



**Metropolitan Police Authority**

**Domestic and Sexual Violence Board  
Final Report  
2006 - 2011**

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## Chairs Foreword

We are proud to present this final report, reviewing the work and findings of the Metropolitan Police Authority (MPA) Domestic and Sexual Violence Board (DSVB) over a five year period. During that time we've challenged, supported, and sometimes just plain pestered our police colleagues in their continual efforts to improve.

And improve they have. Those who report domestic and sexual violence to the Metropolitan Police Service today should expect a service that is second to none. They should know they will be believed, treated with respect, and that all avenues of enquiry will be followed in order to bring to justice the crime committed against them.

Of course we know in practice things aren't always this perfect and where we have found areas for development, small or more significant, we have highlighted them and lobbied for improvement. As the governance body working on behalf of Londoners to hold the police to account, Londoners would expect us to do no less.

The landscape of policing governance is changing, and the DSVB with it. The MPA will be abolished and the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPC) will be created. Our focus now is to ensure the learning from five years of in-depth questioning of policing is used effectively, and we also need to ensure that the future work of the MOPC continues to challenge, support, and even pester as necessary.

We would like to thank Cindy Butts as Chair of the Domestic Violence Board from 2006 to 2009, and all the Members of the Domestic Violence Board and DSVB who have given their time and effort to support the MPA in its oversight of the police in this complex and challenging area. Their skills and knowledge have been invaluable. We would like to thank Lynne Abrams who has coordinated the Board since 2008 and Hamida Ali and Michael Wadham who respectively coordinated the Board from 2006 – 2008, as well as the MPA support staff and data analysts who have assisted the process.

We would like to thank all those who work in partnership with the police to support victims, from those providing safe accommodation to those fleeing abusive partners, to independent domestic and sexual violence advocates (IDVAs and ISVAs), those providing support to victims, as well as to those providing forensic examinations for victims of rape. Each and every one plays an essential part in tackling violence against women. Finally, we recognise and would wish to thank all those MPS officers and staff who work hard to keep the capital safe and to bring those who are violent to justice.

**Valerie Brasse and Kirsten Hearn**  
**Co-Chairs, MPA Domestic and Sexual Violence Board**

# Introduction

The MPS has achieved much over the last five years and made great strides toward a more responsive service provided to victims of domestic and sexual violence. Yet concerns remain. Domestic violence accounts for a third of all violent crime in London, although reports have slightly reduced. Reported rapes continue to rise, with a 16% increase in 2010/11 following a 32% increase in 2009/10. We believe that all reports to police are a positive outcome and each victim who does so shows great bravery in coming forward. We know that these types of crimes are under-reported, so any increase in reported offences of violence against women is a step towards building a more accurate picture of prevalence.

The debate continues about the most appropriate outcome for victims themselves; ranging from being believed and supported to seeing their attacker convicted for the crime. It is the position of the DSVB that achieving both should be the aim. At the moment, criminal justice outcomes (known as a sanction detection) for rape cases are low at 17% of all offences. This may be unsurprising given that the offence of rape is commonly accepted to be extraordinarily hard to prove in court, though it should be noted here that this 17% is higher than the national average.

The DSVB has always been an open and collaborative process, unique in that it offered members of the public as well as experts from the VAWG sector and the MPA itself the opportunity to question the most senior borough officers. Attendees said the meeting *'gives the opportunity to take a step back from the work and look at the way the partnership works, what it does well and what needs to be improved'*<sup>1</sup>.

The improvement across a whole borough partnership was also highlighted by police officers who stated *'partners that were involved in the process were all asked to account for their area of business and provide evidence for the report. I believe this made all partners review and evaluate their 'part' in the whole process. The information in the report was shared with many partners within the Borough and has provided a good point of reference to all in relation to how the Borough deals with domestic and sexual violence'*<sup>2</sup>.

The DSVB has influenced and supported change locally and regionally, from sharing good practice in one borough with the next, to challenging the whole MPS to access feedback from victims of domestic and sexual violence. The challenge moving forward is to retain a focus on these areas and to ensure the learning from the DSVB continues to be utilised.

To ensure this, and to continue to drive improvements in the MPS, we make the following recommendations;

1. *Territorial Policing (TP) Community Safety Unit to review reporting of so-called 'honour' based violence and forced marriage cases and support boroughs to encourage reporting.*

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<sup>1</sup> Feedback from community guest, 2010.

<sup>2</sup> Feedback from CSU DI, 2010

2. *SCD2 (Sapphire- Rape and Serious Sexual Offences Investigation Command) to analyse in-depth the boroughs with the highest increases in reported rapes and serious sexual assaults and also those with significant decreases, and provides an update (including any necessary actions) to the MPA/Mayors Office for Policing and Crime and MPS Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG) Working Group*
3. *Borough Commanders and SCD Operational Command Unit Commanders to review and where necessary amend the resourcing of Community Safety Unit and SCD2 teams in light of the volume of reporting of domestic violence (and other hate crime) and sexual violence*
4. *As part of its continuous improvement programme SCD2 Sapphire Command should review serious sexual violence data for each unit (including a breakdown of reporting and sanction detections by demographic data and relationship type) to identify good practice in units and use this to 'match' successful units to support struggling ones.*
5. *The London Crime Reduction Board should explore existing VAWG prevention activity across London. Through partnership with boroughs, schools, health and others, identify gaps both in content and geographically and produce an action plan to fill those gaps.*
6. *Borough Commanders to review the Critical Success Factors highlighted in this report and those from previous DSVB reports and identify any areas for development within their own boroughs.*
7. *The MOPC should retain the capacity and expertise to independently and rigorously review MPS strategy, policy, and practice across MPS units which deal in any way with domestic and sexual violence, encompassing all forms of violence against women.*
8. *Having reviewed the findings from the five years of reviewing operational delivery and policy development within the MPS, we would like to ensure the following continue to be rigorously pursued in terms of any future oversight and review processes of the MPS.*
  - *Consistency*
  - *Recording processes*
  - *Community engagement*
  - *Response to victims*
  - *Particular focus on those with vulnerabilities*
  - *Policy implementation*
  - *Prevention*
  - *Leadership*
  - *Partnership working*
  - *Organisational Learning*
  - *Training*
9. *The MOPC through the London Crime Reduction Board, should use its capacity to oversee crime, community safety and criminal justice to conduct a whole system review of the criminal justice process for VAWG cases and identify key blockages and areas for improvement to be addressed by an action plan.*

We have also highlighted the following principles of oversight based on our experience:

- *Work in partnership with experts from the voluntary sector as well as with statutory partners.*
- *Engage with community representatives to ensure a full picture. Borough intelligence is invaluable.*
- *Facilitate a dialogue with those who are to be scrutinised or reviewed. It is fair that they should have the opportunity to ask questions about the process.*
- *Maintain an internal focus on learning and improvement – a governance process should be as prepared to learn and develop as those it oversees.*
- *Make as much information as possible available to the public. We believe in a link between transparency and public trust and confidence.*
- *Direct accountability is a key principle guiding the proposed changes to police governance in the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Bill. We support this being applied in its most forthright sense; allowing Londoners to have ownership of and take part in the accountability process.*

# Development of the Domestic and Sexual Violence Board

Since its inception in 2006, the MPA Domestic Violence Board (DVB) supported and challenged the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) to improve its response to domestic abuse. The DVB met quarterly and reviewed two boroughs per meeting, with the exception of an annual thematic meeting. As the regional and national policy landscape moved away from a focus on domestic violence towards a holistic response to all forms of violence against women, the MPA expanded its oversight mechanism to include sexual violence and the Domestic and Sexual Violence Board (DSVB) held its first meeting in 2009. The DSVB increased the frequency of meetings as well, but continued the thematic meetings as a way of retaining a pan-London perspective on various critical issues.

## *Membership*

The DSVB brought together a wide range of regional and national experts, local practitioners, and independent governance to explore and improve practice. Senior representatives from the MPS also attend to take forward any areas of concern centrally as well as support any organisational learning from examples of good practice locally. A list of current members is below, and the MPA would like to take this opportunity to thank them for their continued commitment and engagement; their contribution has made the DSVB a success and supported the MPA to drive improvements across London.

Anthony Wills - Standing Together Against Domestic Violence  
Davina James-Hanman – AVA (Against Violence and Abuse)  
Yeliz Osman - Greater London Authority  
Marion Winterholler, Elizabeth Harrison and Jo Clarke – the Havens  
Louise Smith and Paul Carswell - Crown Prosecution Service London  
Colin Fitzgerald - Respect  
Natalie Ker Watson and Sophie Davies - Victim Support  
Yvonne Traynor - Rape Crisis  
Denise Marshall - Eaves

## *Purpose*

The Terms of Reference for the DSVB required it to monitor, scrutinise and support the MPS in its performance and response to domestic and sexual violence. The aim was to secure continuous improvement in the MPS' response and disseminate best practice and innovation across the 32 Borough Operational Command Units (BOCUs). Specifically, the Board was;

- To lead on the effective monitoring, scrutiny and support of the MPS in its response to domestic and sexual violence on behalf of the Communities Equalities and People (CEP) Committee.
- To secure continuous improvement in the MPS response to domestic and sexual violence by ensuring a consistent and structured follow-up of actions.
- To robustly and effectively address the issue of consistency of service with regard to domestic and sexual violence by focusing monitoring and support on

the 32 BOCUs, and the MPS as a corporate body, thereby monitoring coordination and implementation of policy and practice across the MPS.

