borough of Newham's DV and Hate Crime Unit and NAADV (Newham Action Against Domestic Violence) a DV support charity organisation. Systems are in place that mean that victim's of DV are, with their consent, referred to either of these main support agencies via use of a standardised DV1 report completed by police and emailed to the agency. The agencies will make contact with victim's offering support, advice, safety options and crisis intervention amongst other services. This includes dealing with other issues such as Housing, Immigration, Injunctions.

50. Within NAADV there are 2 Independent Domestic Violence Advocates (IDVA's) who work particularly with those victim's who are pursuing and supporting prosecutions and they provided additional support throughout the judicial process and attend court with them. The IDVA's regularly attend the CSU office to hold case meetings with OIC's and to discuss issues with the CSU DI.
51. Victims who are identified as being at high risk through the assessment of the heightened risk factors will be referred to the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC). This is a panel of agencies chaired by the CSU Detective Inspector (DI). The group shares information in order to increase the safety, health and well being of the victim and their children. The main aim is to reduce repeat victimisation and ensure safety of victim and children.
52. The CSU DI and DS's ensure that ongoing DV secondary investigations are being progressed within the SOP guidelines. A full risk assessment will always be completed and an arrest strategy devised to apprehend outstanding suspects. Contact with the victim will always be established within 24hrs unless the victim specifically requests otherwise. All contact attempts will be recorded. Supervisors will then ensure that the investigation is updated on a regular and timely fashion.

#### Public Protection Group

53. Newham Borough has a well-established Public Protection Group model within its Crime Portfolio and this incorporates the CSU, Violent Crime Unit, Sapphire and Jigsaw teams as well as Mispers and a Public Protection desk. All of these units are based within one site at Plaistow Police station and allows for close and effective working partnerships between the units. For example where there is clear overlapping of offending in DV Rape cases these are investigated by specialist Sapphire officers with support from the CSU team to address the underlying DV issues.
54. The BOCU's public protection model has been recognised as good practice and has been adopted by other Boroughs.
55. Performance management of domestic violence is robust. During the DCI's Public Protection Group daily meeting all overnight DV cases are discussed and reviewed highlighting critical incidents, issues of media interests, incidents that may have an impact on the Borough that day, detections and outstanding arrests. This information is passed to the Daily Management meeting, which is held every weekday. The BOCU Detective Chief Superintendent or his/her deputy chairs this meeting. Domestic incidents are a standing agenda at this meeting, and the Duty Officer will account for all such incidents over the last 24 hrs. During that period of time, DV activity will also be fully documented on the Duty Officer's OB. Any failures to comply with the positive action

policy are brought to the attention of the Chief Superintendent and the Duty Officer of the team responsible.

56. The Senior Management Team are provided with fortnightly performance data by Territorial Policing, which gives details of detection and arrest rates. All MPS CSU DI's meet monthly at New Scotland Yard where a review of performance is a standing agenda item. At the Borough Commander's Quarterly Performance Meetings domestic violence is a standing agenda item. The Crime Manager and DI with responsibility for the CSU have sanction detection targets set within their Performance Development Review as do all officers working directly within the CSU.
57. To ensure the BOCU are aware of current performance issues, meetings take place throughout the ranking structure. One of the items on the agenda will focus on performance. Such meetings have been crucial not only to provide a formal basis for communication by supervisors, but also to promote feedback and to capture and harness useful suggestions, issues and initiatives.