- To identify gaps highlighted by the 32 BOCUs and corporate MPS units and, where appropriate, ensure these are raised with relevant MPA Committees and/or other fora.
- To link to other pan-London and/or national domestic and sexual violence and related bodies.
- To disseminate best practice and innovation not only across the 32 Borough Operational Command Units (BOCUs), but corporately across the MPS.
- To increase trust and confidence in the community by sharing the successes of the MPS and allowing members of the public to participate in the scrutiny process.

### *Work plans and Structure*

Work plans for the DVB and DSVB brought two boroughs per meeting to present to the Board. From 2008 attempts were made to invite boroughs which were not located closely together, to ensure the best possible opportunity to spread learning across London. With the creation of SCD2 in September 2009, however, this became impractical as boroughs were 'brigaded' together into pairs for the purpose of responding to rape and serious sexual assaults. Wherever possible, we then invited these brigaded boroughs so as to ensure a full picture of the SCD2 function.

The format for each Borough session was the same. We prepared a commissioning brief in advance to guide their report, and asked them to cover topics such as volume of crimes, resourcing, community engagement, training, and so on<sup>3</sup>. The Borough Commander presented a brief introduction to the report and then the session was opened up to questions from the board members and discussion.

In order to embed the outcomes of the discussions into practical change on the borough, we requested a follow-up report approximately six months after the initial meeting. This was to allow any new initiatives a chance to affect change, and any individuals tasked with actions an opportunity to complete them and measure any outcomes. The reports are available on the MPA website<sup>4</sup>.

The DSVB also held an annual thematic meeting, which looked at the MPS-wide response to an issue. Our first thematic sessions were held in 2007 and focussed on training, the domestic violence Strategic and Operational Procedures, and Project Umbra (the MPS work to progress the London Domestic Violence Strategy). In 2008 thematic reviews included domestic violence and child protection, domestic violence and sport, and arrest rates and the use of cautions for domestic violence.

In the 2009 thematic meetings, the DSVB scrutinised the MPS response to sexual abuse of disabled people, and domestic and sexual abuse of older people. The DSVB also invited external organisations and experts to contribute to the meeting and heard presentations from Voice UK, Action on Elder Abuse, and the MPS Disability Independent Advisory Group. Most recently, in 2010 we reviewed the front line

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<sup>3</sup> An example of the commissioning brief can be found in previous DSVB Annual Reports.

<sup>4</sup> [www.mpa.gov.uk/dsvb/reports](http://www.mpa.gov.uk/dsvb/reports)



response to victims of domestic and sexual violence through front counters in police stations, call handlers, and first responders.

### *Learning and Legacy*

Having reviewed every London borough in depth and in public, we believe we have learned a few lessons ourselves about how governance should function. Over the years we have invited feedback from MPS colleagues and attendees and practitioners from the community about the way we conducted business, the outcomes, and how we could improve. We have acted on these recommendations, for example to provide visits to boroughs prior to their attendance at the DSVB with a view to supporting the boroughs to prepare and seeing them in a more informal setting. Many responses highlighted the benefits of the thematic sessions and the scope for exploring other issues in this way.

We would also stress that one of the most beneficial aspects of the way we have worked has been transparency and direct accountability. Borough Commanders have presented to the DSVB in the knowledge that representatives from their community were going to be present, and could question them directly.

*We therefore would highlight the following principles to the MOPC for future oversight of the MPS in this field;*

- *Work in partnership with experts from the voluntary sector as well as with statutory partners.*
- *Engage with community representatives to ensure a full picture. Borough intelligence is invaluable.*
- *Facilitate a dialogue with those who are to be scrutinised or reviewed. It is fair that they should have the opportunity to ask questions about the process.*
- *Maintain an internal focus on learning and improvement – a governance process should be as prepared to learn and develop as those it oversees.*
- *Make as much information as possible available to the public. We believe in a link between transparency and public trust and confidence.*
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## Domestic and Sexual Violence in London

As anyone who has attended a DSVB meeting can attest, the data provided below was provided for all boroughs who attended, as well as demographic data for victims and perpetrators, data on officer training within the borough, and staffing levels. This data is intended to provide a narrative of the way domestic and sexual violence is policed in London.

*All London: Domestic and Sexual Violence*<sup>5</sup>

<b>Domestic Violence</b>	<b>12 months to May 2011</b>	<b>12 months to May 2010</b>
Incidents	121,395	120,117
Crimes	48339	51130
Crimes as a % of Incidents	39.8%	42.6%
No Crimes	4987	5822
Crimes flagged 'honour' based/ forced marriage	218	234
Number of DV Homicides	23	25
Sanction Detections	23,587	24,777
Sanction detection rate %	48.8%	48.5%
Number of cautions	10,559	11,796
Cautions as a % of all SDs	44.8%	47.6%
<b>Other Sexual Offences – BOCU</b>		
Incidents	5854	6618
Crimes <sup>6</sup>	4859	5646
Crimes as a % of Incidents	83.0%	85.3%
Sanction detection rate %	25.3%	26.1%
Number of Cautions	185	190
Cautions as a % of all SD's	15.0%	12.9%
<b>Serious Sexual Offences - SCD2</b>		
Incidents	4651	2589

<sup>5</sup> Source: MPS, June 2011.

<sup>6</sup> To classify a reported incident as a 'No Crime' there are criteria set by the Home Office which have to be met. These include where there is clear and credible evidence that no crime was committed, or a crime was committed outside the jurisdiction of the police force in which it was recorded (in this case it would be referred to the appropriate force area). The term 'crime related incident' is used to describe a record of an incident where a report of an incident has come to police attention which, on the Balance of Probabilities, would amount to a 'notifiable' crime, but a resultant crime has not been recorded. An example of this might be an incident is reported by a party other than the alleged victim (or person reasonably assumed to be acting on behalf of the victim) and the alleged victim (or person reasonably assumed to be acting on behalf of the victim) declines to confirm the crime. As a minimum a crime related incident must be recorded and followed up by the police when the person is in a fit state. As with classifying a 'No Crime', Home Office guidelines apply to crime related incidents and more details can be found at; [www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs09/countgeneral09.pdf](http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs09/countgeneral09.pdf)

Crimes	3775	2942
Crimes as a % of Incidents	81.2%	82%
SCD2 Sexual Offences flagged as DV	864	600
Sanction Detections	564	392
Sanction detection rate %	14.9%	13.3%
Number of Cautions	15	12
Cautions as a % of all SDs	2.7%	3.1%
Incidents 'no-crimed'	386	300
Incidents 'no-crimed' as a % of Incidents	8.3%	8.4%
Incidents 'CRI'd'	654	476
Incidents 'CRI'd' as a % of Incidents	14.1%	13.3%
Incidents referred to the Havens <sup>7</sup>	1238	1174
Number of Incidents of Rape	4198	3716
Number of Offences of Rape	3330	2996
Sanction Detection rate (%) for Rape	17.8%	21.4%

These figures show the progression of a reported event to the police. This progression follows the following process: Report to police – Police identify whether reported incident is an offence (or not) – Police identify a suspect and (in consultation with CPS) charge them with the offence – Suspect is brought to justice through a criminal justice disposal (a sanction detection, such as a caution or conviction). Any drop out of a case (for any reason) from this process is known as attrition.

The above data shows that for every ten people who report domestic violence, six people will be informed that what they reported is not an offence. Two will be informed that no suspect has been charged or that there is no successful outcome from the criminal justice system. Two people will find that their case has reached a charge or caution, one of which will be a caution. Of course we recognise that a criminal justice outcome is not the only desirable outcome.

We welcome the overall reduction in the use of cautions for domestic violence. However, the slight reduction of so-called 'honour'-based violence (HBV) and forced marriage (FM) cases is of concern. Within the wider context of under-reporting of domestic violence it is acknowledged that additional barriers to reporting affect those who experience HBV and FM. These include cultural and language barriers to reporting. In an MPA report providing an independent analysis of domestic violence performance in 2008-09 and 2009-10<sup>8</sup>, the MPS was commended for an increase in reporting of such offences. We are therefore concerned that this increase has not been maintained.

*Recommendation: TP Community Safety Unit Central Service Delivery Team to review reporting of so-called 'honour' based violence and forced marriage cases and support boroughs to encourage reporting.*

<sup>7</sup> The Havens are London's three Sexual Assault Referral Centres. They are located in Paddington, Camberwell, and Whitechapel.

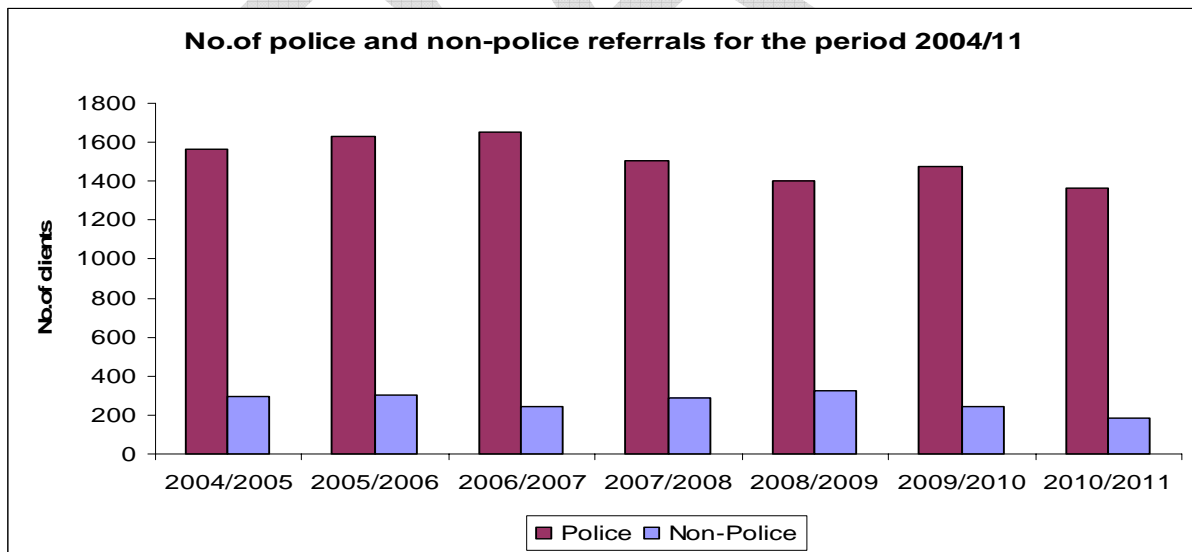
<sup>8</sup> MPA Overview of MPS Domestic Violence Performance, Strategic and Operational Policing Committee – 10 June 2010. Available online at [www.mpa.gov.uk/committees/sop/reports](http://www.mpa.gov.uk/committees/sop/reports)

For reports of serious sexual offences, the picture of attrition is quite different. Of ten reports of rape, eight will be classed as crimes. Less than one will result in a caution, and one and a half will result in a charge. However that leaves six which will remain undetected.

So let us put the figures above into some context. We welcome the increase in reports of rape to the police. Those who follow the work of the MPA beyond the DSVB will be aware that the MPA commissioned research into the increase in reports. This research concluded that some of the increase relates to changes in recording mechanisms. This has had a particular effect on the reduction of 'no-crimed' offences. The remainder of the increase does not appear to be as a result of more rapes taking place. The research notes that British Crime Survey data has not shown an increase in reports of rape – and BCS data may be considered more accurate than police data, because we know the majority of rapes and sexual assaults are not reported to police. We conclude therefore that this increase represents a welcome increase in the reporting of rapes rather than an increase in its prevalence.

Given the overall increase in reports to police we would expect to see this better reflected in increased reports to the Havens; yet data shared by the Havens shows referrals are steadily decreasing. Although the police are not the only source of referrals, they do account for the vast majority of Haven referrals.

*Havens referral data*<sup>9</sup>



It may be that with the development of Rape Crisis Centres across London referrals are also going to these centres. We suggest that future oversight of the MPS captures efficient and timely referrals to a wide range of support for victims of sexual violence.

It should also be noted that there has been an increase in reports of rape and serious sexual offences which are flagged as domestic violence, from 600 to 864. It is likely

<sup>9</sup> Pan London (Havens Camberwell, Paddington & Whitechapel) Activity Stats 2004/5 to 2010/11. With thanks to the Havens for sharing this data.

that this is a reflection of the successful use of the DASH<sup>10</sup> risk assessment form with victims of domestic violence. We commend this success and suggest this increase shows improved joint working between SCD2 and CSUs across London which is welcomed.

It will be for the MOPC and the LCRB to ensure that domestic and sexual violence remains a priority for the MPS; that it is resourced as such to cope with the increased number of victims who are deciding to place their trust in the police and the criminal justice system. The MPS must be deserving of that trust.

### *Domestic Violence<sup>11</sup>: by Borough*

Borough Name	DV Incidents		DV Offences		DV SDs	
	Current 12 Months <sup>12</sup>	% Change <sup>13</sup>	Current 12 Months	% Change	Current 12 Months	% Change
Barking & Dagenham	4323	-4.6%	1716	-15.7%	882	-0.7%
Barnet	3452	-2.9%	1184	-11.7%	684	-18.5%
Bexley	2795	-5.7%	1158	-14.7%	639	-14.0%
Brent	4089	2.4%	2014	-2.7%	1026	28.7%
Bromley	3780	2.7%	1697	-6.8%	817	3.7%
Camden	3181	12.2%	1109	16.1%	532	5.1%
Croydon	6128	4.8%	2334	-7.4%	1258	3.4%
Ealing	4913	1.3%	2016	-9.1%	961	1.7%
Enfield	4491	1.0%	1702	4.5%	826	2.2%
Greenwich	4787	-2.1%	1906	-8.7%	924	-18.4%
Hackney	4624	-2.6%	1506	-21.4%	750	-23.3%
Hammersmith & Fulham	3119	5.9%	1159	-0.6%	544	16.2%
Haringey	3997	0.4%	1488	-2.4%	639	-11.3%
Harrow	2528	6.8%	1275	-2.4%	631	11.5%
Havering	2927	5.6%	1246	12.3%	605	-4.9%
Heathrow	39	129.4%	13	44.4%	6	0.0%
Hillingdon	3223	-15.7%	1838	-5.1%	860	-3.0%
Hounslow	4439	9.3%	1976	7.2%	939	10.5%
Islington	3977	5.1%	1519	8.1%	704	2.2%
Kensington & Chelsea	1684	1.9%	675	3.4%	311	-11.9%
Kingston Upon Thames	1797	2.9%	591	-13.5%	306	-12.1%
Lambeth	4758	-8.0%	1753	-7.4%	766	-16.9%
Lewisham	5690	-2.3%	2033	-9.3%	852	-22.3%
Merton	2411	-3.2%	810	-16.6%	541	15.4%
Newham	5204	1.8%	2266	0.0%	1054	-0.1%
Redbridge	3510	4.3%	1278	3.2%	579	-19.1%
Richmond Upon	1567	4.1%	616	-2.2%	356	-5.3%

<sup>10</sup> Domestic Abuse, Stalking and harassment, and 'Honour' based violence risk assessment.

<sup>11</sup> Source: MPS

<sup>12</sup> Current 12 months is the 12 month period to May 2011.

<sup>13</sup> The percentage increase or decrease in volume compared to the previous 12 month period.

Thames						
Southwark	5649	0.9%	2349	-10.7%	1103	-5.4%
Sutton	2600	-1.1%	913	-6.9%	461	-13.2%
Tower Hamlets	4740	18.4%	1707	-3.5%	860	6.6%
Waltham Forest	4262	1.0%	1843	-1.7%	832	-10.2%
Wandsworth	3843	-2.3%	1297	-25.6%	699	-7.0%
Westminster	2868	3.6%	1352	3.8%	646	-18.8%
<b>MPS Total</b>	<b>121395</b>	<b>1.1%</b>	<b>48339</b>	<b>-5.5%</b>	<b>23593</b>	<b>-4.8%</b>

The boroughs which stand out above are those with the highest or lowest volume of reporting, and those which have shown the greatest change in the last two years. Variance in reporting levels is to be expected and as with sexual violence, reporting can depend on a number of factors such as the proportion of residents within a borough, as well as the presence of accessible reporting schemes, good relationships with domestic violence partner agencies and successful community engagement. Again, as with sexual violence, domestic violence remains under-reported and any increases in reports to police should be welcomed.

MPS targets in relation to domestic violence are focused on arrest rates (the percentage of offences in which a suspect is arrested) and sanction detection (SD) rates, which is the percentage of offences in which there has been a criminal justice outcome such as a caution or conviction.

Boroughs with the highest volumes of reported domestic violence incidents are Croydon, with 6128 (an increase on the previous year) and Lewisham with 5690 incidents (a decrease on the previous year). However in both these boroughs it appears that the majority of calls to the police for domestic violence do not amount to offences. Croydon recorded 2334 offences (which is 38% of the incidents) and Lewisham recorded 2033 offences (35% of the incidents). So Croydon experienced an increase of 4.8% of incidents but a decrease by 7.4% in the number of offences. This appears counter-intuitive. Croydon had an SD rate of 53%, whilst Lewisham's SD rate was 41%.

Another extreme example of this is Tower Hamlets. The borough saw an 18% increase in incidents from the previous year but a 3.5% decrease in offences. Their SD rate was 50%. This rather unusual circumstance is replicated across London as a whole with a small increase in incidents and a larger decrease in offences of 5.5%.

Boroughs with the lowest recorded incidents were Richmond upon Thames and Kensington & Chelsea, both of which experienced increases in reports; though only in Kensington & Chelsea did this translate into increased offences recorded.

The number of offences recorded is also highly variable. Southwark has the highest recorded offences with 2349, followed by Croydon with 2334. We have already noted that for Croydon this is a reduction of 7.4%, for Southwark the reduction is 10.7%, and Southwark's SD rate was 46%.

Fewest recorded offences were 591 in Kingston (a reduction of 13.5%) and 616 in Richmond (a reduction of 2.2%). There were few significant increases in recorded offences. The highest was in Havering with 1246 offences, a 12.3% increase, which

was in keeping with a 5.6% increase in incidents. Their SD rate was 48%. Islington showed an 8.1% increase, also following a 5.1% in incidents, and had a 46% SD rate.

The data does not definitively show any correlation between a low conversion rate from incidents to offences, and a higher SD rate, though there are several examples of this. For example, in Merton the SD rate was a very high 66% (which increased by 15.4% compared to the previous year). Their incident to offence conversion rate was 33%, extremely low. In Sutton, the SD rate was 50%. Their conversion rate was low at 35%.

Redbridge, however, has a similar conversion rate (of 36%), but the SD rate in Redbridge reduced (by 19% from the previous year) to 45%. In Brent, the SD rate was 50%, which had increased significantly by 28.7% on the previous years' SD rate, and their conversion rate of incidents to offences was almost 50%.