## **Resources**

58. The SMT are fully committed to tackling hate crime and this is reflected in their commitment to ensuring the CSU is appropriately staffed. Currently the CSU Budgeted Workforce Target (BWT) is one DI who also manages the Misper Unit, four Detective Sergeants, 24 Investigative Officers of Detective Constable, Trainee Detective Constable and Police Constable Rank and one Administrative staff member. The CSU therefore has a total of 29 Police Officers dedicated to DV and Hate Crime investigations.
59. As of the 29<sup>th</sup> September 2008, the team comprises of three male and one female DS's who lead their respective teams. They are also responsible for the progress of their individual portfolios that include race and homophobic crime as well as vulnerable person abuse. Within the four teams, there are four substantive Detective Constables comprising 3 male officers and 1 female, seven Trainee DC's, 4 of whom are female and 3 male, eight Police Constables, comprising 3 females and 5 males. The unit has also one female Staff Administrator. One officer (Trainee DC) works compressed hours, and one (PC) is on maternity leave. All other staff are full time. There are no disabled staff in the CSU. Eight investigators are from black and ethnic minority groups (this represents 27.8% of the BWT for the CSU).
60. As of 29<sup>th</sup> September there are four PC and one DC or TDC vacant posts. However, 2 of the PC posts have been filled via a recent internal selection process and they are to be posted to the unit from the end of October 2008.

61. In respect of the other 2 PC vacant posts due to a review of the Crime Portfolio's BWT these posts have been converted to DC/ TDC posts and these posts will be filled as soon as possible. This effectively means that the unit will benefit from having more experienced and trained Detective officers within the investigation teams.
62. The CSU is a specialist investigative unit within the BOCU. Currently, there is a balance of skills and expertise that provides an excellent learning environment for junior staff members. The training received by CSU staff will be covered in section F of this report.
63. Supervisors assess the needs of the Borough and development of their staff twice a year in line with staff performance development reviews (PDRs). They then pass their recommendations to the Crime Manager. Decisions are made at a CID SMT level to accommodate the needs of the Borough and staff. This system has ensured that performance is maintained and staff opportunities are accomplished. The Borough's posting panel sits every two weeks and supports this process.
64. Newham, like all other MPS boroughs, is supported by Territorial Policing to deliver effective performance in relation to domestic violence. The BOCU is assisted in the following ways.
- Fortnightly performance data is provided in relation to sanctioned detection and arrest rates, this includes comparative data with other Boroughs. This allows for detailed analysis by the BOCU on a range of performance issues.
  - The CSU Service Delivery Team holds monthly DI Meetings. At these meetings more detailed data is provided such as CAD to CRIS conversion rates, sanctioned detections and the ratio of charges and cautions. Policies, procedures and issues impacting on performance are discussed. Best practice is identified and disseminated.
  - TP Violent Crime Directorate conducts a daily review of serious violent crime that falls within the public protection arena, flagging up to individual Boroughs those crimes that are of critical concern, offering support and advice. This acts as a safeguard for the BOCU to ensure critical cases have not been overlooked and also that risks have been appropriately identified and actions set.
  - CSU Service Delivery Team website is a central reference point for policies, guidance, legislation etc relating to domestic violence. This provides an immediate reference guide and can be used quickly and easily.
  - CSU Service Delivery Team provides an advice service and will review investigations upon request. In the past twelve months, the CSU

Service Delivery Team has assisted Newham BOCU by reviewing and giving advice on a number of critical investigations.

- CSU Service Delivery Team provides the BOCU with a single point of contact who regularly visits and provides support when appropriate. This support has proved very positive with CSU officers able to have a direct link (an individual) to assist them in their investigations. Practical advice has been given in cases involving Forced Marriage as well as in solving practical accommodation and refuge issues for victims.

65. TP Support is considered helpful and positive in terms of the advice, support and guidance given. It provides an additional focus on the issue of DV as well as other issues such as Forced Marriage and Honour Based Violence. It also provides useful data to the BOCU so that performance can be monitored and reviewed.