*Sexual Violence<sup>14</sup>: by Borough*

Borough Name	Rape Offences		Other Sexual Offences	
	Current 12 Months	% Change <sup>15</sup>	Current 12 Months	% Change
Barking & Dagenham	83	+3.8%	189	-0.5%
Barnet	96	-5.9%	208	0%
Bexley	33	-2.9%	150	18.1%
Brent	127	18.7%	215	0.5%
Bromley	60	-3.2%	193	-6.8%
Camden	110	29.4%	234	3.1%
Croydon	181	4%	302	0.3%
Ealing	108	21.6%	275	3.4%
Enfield	128	10.3%	204	-6.4%
Greenwich	108	52%	320	0.3%
Hackney	140	8.5%	293	-7.3%
Hammersmith & Fulham	79	5.3%	155	-3.7%
Haringey	140	17.6%	235	-12.6%
Harrow	59	3.5%	121	-12.9%
Havering	53	-15.9%	155	-3.3%
Hillingdon	67	-14%	200	-19.7%
Hounslow	103	30.4%	203	-5.6%
Islington	107	28.9%	193	-4.5%
Kensington & Chelsea	51	15.9%	123	20.6%
Kingston	51	18.6%	135	20.5%
Lambeth	213	10.4%	340	-10.8%
Lewisham	133	5.6%	253	5%
Merton	66	3.1%	120	-17.2%

<sup>14</sup> Source: MPS crime figures, met police website

<sup>15</sup> The percentage increase or decrease in volume compared to the previous 12 month period.

Newham	127	23.8%	274	-12.7%
Redbridge	90	25%	138	-16
Richmond	34	13.3%	103	0%
Southwark	182	5.2%	303	-3.5
Sutton	61	-3.2%	120	-11.8%
Tower Hamlets	127	30%	252	0.4%
Waltham Forest	112	14.3%	190	-10.4%
Wandsworth	92	-14.8%	256	-0.4%
Westminster	139	14%	389	-9.1%
MPS Total	3,330	11.1%	6,869	-4.5%

It is important to remember that rapes and other serious sexual offences are investigated by brigaded teams, usually covering two boroughs, which means it is not possible to show the sanction detections by borough<sup>16</sup>. Three boroughs have their own dedicated team which reflects the volume of reporting in that borough<sup>17</sup>. It is no surprise that these boroughs are also those who have high volumes of reporting across all crime types. Overall, as noted in the pan-London figures, sanction detections for rape have decreased from 21% to 17% in the last 12 months.

What is particularly striking here are the dramatic differences across London. The volume of reported rapes range from 213 (or four per week) in Lambeth to 33 in Bexley (less than one per week). Overall, reported rape has increased by 11%. The boroughs with the highest increase are Hounslow (30%), Camden (29%) and Islington (28%). It is worth noting that Camden and Islington boroughs fall within a brigaded unit. There may be many reasons for the increase in reporting in these boroughs. For example, efforts on the part of the local SCD2 unit to engage with both the community and with women's groups and support organisations in the area may have been fruitful, causing an increase in reports. The recently opened Rape Crisis Centres in North, East, and West London may have also increased reports to the police as victims come forward for support and feel ready then to report to police.

Some boroughs are experiencing a decrease in reported rape, most notably Havering with -15.9% and Wandsworth with -14.8%. Again, without further exploration as to the reasons behind this we can only speculate. Both boroughs are also showing small reductions in other reported sexual offences.

For other sexual offences Westminster has the highest number of reports at 389 (more than one a day), and Richmond has the lowest with 103 (approximately one every three days). Most boroughs appear to show a decrease in reporting of sexual offences other than rape. This may be linked to recording methods which ensure that an offence is recorded and dealt with at the appropriate level of seriousness. Boroughs with significant decreases are Hillingdon with -19.7% and Merton with -17.2%. Hillingdon is also experiencing a 14% reduction in reported rapes, whilst Merton is seeing a small increase.

<sup>16</sup> However, reports to the DSVB since 2008 have provided this information and these are available online at [www.mpa.gov.uk/dsvb/reports](http://www.mpa.gov.uk/dsvb/reports). Current numbers of sanction detections for rape and other sexual offences are available online at [www.met.police.uk/crimefigures/index.php](http://www.met.police.uk/crimefigures/index.php).

<sup>17</sup> These boroughs are; Newham, Westminster, Lambeth and Southwark.



Increases in reporting of sexual offences other than rape are less frequently seen in the table above, but notable changes can be seen in Kensington & Chelsea and Kingston upon Thames, both with 20% increases. It is worth noting that they have both also recorded increases in reported rape, or 15.9% and 18.6% respectively.

There seems to be no correlation between increase in reported rape and an increase in reports of other sexual offences. As part of the actions following the rape research we understand that some boroughs with significant increases are to be analysed in greater depth. We recommend that such analysis is also provided to those with significant decreases too.

*Recommendation: SCD2 further analyses the boroughs with the highest increases in reported rapes and serious sexual assaults and also those with significant decreases, and provides an update (including any necessary actions) to the MPA/MOPC and MPS VAWG Working Group*

So how has the reporting of domestic and sexual violence changed over time?

*Domestic and Sexual Violence: Historical<sup>18</sup>*

	FY2004/05	FY2005/06	FY2006/07	FY2007/08	FY2008/09	FY2009/10	FY2010/11
Total Notifiable Offences	999451	977958	918031	862913	844910	829327	822961
Serious Sexual Offences (SSO)	7562	7142	6659	6366	6487	7449	7974
Rape Offences (Reconciled)	2374	2344	2291	1904	2180	2836	3291
Domestic Violence Offences (DV)	62601	60303	54693	50847	52912	51683	48432
Percentage SSO out of all TNOs	0.8%	0.7%	0.7%	0.7%	0.8%	0.9%	1.0%
Percentage Rape out of all TNOs	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.3%	0.3%	0.4%
Percentage DV out of all TNOs	6.3%	6.2%	6.0%	5.9%	6.3%	6.2%	5.9%

<sup>18</sup> Source, Met Stats, 29/06/2011

The above table shows that in London, domestic violence offences have been decreasing, and they are now a slightly smaller proportion of Total Notifiable Offences (TNOs), or all offences. Serious sexual offences have been more variable over time, and although they are at their highest levels for the last seven years, as noted above this increase in reporting is welcomed as evidencing a more accurate picture of volume. The same is true of recorded rape offences.

Let us take a step back to place this in the national context. As noted in the MPS rape research, the latest British Crime Survey data shows a small reduction in the number of people who report having been victims of a sexual offence in the last year, but an increase in those who report having been victimised since the age of 16. This suggests increased willingness by victims to identify and report offending rather than an increase in offending. British Crime Survey data<sup>19</sup> also shows levels of domestic abuse experienced in the previous year have generally declined since 2004/05. In conclusion, London appears to reflect national trends.

Whilst we did not review practice relating to trafficking, sexual exploitation and female genital mutilation as part of the borough reviews, these issues were raised as part of some individual borough sessions and through trafficking updates from the MPS Human Exploitation Command (SCD9) in closed sessions. A full analysis of the data relating to these offences will appear in the next Violence against Women Annual report to be published late 2011/ early 2012. However, as these offences come under the realm of Violence against Women and so form a picture of domestic and sexual violence in London, an updated set of data is provided in Appendix One.

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<sup>19</sup> *Homicides, Firearm Offences and Intimate Violence 2009/10*, Supplementary Volume 2 to Crime in England and Wales 2009/10, January 2011

# Domestic and Sexual Violence Board Findings

## **2011 Findings**

Four boroughs presented in the final sessions of the DSVB: Barnet, Harrow, Ealing and Enfield. Each had some areas of very positive practice to share as well as innovative approaches to domestic and sexual violence. As there are fewer boroughs than we would usually refer to in an annual report<sup>20</sup> we will simply explore the key issues which prompted debate and discussion and appear to have relevance across London.

### *Independent Prosecutions*<sup>21</sup>

Boroughs can often provide little evidence of successful prosecutions made without the support of the victim. Barnet were challenged on this, whilst neither Ealing nor Enfield were able to provide any data to support their practice. We recognise that the victim is the key witness in the case against a suspect, but we also know how frequently victims feel unable to give evidence against their partners or family members. In cases of domestic violence where a pattern of abuse over time is often present, evidence gathering through methods other than reliance on the witness statements can be extremely important.

This has been echoed many times in the issues highlighted by boroughs, as noted below (see page 44). It should also be noted that Harrow's follow up report described a Victimless Prosecution Template (VPT) to score the risk to those who decline to support prosecution. The merits of mounting a victimless prosecution are measured and therefore cases are more likely to be entered into the Criminal Justice System (CJS) as a victimless prosecution. Since the introduction of this system they have had two such cases. We will ensure that promising practice such as this is captured and shared through the oversight mechanisms under the MOPC.

### *Cautions*

As noted in last year's Annual Report, and in the thematic scrutiny section below, cautions are a recurrent issue at DSVB meetings. Whilst the use of a caution is understandable where it may have future benefit (not least in supporting an independent prosecution, as noted above), given the same evidential test must be satisfied for both a caution and a charge, a charge should usually be the preferred outcome. It is also worth noting that a recently published Criminal Justice Joint Inspection report<sup>22</sup> found that the MPS utilised out of court disposals such as cautions fourth most frequently, with 45% of all offences brought to justice being disposed of using such methods.

We found that Enfield and Ealing had acceptable caution rates of 44% and 45% of all sanctions, and Barnet and Harrow were commended on their less frequent use of cautions at 37% each.

<sup>20</sup> In previous Annual Reports the findings of the DSVB were presented as a reflection of the content of reports to DSVB as follows; data, policy compliance and quality assurance, partnership work and community safety partnerships, victims and communities, and organisational improvement.

<sup>21</sup> In which a case is prosecuted without the victim's evidence as a witness in the case.