## **C. KEEPING SURVIVORS SAFE AND HOLDING PERPETRATORS ACCOUNTABLE**

66. As well as an immediate risk assessment recorded by reporting officers within the book 124D, officers within the CSU will always carry out a further comprehensive risk assessment (RA) for all domestic incidents. Under no circumstances will any such RA and appropriate measures to manage the risk be left unrecorded until the following day. Officers on the CSU are fully aware of this critical part of their duty and always adhere to the 'RARA' procedure when compiling Safety Plans for victims. 'RARA' is the established MPS risk management model and relates to the Removal, Avoidance, Reduction and Acceptance of risk issues. CSU Detective Sergeants have responsibility for the risk management of all cases of DV on their team, but in particular the medium and high-risk cases (there are enhanced risk assessment models to deal with these cases). The CSU Detective Inspector has responsibility for the risk management of all cases of DV victims but in particular the high risk cases. He/she will inform the Crime Manager as soon as practicable about such high-risk cases. These assessments are rigorously monitored as new information may further impact on control measures. The CPS is briefed on any medium or high-risk victims in order to inform the investigating officer of any changes in relation to the offender's restrictions or conditions.
67. There is a close liaison between CSU and the London Borough of Newham DV team and NAADV thus facilitating regular exchanges between the agencies around the safety of victims of DV and their children. There are established Information Sharing Protocols in place. All DV crimes and incidents are referred to one of the agencies and officers record this action within CRIS together with the type of response required.
68. This service is available 8.30am – 5pm every weekday; however staff often see clients outside these times if prearranged. The staff also offer a duty system whereby one of the incident workers is available every day to attend the victim's current address with an officer. The agencies offer a number of services, but in essence, they are a crisis intervention service carrying out a risk assessment and offering safety planning. Below is a list of services they can supply or access to keep survivors safe.
- Liaison with housing departments and refuges to secure alternative safe accommodation, this is invariably at short notice to avoid any future risks
  - Crisis counselling, longer term counselling, monthly confidence building courses, weekly support groups, and parenting classes

- They offer information with regard to civil remedies such as injunctions, contact and non-molestation orders. They also have excellent contacts with local family solicitors
- The Independent DV Advocates working within NAADV support victims and witnesses awaiting trial and liaise with witness services at various courts
- In discussion with the victim and where it enhances safety, they often make referrals to the “safer homes scheme” to improve security measures
- The agencies offer welfare and benefit advice
- The DV Intervention programme managed by the LBN DV unit commission perpetrator programmes for men and support women who are their partners. This is an innovative programme that is non-court mandatory.
- The Victim’s Suite at Plaistow Police Station has been recently refurbished utilising The Proceeds of Crime Act funding available to the BOCU.

69. All the agencies have access to interpreters for any other language requirement.

### Sanctuary Scheme

70. The BOCU supports the London Borough of Newham in operating a Sanctuary Scheme project to provide a victim centred approach to prevent homelessness in cases of DV. The main feature of the scheme is the creation of a “sanctuary room” providing a safe room from where the victim can call and wait for the arrival of police. Additional security can also be provided e.g. locks and gated security.

71. There is a strong partnership link between the London Borough of Newham and the BOCU’s Crime Prevention Officer’s to ensure this scheme remains a positive way of keeping victim’s safe. During the last financial year 55 Sanctuary Scheme cases operated within Newham.

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Party Reporting Sites

72. Agency intervention has significantly impacted on victim safety and holding perpetrators accountable, measured through increased detection targets and reduced repeat victimisation. Through their support, victims have been more willing to support the prosecution process.
73. In addition, and to encourage the reporting of DV, some twelve 3<sup>rd</sup> Party reporting sites have been developed within Newham. These include police trained staff with investigative and forensic awareness who work within the voluntary sectors.

### MARAC

74. Newham have a very well established and successful Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC). It has been in operation for 2 years and during the last year has reviewed some 181 cases. This partnership scheme is critical to make a significant difference to the safety of *very high-risk* victims. The MARAC is represented by a number of agencies including Mental Health, Housing, Victim Support, Probation, Children Schools and Families, Safeguarding and Social Care, Health and Accident & Emergency Services and many more. The panel sits once a month, chaired by the CSU DI. Cases are referred by various agencies and CSU through the internal risk assessment process, with the majority of cases being referred by the police. At the MARAC meetings new cases are discussed, strategies developed and previous outstanding cases are reviewed. No case is removed from the MARAC list until we are sure that the high risk has considerably decreased or stopped.
75. An officer has been appointed MARAC co-ordinator and this officer provides regular contact with MARAC agencies to enhance the support to victims. Many of the agency representatives have undergone Co-ordinated Action Against Domestic Abuse training (CAADA). This includes being able to conduct their own risk assessment and identify factors that would merit a MARAC referral. This has been highly successful with the number of referrals increasing from outside agencies and a reduction of repeat offenders. Success is also measured in the number of referrals back to the MARAC; ie; those victims that have been previously referred, and in 2 years there have only been 2 instances. The group continues to be linked into CAADA, who provides ongoing implementation support.