<sup>22</sup> *Exercising Discretion: The Gateway to Justice*, HMIC & HMCPSP, June 2011

Currently discussions are underway to explore the use of conditional cautions for domestic violence cases. We can see the potential benefits of these as they could be more demanding of an offender by including requirements such as attendance at a domestic violence perpetrator programme. Should these be introduced we would strongly recommend that the London Crime Reduction Board (LCRB) and governance bodies such as the future MOPC carefully monitor their utilisation.

### *Leadership*

Borough Commanders were often challenged about their leadership approach. For example a 'whole borough' approach was evidenced in Hillingdon's approach to keeping domestic violence suspects in custody (see the Critical Success Factors below). Another approach which appeared successful was recruiting a local councillor as a domestic violence or VAWG 'champion'. We noted this in our last Annual Report, which commended Hillingdon for retaining all their domestic violence service provision despite budget cuts. This approach was also used successfully in Harrow to maintain a high profile of domestic and sexual violence in the borough.

### *Community engagement*

Enfield experienced very low reporting from the Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual and Transgender (LGBT) community. The discussion on this topic centred on the lack of LGBT nightlife in the borough, a position which was robustly challenged since proximity or access to the night-time economy is not considered a key factor in domestic violence. In fact, all four boroughs which presented to the DSVB showed poor recording of LGBT domestic and sexual violence. We posited – and indeed made in a recommendation in our previous Annual Report to the effect that that Enfield, like many boroughs which have attended the DSVB, simply needed to improve their recording.

Harrow, Barnet and Ealing all had surprisingly low volume of reports of so-called 'honour' based violence (HBV) and cases and of forced marriage, given their demographic composition. Ealing received only five reports over a 12 month period, for example. These boroughs were challenged on this. We suggested they instigate dialogue with Southwark, who had high reports of HBV, perhaps as a result of the presence of local expertise on the borough supporting better identification of such cases.

### *Recording processes*

Two of the four boroughs were challenged in relation to the low proportion of offences from all the reported incidents of domestic violence to the police. It is always difficult to establish what would be an appropriate proportion though the average across all the London boroughs is about 50%. This means that for every 100 calls to the police (incidents) there will be about 50 which will constitute offences, and the remainder will not 'cross the line' into a criminal offence but will still be recorded by police. There are clear guidelines in this area but professional judgement is also required and a culture of meeting targets can influence this judgement in unintended ways. For example, boroughs with similar low conversion rates of incidents to crimes often had a smaller proportion of cautions within their sanction detection (SD) rates, and high SD rates for

domestic violence, something which is usually commended by the DSVB. But these SD rates may have been high because so few cases were considered to be offences, and therefore officers had fewer cases to investigate. As we have seen above (see pages 13-14), in some circumstances it appears that there may be a relationship between the conversion of incidents to offences, though this relationship does not appear to be the case across every London borough.

### *Partnership working*

Harrow borough were commended for their partnership working. We were impressed with their engagement with residents, for example through the use of a 'Question Time' style panel to allow members of the community to question senior police officers. This is an excellent example of the direct accountability we champion in the Learning and Legacy section on page 7 above. Targeted engagement with Somali and Tamil communities, where the Borough Commander meets with women's groups, is also undertaken in Harrow.

### *Risk Management*

Harrow also demonstrated innovative ways of managing risk; Harrow's Crime Manager has introduced a local risk matrix for cases where there is a named suspect with an outstanding arrest warrant relating to an alleged crime. A high score prompts immediate action jointly taken by both uniformed staff and investigators to reduce risk in line with the risk matrix protocol. Domestic violence features as a heightened risk factor attracting an immediate high score which ensures focus and maintains domestic violence as a priority. The template has initially been shared with Ealing, who are considering it as best practice.

### *Resources*

Unsurprisingly, resources were highlighted as an issue in all the boroughs. This was a notable feature of all the partnerships which presented. Several of the boroughs were commended for expanding the partnership work from domestic violence towards sexual violence and a more holistic VAWG approach. For example, Enfield and Barnet identified sexual violence as a future priority for the borough. These developments were welcomed, but they also raised issues as to how boroughs intended to maintain the existing provision for domestic violence as well as developing new services, whilst in such a challenging economic climate. Using the example of Barnet, innovative approaches are being developed, such as recent partnership work between the police, local authority and local schools which helped raise awareness of sexual violence by allowing students to work on a project refurbishing the rape victims' comfort suite.

We were informed that all were struggling to maintain resources in the field of domestic violence whilst at the same time hoping to expand service provision for all forms of VAWG. Resourcing was also an issue within the MPS. One borough which attended had the fourth highest volume of domestic violence in London but their Community Safety Unit was only the thirteenth best resourced. They also had the third largest residential population in London.

*Recommendation: Borough Commanders and SCD OCU Commanders to review and where necessary amend the resourcing of CSU and SCD2 teams in light of the volume of reporting of domestic violence (and other hate crime and sexual violence.*

### *Response to victims*

The data provided for sexual violence cases occasionally showed unexpected outcomes. For example, Ealing was very successful in bringing sexual violence cases with older victims (over 61 years) to a criminal justice outcome, though there was significant attrition in cases with younger victims (aged under-18). 5% of their sanction detections were against female perpetrators and 10% were against older perpetrators. Enfield on the other hand had very little attrition with younger victims. It was clear that some boroughs had begun to develop expertise around certain types of cases and this should be utilised corporately to improve practice across London.

*Recommendation: As part of its continuous improvement programme SCD2 Sapphire Command should review serious sexual violence data for each unit (including a breakdown of reporting and sanction detections by demographic data and relationship type) to identify good practice in units and use this to 'match' successful units to support struggling ones.*

## **Thematic and Targeted Oversight**

In addition to the in-depth borough reviews; the DSVB has focussed two sessions annually on thematic and pan-London issues. This has allowed issues which arose during the year to be addressed and targeted oversight to continue throughout the work programme. The last of these was held in 2010 and detail of the findings can be found in the 2010 MPA/MPA Violence against Women Annual Report. The DSVB also held closed sessions prior to the borough sessions in which pan-London issues were explored. The findings and outcomes of these are outlined below.

### *Repeat Cautions*

The DSVB often challenged the use of repeat cautions as appropriate against domestic violence offenders; those who read the MPA/MPS VAW Annual Report will be familiar with the discussions about cautions in general. In the case of repeat cautions, guidance states an initial caution is only suitable where certain criteria is in place, including that there is no previous record for violence. The presence of an existing caution for domestic violence would, therefore, negate any domestic violence case as being suitable for a further caution.

Following a request from the DSVB, the MPS CSU Service Delivery Team reviewed the administration of cautions from boroughs and identified some boroughs that appeared to be utilising repeat cautions. As a result, updated policy guidance was shared with all boroughs on the use of repeat cautions. Maintaining oversight of the outcomes of such work will be one of the challenges for the new MOPC.

### *Domestic violence victims' feedback*

We have continuously pressed the MPS to listen to victims of domestic and sexual violence about the service they receive from officers. We made a recommendation to the MPS in 2009-10 to explore ways of accessing feedback from victims. As a result, a sub-group of the DSVB was created and representatives from the MPS, MPA, Victim Support, Standing Together and AVA (Against Violence and Abuse) met to discuss how the MPS could access feedback safely and appropriately.

Victims of domestic (and sexual) violence are not included in the generic MPS process of collecting feedback from victims, as the feedback process uses a call back system which may not be safe to use when offences have been committed within the home. Therefore, a different approach needed to be created which would meet the heightened requirements of safety and confidentiality. It would also have to sufficiently capture the high volume of domestic violence victims; as shown above, over 48,000 offences were recorded in the 12 months to May 2011. Options were researched and this resulted in the Violent Crime Directorate establishing a three-month pilot using the feedback forms in Newham and Wandsworth. This pilot is due to begin imminently, and will allow for several hundred victims to give detailed feedback. Again, the outcomes of this will be followed up as part of the MOPC oversight function.

Sapphire teams already request feedback from victims of rape. In fact, positive satisfaction is part of the suite of performance targets for the Sapphire command.

Although the sample size is small<sup>23</sup>, responses suggest 89% are satisfied with their treatment by the police. Respondents are more likely to be satisfied with the police if the offender is charged<sup>24</sup>, which supports the view that both support for the victim and a criminal sanction for the perpetrator is desirable for victims. Over the longer term, the MPS continues to work towards providing feedback mechanisms online.

### *Sexual violence and disproportionality*

In 2008 the MPS Diversity Board commissioned the MPS Diversity and Citizen Focus Directorate (DCFD) to develop the structure for an in-depth scrutiny of a sample of domestic violence incidents. The aim of this was to determine whether the disproportionality in arrest and sanction detection rates according to the age, disability, ethnicity, gender and sexual orientation of the victim can be explained by different actions and decisions taken by officers at the scene of the domestic incidents.

TP officers conducted an analysis on the findings and produced a report containing practical recommendations for mitigating any risk. This report and an accompanying action plan were brought before the (then) Domestic Violence Board. The action plan included the dip sampling of cases by a central unit, a performance needs analysis and an audit of training.

As sexual violence became part of the DSVB remit it made sense to capture the picture as it related to sexual violence across the MPS, though this was made more complex as sexual violence is investigated by SCD2 (Rape and Serious Sexual Offences Command), borough officers and SCD5 (Child Abuse Investigation Command), dependant on the type of offences committed. We therefore commissioned the MPS DCFD to determine whether there is any similar disproportionality in arrest and sanction detection rates of sexual offences according to the age, disability, ethnicity, gender and (where possible) faith and sexual orientation of the victim.

The initial findings, like those of the domestic violence research, showed there were some differences. For example, for SCD2-investigated offences, the notable area of disproportionality is around age. There was a lower SD rate for victims aged 35 and older, and these sexual offences were more likely to be domestic violence related and the victims to have mental health issues. Victims vulnerable through mental health issues had the lowest arrest rate and SD rates despite them being less likely to have self-administered alcohol or to withdraw allegations, both of which are associated with higher rates of attrition. Intimidated<sup>25</sup> victims showed higher arrest and SD rates.

SCD5 cases suggested some disproportionality around ethnicity. Cases with black victims had lower SD and arrest rates. For those offences investigated by BOCUs, Black and minority ethnic (BME) victims had lower arrest and SD rates than non-BME victims. Under 15's had the lowest arrest and SD rates (those aged 35-44 had the highest) and this was also a vulnerability factor, along with those with mental impairments who also had a lower SD and arrest rate.

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<sup>23</sup> 70 responses over the period January to March 2011

<sup>24</sup> *Headline Performance Report for 2010/11*, MPA Strategic and Operational Policing Committee, 12 May 2011.

<sup>25</sup> Intimidated victims are those who were likely to be intimidated by the perpetrator, such as those who experienced sexual violence from a partner.



Further in depth case studies suggested there were a number of possible reasons for the above. For example SCD5 found that offences with BME victims were more likely to be reported by a third party, often with insufficient detail, and uncorroborated by the named victim, from which investigators could progress the case. The presence of mental health issues and the consumption of alcohol can both make establishing the circumstances around an alleged offence more challenging. Indeed, it must be stressed here that all of the units involved were very clear that the presence of such vulnerabilities would have no influence on the way they handled a reported offence.

We must also recognise that sexual offenders are predatory and may target individuals who they feel will not be believed or who may not even report. There is evidence to suggest that those with mental health problems are more likely to be victims of crime.<sup>26</sup>

It's also worth considering the above in the light of previous MPS findings in Rape Reviews on victim vulnerability, particularly that being under 18 tends to indicate higher likelihood of attrition, as does the rape taking place within domestic violence and the presence of mental health issues. The DSVB closed session reviewing these findings also noted this and the three command units took the findings away to produce actions and next steps.

SCD5 produced a full report reviewing a sample of undetected SCD5 crimes. Recommendations from the report were for investigators to consider wider issues prior to engaging with victims and their families. Project Violet has recently been extended to cover all faith based abuse. It was recommended that Violet take on examining why select communities choose to deal with abuse allegations from within.

SCD5 will also maintain a focus on this area by presenting the findings of their report as an agenda item to detective inspectors at their bi-monthly continuous improvement team meeting. The main issues that are applicable to CAIT colleagues will be included in the next round of regional training seminars co-ordinated by the training unit. These are due to take place in the autumn/winter of 2011.

They will also repeat the analysis for the last 6 months of 2010 (August to December). This will give complete analysis of 2010. The data collection will commence in June and the analysis will be complete by end of July. The analysis will this time feature all ethnicities (not just white or Black and minority ethnic groups) and will look for any differences in reasons across the victim types. The process will allow for a review of the first full six months of the new MPS crime reporting information system (CRIS) page. This should identify any recurrent combinations.

SCD2 provided a 'snapshot' of February 2011, together with the sanctioned detection outcomes for February 2010, and conducted a small case review. SCD2 reviewed their scoring matrix (used to establish the most high risk cases) and it was found to be satisfactory. The proposed action relating to SCD2 cases was for the MPS Strategic

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<sup>26</sup> *Access to Justice: evidence of the experiences of adults with mental health problems* Ministry of Justice Research Series 7/09, May 2009. The report found that adults with severe mental health problems are almost 25% more likely to be victims of crime than the general population.

Research and Analysis Unit to include mental health as a focus within their annual Rape Review.

Like SCD5, the central TP Crime Operational Command Unit (OCU) conducted a further examination of 229 TP-investigated sexual offences<sup>27</sup>. A series of scrutiny questions was developed by the CSU Central Service Delivery Team and DCFD that covered a range of areas relating to the investigation and supervision of TP-investigated sexual offences including reporting, victim-related investigation; suspect related investigation; and disposal of the incident.

A range of actions have been considered and agreed by senior officers within the TP Crime OCU. A new section will be developed and inserted into the current Standard Operating Procedures for the investigation of Crime which specifically addresses TP sexual offence investigation issues. In relation to victims who may have mental health issues or learning difficulties, reference to the existing Safeguarding Adult At Risk policy and other guidance will be made, especially in the areas of addressing capacity issues, achieving best evidence, referrals and support. A communication strategy will be developed to ensure implementation and compliance in any new instructions.

Liaison will take place with training providers to ensure relevant training programmes are appropriately updated. A feasibility study will be conducted with a view to developing performance measurements for TP sexual offence investigations.

A consultation process will be commenced with established groups (e.g. Independent Advisory Groups, Disability Hate Crime groups and other disability support organisations) to improve service delivery. Methods of sharing good practice will be explored amongst boroughs and the promotion of specialist borough sexual offences investigation teams will be considered.

This extensive and considered approach has been praised by the DSVB and we would like to thank the units involved. In the main, they have welcomed the opportunity to address any disproportionality and have explored how to do this. They have agreed specific actions which we commit to ensuring are followed through. This role will be part of MOPC functions and that of the MPS VAWG Working Group.

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<sup>27</sup> Covering the time period of January to June 2010.

## 2006 – 2010 Findings

*I have found members of the Board have been a helpful source of support during the last two years since the creation of SCD2 Sapphire and as responsibility for serious sexual offence investigations moved from Boroughs to the new SCD OCU. This has been a significant change in service delivery for the MPS and the scrutiny provided at Board meetings on how SCD and BOCU colleagues are working together to support victims of sexual violence, has helped improve the standards and consistency of services across London.*

*DCS Caroline Bates, SCD2 Sapphire OCU Commander*

As we noted in the MPA/MPS VAW Annual Report, some issues appear to be perennial. Issues we would particularly wish to draw attention to from earlier<sup>28</sup> DSVB reports are;

### *Consistency*

Consistency is probably the most recurrent theme; something we have highlighted as an area for improvement in the 2009-09 DSVB Annual Report in relation to the response to domestic violence, and in the 2009-10 DSVB Annual Report in relation to recording and community engagement.

### *Recording processes*

We have discussed countless times the importance of accurate recording to build an accurate picture of practice which can then be analysed. This was raised in relation to recording of LGBT domestic and sexual violence in the 2010 Violence against Women Annual Report as a particular issue, as boroughs claimed to be doing good work with LGBT communities but couldn't evidence it as it wasn't recorded. Another area affected by recording processes is MPS compliance with the Victims Code of Practice; something boroughs often state they do (and which has an impact on victims and witnesses remaining engaged with the police and retaining trust and confidence), yet can rarely demonstrate they do.

### *Community engagement*

Discussions at the DSVB have often highlighted the need for local officers to conduct targeted engagement with diverse communities. This should enable police officers to understand barriers to reporting and allow communities to develop relationships with the police and start to build trust and confidence.

### *Response to victims*

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<sup>28</sup> For full findings and recommendations, reports from 2006-07, 2008 -09, 2009-10, and 2010 can be found at [www.mpa.gov.uk/dsvb](http://www.mpa.gov.uk/dsvb)

The MPS have been very positively responsive to this issue, for example by developing referral pathways and introducing or improving feedback mechanisms. However, in the main improvements have been made by the specialist units dealing with domestic and sexual violence, and as we noted in the 2010 thematic session on first responders; the front line response needs to be as consistent and supportive as the specialist units to whom the cases are then referred.

### *Leadership*

Almost every Borough Commander who presented to the DSVB was asked about how their leadership in this field influenced the approach taken by their borough. They were invited to outline what the power of senior leadership can do. This often highlighted an understandable tension between recognising that domestic and sexual violence is high volume, high risk, and high impact, and therefore must be a high priority, and also recognising that there are dozens of other competing priorities locally. That said, we tended to find that really good leadership made a difference all the way through the borough; from which priorities were supported at Community Safety Partnership meetings to the way custody staff viewed retaining offenders in custody.

### *Partnership working*

Police services often quite rightly say that they cannot fix everything themselves. Partnership working across the Community Safety sector is well-established. Over the past five years we have seen this style of working flourish to the benefit of local communities. The challenge going forward is to sustain and improve partnership working with other agencies and the voluntary sector at a time of drastically reduced budgets.

### *Training*

Another consistent issue raised was training; which needs to be both timely (not six months into a job at the Community Safety Unit) and targeted at the right level. Training for specialist roles is intensive, and the SCD2 course for specially trained Sexual Offences Investigation Techniques (SOIT) officers and SCD2 detectives is up to date and includes input from Victim Support, the CPS and the Havens. Training for first responders or for call operators is not so intensive, nor should it be. But it does need to provide them with the tools to deal with people who have just been raped or threatened by their partners; a scenario which requires patience, compassion, and an analysis of the immediate risk to that person and other vulnerable dependents.

### *Resources*

It has always been the case that individual units and boroughs would like more resources to tackle domestic and sexual violence. Sadly, they do not run out of cases to investigate. However more recently the wider financial climate has meant that whilst police resourcing of units is still an issue, the potential and sometimes very real lack of funds to provide any other services to victims means that a holistic provision of necessary services is sometimes simply not happening. Boroughs are struggling to provide basic support services, at the same time as regional and national policy

developments towards a violence against women and girls (VAWG) approach require them to put in place similar or complimentary services for other forms of VAWG.

We have made a point of commending boroughs which have successfully expended service provision and have in the past recommended that Borough Commanders lobby their Community Safety Partnerships to extend existing domestic violence service provision into sexual violence services. An innovative new approach is being explored by the London Crime Reduction Board (LCRB), to initiate pan-London commissioning of refuge services.