## Forced Marriage/ Honour Based Violence

76. Due to the demographics of the borough there are a significant number of flagged Forced Marriage cases and also cases linked to Honour Based Violence (HBV). As there is not a flagging system yet in place for HBV cases there are no statistics available in terms of numbers. However, the BOCU regularly deals with a number of 'Honour' related incidents and is aware of the safety measures that have to be implemented and managed in order to secure survivors' safety. There is regular close liaison with the Home Office Forced Marriage Unit and other local agencies (Newham Asian Women's project and Aanchal who both work with women and the issues around Forced Marriage). This ensures that there is a partnership approach to this issue.
77. Effective liaison is made also with the central CSU Service Delivery link officer who has provided practical advice and support to officers.
78. All CSU staff receive guidance and training on this issue and have been briefed on the potential risk factors to alert them to the possibility of HBV. There is also a clear and recognised link between young Black or Minority Ethnic (BME) females reported missing via the MisPer unit and the potential for Forced Marriage and HBV issues. This has been one of the driving factors leading to the CSU DI now also being responsible for Missing Persons. This ensures that any potential issues are identified early and dealt with positively. There have been a number of recent cases where through early intervention and through liaison with partner agencies and appropriate referrals effective safety plans have been put into place.
79. The proposed Family Justice Centre for Newham would also incorporate a Forced Marriage Unit.
80. Newham continues to promote and support the positive action policy to hold perpetrators accountable. Where an arrest is not made when a power of arrest exists this will be highlighted and reviewed by the CSU Supervisors, Furthermore, this is also highlighted at the Daily Management Meeting.
81. Newham CSU supported by the CDRP have been operating a DV car responding to DV incidents to lend support, advice and guidance to front line officers as well as offering practical support in respect of dealing with witnesses, victims and the management of scenes and evidence gathering. This car is to operate at least until the end of the current financial year when it will be assessed and reviewed. The purpose of this was to hold perpetrators to account and to reassure the public. The main thrust of this initiative was to ensure that the "positive action strategy" was complied with and victim care enhanced and effectively managed.

82. The recording of cross allegations and carrying out dual arrests at domestic violence incidents is discouraged. There is a dedicated forum within the Borough's internal IT systems containing Borough Instructions on this. Officers are expected to carry out a full investigation of the incident, which should identify the primary aggressor. Any cross allegations or dual arrests are highlighted at the daily management meeting and reviewed by the CSU DI and where appropriate challenged. Whilst there is no data available on numbers of cross allegations or dual arrests, they represent very few cases.

## **D PREVENTING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**

83. Newham CSU supervisors ensure a comprehensive risk assessment is carried out for every domestic violence incident report including the Non-Crime offences. Incidents are then referred to a support agency (LBN team or NAADV) who also carry out their own independent assessment. The Investigating Officer has clear instructions that where the need arises a clear safety plan must be implemented and documented. Supervisors will be consulted and an action plan agreed on for all medium and high risk cases. Where victims are of high risk or repeat victims that are hard to engage, a referral to MARAC is considered. This work is critical to prevent domestic violence and reduce the number of repeat victims.

84. Excellent partnership service practice including the established MARAC system have prevented DV offences by protecting victims.