### *Prevention*

The LCRB work mentioned above effectively addresses a most critical need – the need to escape a violent situation. But for a situation to reach this level of risk is perhaps already a failure. We feel that the following recommendation will develop the other end of that spectrum to ensure that prevention activity is equally well addressed.

We continue to support *The Way Forward*, the Mayoral strategy to end Violence against Women and Girls in London and suggest that boroughs do take a VAWG approach to service delivery. Both *The Way Forward* and the national *End Violence Against Women* strategy recognise that to truly end violence against women we must take preventative action. We fully concur with this and recommend that this be a focus of future governance activity going forward.

*The London Crime Reduction Board should explore existing VAWG prevention activity across London. Through partnership with boroughs, schools, health and others, identify gaps both in content and geographically and produce an action plan to fill those gaps.*

### *Organisational Learning*

Any resistance to organisational learning needs to be addressed. We have highlighted time and again the need for learning to be shared, and most importantly, acted upon. The size of the MPS and the scale of the different units do not easily always support joint working, but learning should know no boundaries, as we stated in the 2008-09 Report. Lessons from child abuse, rape, and domestic violence homicide investigations, as well as those learnt by other delivery partners such as Children Services should be a part of all MPS continuous improvement programmes.

*Having reviewed the findings from the five years of reviewing operational delivery and policy development within the MPS, we would like to ensure the following continue to be rigorously pursued in terms of any future oversight and review processes of the MPS.*

- *Consistency*
- *Recording processes*
- *Community engagement*
- *Response to victims*
- *Particular focus on those with vulnerabilities*

# Domestic and Sexual Violence Board Achievements

*I feel that the Board has achieved a huge amount through its structured, supportive and also challenging approach to understanding, assessing and querying police performance at local level in relation to sexual and domestic violence. In particular the sharing of good practise has been inspiring to me as well as the commitment of individuals to further improving responses to victims. I feel that the Board has given police and other stakeholders the opportunity to also compare performance and challenges across London in an in depth way and via a partnership approach, which has been very productive.*

*Marion Winterholler, Haven Manager*

## **Boroughs**

The DSVB has had a significant impact in its five years of operation; from creating bespoke borough action plans for development of service delivery to making corporate recommendations. One of the areas of success for the DSVB has been getting boroughs to talk to each other. For example Islington and Barking & Dagenham have both successfully engaged health colleagues in tackling domestic violence – many boroughs who attended the DSVB were tasked to contact them for ideas and to share good practice. Likewise, boroughs who were finding engagement with LGBT communities difficult locally were told to seek out Westminster colleagues who had excellent examples of practice in this field.

Some boroughs have themselves taken the challenges of the DSVB and gone even further than we asked, such as Lewisham, who attended in 2010. We queried the low reporting rate of sexual violence from older people in the borough and in response SCD2 held a South London seminar to raise awareness of the role of Sapphire, the role of other agencies and to dispel myths. Representatives from Safeguarding Adults, sexual violence support services and the police were present. This was so successful other elder abuse seminars will now be conducted across other regions of London.

Newham, who attended in 2008, noted the comments of the DSVB and went on to achieve a 10% reduction in the use of cautions. At January 2009<sup>29</sup> the overall sanctioned detection rate for domestic violence at Newham stood at 52%, representing the best ever performance in this area for the borough, and this been achieved whilst reducing the rate of cautioning.

In some cases, the intense spotlight on the borough has revealed areas of concern which police colleagues have consequently taken forward, for example one borough seemed to have a high volume of reports of domestic violence, but few of these (less than 35%) were recorded as offences. Although the borough appeared to be exceeding its performance targets for sanction detections (the percentage of criminal

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<sup>29</sup> The date of the follow up report from Newham to the DSVB.

justice outcomes from the offences recorded), this may have not reflected the full picture. The MPS Violent Crime Directorate instigated a review following the DSVB meeting.

Each borough produced a report following the DSVB meeting which outlined how it progressed the bespoke action plan. Although all are archived on the MPA website, examples from some of these and when they were received by the MPA are reproduced below.

#### *Hammersmith and Fulham, October 2007- victim referrals*

It has been agreed that all victims will be referred to the local support service, Advance, on a daily basis unless there is good reason not to. This will only be in exceptional cases and rare. In summary there is now no issue with police referring all cases and the system is in place to do so.

#### *Sutton, October 2007 - Cautions*

It was indeed an informative and challenging meeting, offering the opportunity to reflect upon the work we do in Sutton in completing a report and preparing for the presentation. It has enabled us to learn from the Board and provide additional impetus to our redevelopment of services for survivors of domestic violence and their families. Sutton Borough will undertake dip sampling of cautions led by the Detective Inspector in charge of Public Protection to ensure that disposal decisions are appropriate. Dip sampling will be undertaken weekly and involve 10% of cautioned cases.

#### *Hackney, February 2008 – Risk Assessments*

Improved completion rates for 124Ds have been achieved since the report was made to the Board. An 18% improvement was made in November and December and the OCU intends to build on that achievement. Closer supervision of DV incidents by uniform Sergeants has been a key element in this success. Inspectors, Sergeants, and Constables have all been reminded of the importance of the 124D form, and how it assists the BOCU in providing a better service to all DV victims, and in achieving our sanctioned detection targets.

#### *Kingston, February 2008 – Safer Neighbourhoods good practice*

The good practice identified at the Board was passed via a Commander within Territorial Policing to all Boroughs and the Central Safer Neighbourhoods Team. Since this time several Boroughs have made contact with Kingston to obtain further information on how we link Safer Neighbourhood teams into the support and investigation of hate crime. I hope this provides you with clarity and confidence that Kingston Borough continues to be committed to the issue of domestic violence and along with partners and stakeholders seeks to deliver excellent services to all involved.

#### *Bromley, February 2009 – Identification of 'Honour'-based Violence*

We are holding a meeting next week between the Community Safety Unit and the Hilac Centre, which is a family and children's centre for the Somali Community. The meeting will look for a way forward to address the action point raised. HBV is now monitored daily through the borough Daily Management Meeting.

The Gypsy/Traveller project is represented on the DV forum and has close links with the Safer Neighbourhood Team covering the St Mary Cray Ward, where they have a representative on the Ward Panel. The Gypsy/Traveller community are also represented on the Borough Community Advisory Group.

#### *Bexley, October 2009 – Community Engagement*

We have audited our community engagement in order to improve confidence in police, council and partners. We now integrate our community engagement with the Bexley Community Police Engagement Group (BCPEG), which is dedicating its next meeting to the theme of domestic violence. The Sikh community is our largest minority ethnic community, and the last BCPEG meeting was held in the local Sikh temple and was translated at the time into Punjabi, which has encouraged further involvement with the Sikh community in relation to hate crime.

Safer Neighbourhoods Teams regularly engage with all faith premises, including our new mosque, and aim to support women's and young people's groups which are not always represented in the formal management structures. A hate crime conference in early 2009 improved engagement with women's groups, including those from minority ethnic communities, and has led to a series of specialist seminars.

#### *Lambeth, July 2010 – Expansion of successful prevention work*

Lambeth Children's and Young Persons Services are in the process of commissioning a third sector organisation to build on and continue to deliver the excellent work that Tender have been carrying out in Lambeth in relation to domestic violence preventative work in schools. This preventative work will focus on healthy relationships, and will also address issues of sexual violence and sexual bullying.

#### *Barking & Dagenham, November 2010 – ISVA service provision*

The tender process has just been finalised and a new contract is being awarded to the new provider of IDVA's for Barking & Dagenham Borough. The provision of an ISVA has been included as part of that contract and all posts should be filled by October/November of this year.

#### *Hounslow, April 2011 – MARAC Steering Group*

As suggested at the meeting, contact was made with the Haringey Domestic Violence Coordinator. The MARAC steering group has been set up. Hounslow Borough Community Safety Partnership (CSP) is leading. The terms of reference will be circulated in the first week of April and the first steering group will take place on 12/04/2011.

#### *Enfield, July 2011 – Independent Domestic Violence Prosecutions*



The number of unsupported prosecutions is very small within the period under review, which echoes previous years. This area is not actually measured by the CPS so actual returns are not numeric but it is accepted that it should be a future consideration. A new sergeant has been in post since January 2011 and has taken over the task of overseeing court cases and those withdrawn by the CPS. This officer has now devised monitoring by way of a Tracker, which provides the Borough with an exact detail and measures on cases which are discontinued or withdrawn by the CPS.

Since January of this year there have been no discontinuances of cases involving DV at court. With the introduction of the new bespoke Tracker (mentioned above) the figures in the future will be accurately recorded and available for review.

*Harrow, July 2011*

The CSU Detective Inspector has liaised with Islington and Barking & Dagenham to link their ideas to Harrows NHS/Primary Care Trust. Barking and Dagenham has been chosen as the London NHS regional demonstration site for Health based domestic violence initiatives. This MPA recommendation has provided positive and welcomed information sharing. Best practice has been adopted and fed into Harrows DV Steering Group agenda with a view to promote the inclusion of DV as a priority in Harrows "Health and Well Being Strategy".

## MPS

We have already noted in the Thematic and Targeted Oversight section above some of the pan-London successes of the DSVB. These include revised guidance being disseminated regarding the use of repeat cautions in domestic violence cases, and the development of a pilot project to access feedback from victims of domestic violence. We are extremely pleased that this recommendation from our 2008-09 DSVB Annual Report has been taken forward by the MPS.