85. Positive action strategy by means of arrest have impacted on the behaviour of perpetrators

## **E WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP**

86. Newham BOCU works closely with the London Borough of Newham DV and Hate Crime Teams as well as the main DV voluntary agency, NAADV. Via the monthly MARAC process the BOCU works closely with a wide range of other agencies including Probation Service, Social Services, Drug and Alcohol services, Primary Care Trust (A&E), Mental Health Unit, Housing.
87. Referrals to the agencies are made via an established protocol whereby the OIC will, where consent of the victim is obtained, provide details via a form DV1 and this is emailed to the agency and a copy retained within the CSU for monitoring and auditing purposes.
88. The BOCU additionally works together with the Newham Asian Women's Project, Asian Women's DV project (AANCHAL), East London Black Women's Organisation, Victims Support and East London Women's Trust. The CSU DI attends the Multi Agency DV forum with many of these agencies represented where issues are jointly discussed and shared.
89. Newham works closely with the Home Office Forced Marriage Unit and often deal with direct referrals from them as well as seeking support/advice regarding sensitive Forced Marriage issues.
90. Newham BOCU has been working closely with the London Borough of Newham in respect of setting up a Family Justice Centre within Newham in the future. This will effectively be a one-stop shop for those requiring multi-agency support over a wide range of issues. Much research has already been done including joint best practice visits to established centres in London (Croydon) and in the US (New York).
91. The LBN Domestic Violence and Hate Crime Unit Manager coordinates the Newham DV Forum. The meetings are open to all practitioners in the area and aim to provide information exchange and networking opportunities, advice, guidance and support and to identify and share good practice. This meeting can also help to identify barriers to achieving best practice that need to be addressed or gaps in service provision.

### Specialist Domestic Violence Court (SDVC)

92. An SDVC is now in place at Stratford Magistrates Court and has been operating since April 2007. The SDVC represents a multi-agency co-ordinated response to domestic violence. The aim is to improve the safety of survivors and their children and to hold abusers accountable from their initial point of contact with the police and throughout the criminal justice system.

93. Its aims are:

- To increase the effectiveness of the judicial system in providing protection and support to victims and witnesses of domestic violence throughout the whole criminal justice proceedings.
- To reduce delay through effective case management and effective and early interventions; appropriate penalties and clear messages that domestic violence is wrong.

94. Each of the agencies have signed up to the SDVC protocols and whilst acknowledging that each agency maintains its independence, the Newham SDVC Strategic Group aims to ensure that all the agencies involved work in an integrated and co-ordinated way to achieve the objectives of the project.

95. Agencies that have signed up to the protocols are:

- Newham Crown Prosecution Service
- London Borough of Newham
- NAADV
- Newham Hospital
- Newham Police
- Probation Service
- Stratford Magistrates Court
- Victim Support/Witness Service

96. There is also an SDVC Operational Group meeting monthly to address any delays or problems in processes and provide regular feedback on cases.

97. The CSU DI attends the Specialist Domestic Violence Court (SDVC) Operational Steering Group, chaired by the LBN DV and Hate Crime Unit Manager. CPS, Probation and NAADV are also represented and the group discusses and addresses a number of agenda items with the objective of reducing the attrition rate and support victims through the criminal justice system.

98. Again, this scheme has been set up from within Newham and is self-funded. It has been recognised as a successful scheme and been subject of best practice visits by other BOCUs'

99. Since the start of the SDVC (April 2007) there has been a reduction in the number of case withdrawals and retraction of statements. This is attributed to the effective role the IDVA's play in the process. Newham's SDVC has the second highest conviction and success rates in the North East Sector. The London average conviction rate for DV is approximately 58.3%. Newham's SDVC reports a rate of approximately 69.1%.

## **Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRP)**

100. The overall budget for the CDRP within Newham is over one million pounds, however the CDRP funding in respect of overall Violent Crime Delivery is £406,800.

101. The funding dedicated specifically to tackling Domestic Violence from within this figure is £135,000.

102. The current CDRP action plan comprising of 7 priorities includes three DV specific priorities.

- To reduce violent crime by focussing on Serious Youth Violence, Knife Crime and Domestic Violence. (Lead: Detective Superintendent Simon Letchford).
- This includes a commitment to deploy a Domestic Violence car on operational days August 2008 – March 2009.
- This also includes a commitment to arrange proactive monthly arrest days focussing on suspects for violent crime to include Domestic Violence offenders.

103. Domestic Violence Intervention Project (Lead: Francis Martineau, Head of Domestic Violence and Hate Crime Unit, London Borough of Newham)

This programme aims to increase the safety of women and children by providing services to assist men to stop violent and abusive behaviour. This project has contributed to a decrease in repeat victimisation in the borough and is one of the few such projects operating across London.

In terms of success the Intervention Project can demonstrate between 87.5% and 89.3% reduction in repeat victimisation where there had been a continued intervention with either the victim and / or perpetrator

104. Independent Domestic Violence Advocates. (Lead: Francis Martineau, Head of Domestic Violence and Hate Crime Unit, London Borough of Newham)

This is a system utilising specially trained professionals providing support to victims throughout the criminal justice system. They are fully integrated into the court process in Newham particularly within the Specialist Domestic Violence Court at Stratford Magistrates Court.

105. Additionally, the BOCU applied for funding to operate a Victim's Taxi service system that had operated the previous year from funding secured through the Tackling Violent Crime Programme. £7,000 has been secured to operate this system to provide practical support to

victim's with transport difficulties that affect the potential of their providing early evidence and also in cases where it is appropriate to increase safety of victim's (e.g. in Harassment cases). This is a positive and well-received scheme.

## **F TRAINING**

106. There is comprehensive Domestic Violence training delivered to Newham officers. New officers receive DV training during their initial induction package and this is a corporate package around DV guidance and 124d completion. Officers transferring to Newham receive similar training during a 2-day induction-training package delivered by the BOCU Training Unit.
107. A package is also delivered to Police Community Support Officers including training to enable them to complete the 124d.
108. In addition the BOCU has, over the last few years, been proactive in delivering the corporate DV training package to all officers on the borough. This training is mandatory at Newham and attendance numbers for this are very high.
109. Officers who are posted to the CSU receive an induction package that provides practical guidance on legislation, MPS policy and procedures, completion of 124ds, good practice at scenes and for investigations, use of criminal intelligence, risk management, victim support and details of support agencies.
110. There are also a number of courses in which DV training is incorporated. There is an MPS 1 day refresher CSU training course, a 1- week course for officers who are not to receive the training during their DC course. This 1 week input is included in the 5 week DC course.
111. Other training has been delivered to Public Protection DI's in conjunction with other statutory and voluntary agencies e.g. CAADA (Co-ordinated Action Against Domestic Abuse) training relating to MARAC.
112. Partner Agencies have also been invited to give presentations to the staff within the CSU and both the LBN DV and Hate Crime Unit and NAADV have recently attended to deliver these in relation to their roles, the support they can provide and to give feedback to police on specific issues identified by staff and the victims/clients they deal with.

113. Conversely, training has been given by the BOCU to partner agencies in relation to DV. This has been in the form of a presentation by the CSU DI to the DV Forum covering a wide number of issues and incorporating a question and answer session. This input received excellent feedback from the partner agencies.
114. Newham CSU are currently organising an additional refresher training day to address emerging issues and to reinforce existing policy and procedure. This training will incorporate presentations from external speakers covering topics such as victim support, honour based violence and MARAC.

## **G EMPLOYEE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**

115. Police employees who commit domestic violence will not be seen or treated as different from any other perpetrator and will be investigated and held accountable through the Criminal Justice System in the same way as any other person. It is of paramount importance that the public has faith in the honesty and integrity of Police officers.

*"The primary duties of those who hold the office of constable are the protection of life and property the preservation of the Queen's peace and the prevention and detection of criminal offences. To fulfil these duties they are granted extraordinary powers. The public and the Police services therefore have the right to expect the highest standards of conduct from them".*

116. The CSU Detective Inspector leads all investigations in the first instance. There is a comprehensive SOP that audits activity through to ACPO ranks and is for strict compliance.
117. The safety of the victim and any children will be paramount. There may be additional barriers to reporting for partners of Police officers/employees and further pressures for victims who are Police employees and must always be borne in mind.
118. The CSU at Newham has the confidence of its peers and has supported Service Policies and initiatives to tackle DV. An internal advertising campaign was eagerly supported. Support mechanisms and referrals are commonplace tools to win victim support, whilst ensuring that confidentiality issues are robustly adhered to.
119. Newham's positive policy in relation to dealing with these issues was evidenced recently in the dealing of a police colleague from another area arrested for domestic assault. This investigation was overseen by the CSU DI, positive action policy implemented and evidence was secured to enable referral of the case to the CPS.

## H CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

120. Newham Borough is continually making steps to improve performance and there are a number of challenges for 2008/09. Steps have already been taken to allow a smooth transition in the forming of the Public Protection Group. This unit includes Sapphire, CSU, Jigsaw, Compass, Mispers, Public Protection desk and incorporating other Violent Crime (e.g. Operation Blunt tackling Knife Crime). An intelligence focus desk supports these units. The team's work alongside each other to allow for a joint partnership approach to public protection issues.
121. The BOCU in conjunction with the London Borough of Newham are seeking to introduce a multi-agency Family Justice centre that would provide a cohesive all-round service in a range of areas to victims of Domestic Violence. This would further enhance the quality of service and support to victims.

### 2012 Olympics

122. The BOCU is aware of the link between sporting events and DV. The borough has systems in place, for example, to deal with anticipated increases in DV reports particularly linked to significant football matches (e.g. West Ham United home games). The BOCU ensures there are additional resources in place at these times and for the football matches deploys a DV car to deal with any effects. The BOCU are not currently aware of any similar effects from Olympic events. However, the BOCU will be liaising closely with the MPS Olympic Directorate to monitor this and will ensure that sufficient resources are in place during the games.
123. Newham has an established sex trade, which is closely monitored and controlled. The BOCU will monitor the industry and any relevant intelligence linked to the sex trade. The BOCU will maintain close liaison with the MPS Clubs and vice team as well as the MPS Human Trafficking Team to monitor trends and react accordingly.
124. The BOCU will also be closely working with the London Borough of Newham in developing an Olympic Policing plan to address a range of issues to include DV issues.
125. In response to the DV issues within the emerging Eastern European communities in Newham, the BOCU and London Borough of Newham have secured funding from the Tackling Violent Crime Programme to use advertising to highlight the issues and promote reporting of DV.

## Cautioning Issues

126. Newham BOCU recognises that the cautioning of offenders during 2007/08 represented almost 68% of all Sanction Detections and although mindful of the level of cautioning the BOCU does not see cautioning as a negative outcome. However, the Detective Superintendent has commissioned an analysis of the use of cautioning during this period to ensure it was used appropriately.
127. Cautioning is used as an effective method of holding offenders accountable and Newham use this positively but only where appropriate and proportional.
128. Inspectors within Newham Borough monitor and are consulted regarding cautioning and are instructed only to authorise the cautioning of an offender where no other positive outcome is possible (e.g. where otherwise the disposal would be No Further Action). The system is strictly monitored by the CSU DI to ensure there are no cases of repeat cautioning for DV offences or multiple cautions.
129. Newham is implementing the guidance contained within Home Office Circular/016/2008 in respect of the Simple Cautioning of Adult Offenders and the CSU DI ensures as a result that there is a record of the justification of authorising a caution within the Custody Record of the suspect. The DI reviews the case in conjunction with the gravity factors, public interest principles, and the likely CPS decision and with reference to Home Office Circular 016/2008. This is recorded within a specifically developed template and entered onto the custody computer system (NSPIS).

The following information is included with relevant details.

- The suspect has made a clear and reliable admission to the offence.
- The suspect has made a verbal admission to the offence of Common Assault during a tape-recorded interview; i.e.; PACE compliant
- There is a realistic prospect of conviction if the offender were to be prosecuted in line with the Code for Crown Prosecutors "The Full Code Test".
- A clear, reliable admission of the offence has been made and this is corroborated by the victim's written statement and police officer's record within 124D and EAB where victim's account was noted and recorded.

- It is in the public interest to use a simple caution as means of disposal. Here the DI records the victim's views, assesses the harm caused and likely penalty if convicted
- The suspect is 18 years of age or older at the time the caution is to be administered.
- The simple caution is appropriate to the offence and the offender (with reference to ACPO's Gravity Factors Matrix and the offender's criminal history).

Here a record is made of the 5-year checks made regarding previous incidents between suspect and victim. Also, any previous convictions, cautions or reprimands are recorded. This is to ensure that the authorising officer is fully aware of the offender's history and that repeat cautioning is not an issue.

Also, mention is made of whether there was any weapon used or pre-meditation and also whether children were present when the offence was committed.

A record is made of the fact that the authorising officer believes a caution may reduce the likelihood of re-offending and captures the seriousness of the incident.

130. Newham's fundamental objective is to reduce and prevent violence and this is being achieved in respect of the reduction in repeat victimisation and also the high conviction rate at the Specialist Domestic Violence Court where those cases with a realistic prospect of conviction are rigorously prosecuted.

## I EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

131. The CSU DI is a member of the DV Forum with representation from a wide and diverse range of agencies including the Asian Women's Domestic Violence project (AANCHAL), Newham Asian Women's Project, East London Black Women's Organisation. Also represented are the LBN's Vulnerable Adults team, East London Mental Health Team and Drugs and Alcohols Services team. These agencies are also members of the MARAC chaired by the CSU DI. This allows for a broad spectrum of knowledge and understanding the needs of different groups within the community.
132. Each DS, within the CSU, has been appointed as the BOCU's SPOC and is responsible for performance and training around the areas of Domestic Violence, Race Crime, Homophobic Crime and crime involving Vulnerable Adults.
133. Newham Police are aware of the historic problem of underreporting of DV among BME groups, LGBT and other groups, for example among people with disabilities. Together with various partnerships, the drive is to raise the awareness about domestic violence and the service available to their victims and families.
134. Newham has recently increased to 3 LGBT Liaison Officers who work closely with the CSU team. The CSU DI holds regular meetings with the officers to ensure promotion of relevant issues. The officers are a vital resource for engaging with the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community. They have provided support in hate crime investigations and have also been proactive in increasing trust and confidence. A dedicated email address and telephone number have been sourced for the LGBT team and they have recently been involved in a number of visits to identified LGBT venues in the borough.
135. Due to the population and demographic of Newham Borough a large proportion of DV victims are from within Black or Minority Ethnic communities. Therefore greater emphasis is placed on ensuring that frontline officers are fully trained in dealing with diverse communities; victims are also given access to Language Line, MPS interpreters, and to specialist BME support groups. Newham's use of interpreters is the highest within the MPS.

During 2006/07 the BOCU's interpreter spend was £444, 000, for 2007/08 it was £520,000.

136. Compliance with the 'SPECCECS' risk assessment model ensures that cultural factors are included in the risk assessment of every reported domestic incident. Newham is currently looking to address the issues around the Eastern European communities emerging in the borough and a CSU officer is to be nominated as SPOC to engage with these communities in partnership with existing agencies. An officer has already given a presentation to a Lithuanian Women's Group.

## **J FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

137. Funding for initiatives mentioned throughout this report has been sourced from police/partnership/CDRP budgets.

138. Proposed additional training will be sourced from within existing budgets.

139. Additional funding for policing activity (arrest days etc..) is sourced from CDRP and via MPS funding processes.

140. There will be a major financial implication for the proposed Family Justice Centre. Details of this are not yet known.

### **Report Author**

Tony LYNES  
Detective Inspector  
Newham CSU