We also noted above the success of the research we commissioned into sexual violence and disproportionality. The action plans produced by SCD2 (Sapphire – Rape and Serious Sexual Offences), SCD5 (Child Abuse Investigation Command) and Territorial Policing (covering all 32 London boroughs) includes addressing issues through training, regular data reviews of case outcomes, and updating pan-London Standard Operational Procedures which govern the investigation of crimes.

*Frankly I was not convinced that the MPA DVSB would be able deliver on its promise to hold the MPS and Boroughs to account for their performance in relation to the police response to domestic violence (and later sexual violence). I was wrong. Honest, and sometime painful discussions led to policy and practice change and the MPS generally listened and showed a commitment to delivering more effective outcomes for victims. I have been proud to be part of the Board and the MPA should be proud of their achievements in activating a process of improvement that has made such a difference.*

*Anthony Wills, Standing Together Against Domestic Violence*

In the past, we have made ambitious recommendations to the MPS, its partners, and the Home Office. We have often highlighted the need for change at national or regional level and later seen this change take place. As far back as the 2006-07 Annual Report we asked for routine referral for victims of domestic violence to support services – something which is now embedded in practice.

In the 2008-09 DSVB Annual Report we asked the Home Office to fully enact the Domestic Violence Crime and Victims Act (2004), and to ensure sustainable funding streams for victim support services. We are delighted Section 9 has now been enacted, and some funding (for example for Rape Crisis Centres) has been committed over a three-year period instead of annually, allowing for longer term planning. However, there is still a long way to go to ensure a robust and sufficiently resourced specialist support sector.

Likewise, we recommended the development of joint performance measures between the CPS and MPS in relation to domestic and sexual violence in the 2009-10 Annual Report. This is now underway for sexual violence performance measures between SCD2 Sapphire and the CPS London Rape Charging Centre. We have recommended reviews of the 'no-criming' levels of rape cases, something which SCD2 have successfully reduced.

We also recommended in that report a wider and more holistic approach to organisational learning, so as to ensure that learning from serious case reviews, internal management reviews, domestic violence homicide reviews, gold groups and other such processes could be collated and shared. The MPS has recently put in place a corporate Organisational Learning team within HR Organisational Development to co-ordinate and drive forward activity. A project has been initiated within the MPS Directorate of Resources to ensure synergy across all the existing areas of organisational learning. We will continue to work with the MPS to ensure that this project uses the widest possible range of learning mechanisms to benefit service improvement.

In the same way as we pursued the borough action plans, we also followed up on recommendations from our Annual Reports. Examples from previous years are made available in the following years' annual report. Notably these have included;

*Conduct an independent evaluation of the Form 124D as part of the review of the MPS Domestic Violence Standard Operating Procedures (2006-07)*

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.

*Expand upon and disseminate the learning from Domestic Violence Homicide Reviews by producing an annual report on the Reviews with recommendations across the service. (2008-09)*

The MPS is currently drafting an annual report on behalf of the London DV Homicide Review Group, which is in an advanced draft format. The MPS is committed to sharing this report with partners including the MPA Domestic & Sexual Violence Board and its members. It is hoped that this document will be available in the new year.

*Include performance on domestic violence and other forms of violence against women as part of the assessment process for Borough Commanders. (2008-09)*

Borough Commanders are held to account for an array of performance outcomes, which include domestic violence. They are directly accountable to TP DAC for their overall performance against the whole range of performance indicators.

*Review the volume of rapes and serious sexual offences which have been recorded as 'no-crime' or 'crime-related incidents' (CRI) against the Home Office Counting Rules to ensure compliance. (2010)*

No Crime and CRI decision making is now made centrally within the SCD Crime Management Unit. No Crime and CRI performance is monitored by the SCD2 SMT on a team and regional basis to identify and challenge any disproportionality. MPS national figures are currently in line with other Forces at 7% No crime rate, having been 19% in 2009. SCD2 performance data for 2010-11 includes no crime rates and so will be the subject of ongoing monitoring.

*Disseminate the findings from their Domestic Violence homicide reviews across the MPS, and proactively identify learning opportunities from reviews across other business areas, such as Specialist Crime Directorate child protection serious case reviews, or reviews conducted into cases of rape and serious sexual offences. Disseminate also the critical success factors identified by Bexley to BOCUs. (2010)*

This will continue to be done in the following ways;

- Participating in DV Homicide (DVH) Review Group. Organisational learning from 2009 DVHR has been disseminated.
- Ensuring findings from SCD5/SCD2/Critical Incident Advisory Team (CIAT) DVH reviews are cascaded by e-mail traffic, training and regular Detective Inspector (DI) meetings. This process of ensuring organisational learning is streamlined will be progressed as the CIAT who conduct our internal DVHR process move to SCD20 currently responsible for all Serious Case Reviews.
- Identifying corporate learning through Daily Management Meeting process and ensuring actions for DV, Hate Crime, Safeguarding Adults at Risk, and so-called 'Honour' Based Violence.
- Undertaking fast time review of all DV homicides within 24 hrs where possible. Identifying good practice or missed opportunities for Police intervention.
- National learning such as the IPCC "Learning the Lessons" bulletins are fed into current policy and Standard Operating Procedures.
- TP is currently exploring the possibility of single officer allocation for repeat cases of DV as is currently done in Wandsworth.

*Victim Support was pleased to be a part of this board and the valuable work it did in challenging and supporting the police in their response to domestic and sexual violence. Through this board the third sector were able to make the voice of victims heard.*

*Natalie Ker Watson and Sophie Davies, Victim Support*

## **Update on Recommendations from MPA/MPS Violence against Women Annual Report 2010**

Each recommendation from the 2010 Annual Report is listed below, with an update on the progress so far and the aspirations for the work.

### **1. MPS to ensure that corporate analysis of demographics uses the same data across its commands and units.**

The MPS VAWG Working Group has commissioned SCD15, in partnership with PIB and TP Performance Unit, to produce a single draft report containing comprehensive performance data / measures for Violence Against Women and Girls. The Working Group anticipates that this data set would be the only, single data set used by all relevant Boards, such as the MPS Anti Violence Board. Future performance matters would be informed and directed by this product.

### **2. MPS to secure improvements in Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) flagging in cases of domestic and sexual violence.**

The Community Safety Unit (CSU) Service Delivery Team actively seeks to encourage the recording and flagging of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) domestic abuse. When recording domestic incidents, one screen of the Crime Reporting Information System has a specific tabbed page for DV and hate crime. This page asks a pointed question of the recording officer 'Is this a LGBT relationship?' When this box is ticked the report is automatically flagged 'DI'. Some data analysis is currently being undertaken by the MPS Performance Information Bureau (PIB) to measure compliance with the flagging of such cases.

The CSU Service Delivery Team is confident that all other equalities data is retrievable using relationship, age, race, faith, and disability fields on CRIS provided that this is recorded by the officer. There are currently no mandatory requirements to do so. Constant supervision and compliance checks to raise awareness amongst officers are required.

Consequently, the MPS VAWG Working Group has commissioned SCD15, in partnership with PIB and TP Performance Unit, to produce a single draft report containing comprehensive performance data / measures for Violence Against Women and Girls, using the information above. The aspiration is for a single performance framework which enables easier identification of victims, and includes a data breakdown on all six<sup>30</sup> strands of diversity, including sexual orientation.

It is accepted that the parameters for the data need to be made bespoke for VAWG before efforts can be made to improve data collection and flagging by front line police officers. The VAWG data set will focus on MPS data only at this stage.

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<sup>30</sup> Age, sexuality, race/ ethnicity, religion/ belief, disability and gender.

**3. MPS to review the training for officers from SCD2 and SCD5 to ensure specialist training on investigating sexual offences, and specialist training on child protection and working with children as victims is appropriately available to both units.**

Specialist Crime Directorate 2 (Sapphire Command) and Specialist Crime Directorate 5 (Child Abuse Investigation Command) officers are subject to bespoke training to ensure they are fully equipped for their separate roles. Since the recommendation was made, the MPA has fed into a review of the ABE Foundation and Joint Child Abuse Investigative Skills Course to support the above recommendation.

**Specialist training on investigating sexual offences for SCD5**

The Crime Academy delivers bespoke Sexual Offences Investigative Techniques (SOIT) training to SCD5 officers. SCD5 and SCD2 SOIT officers are trained by the same team of trainers within Crime Academy to ensure consistency.

**Specialist training on child protection and working with children as victims for SCD2**

An input from SCD5 is provided on every SCD2 Rape and Serious Sexual Offences course to ensure all SCD2 officers have an understanding of SCD5's remit and the support provided by SCD5 in relation to police attendance at case conferences.

All SCD5 officers attend the Specialist Child Abuse Investigation Development Programme (SCAIDP) course (2 weeks) at the earliest opportunity. The content of this course was reviewed by SCD5's training unit in 2010. As a result, the content has been adapted to complement the National Police Improvement Agency (NPIA) learning descriptors. This was piloted in June 2011; and after a detailed review, a second pilot is scheduled for July. This will also be reviewed and then will be delivered monthly. It is intended to open up the SCAIDP course to SCD2 officers and officers involved in the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hubs (MASH) if deemed suitable by the pilot evaluation.

Furthermore, SCD2 and SCD5 specialist support teams are co-located to ensure fast time communication in training issues.

**4. MPS to review borough practice of the use of cautions to ensure the proportion of cautions within SD rates is appropriate and that cautions are used sparingly.**

The MPS closely monitors cautioning rates for Domestic Violence. The DV Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) states that there will always be a presumption of charge, however for many reasons this will not always be achievable and cautioning is another means of holding abusers to account.

Cautioning rates are constantly raised at Community Safety Unit (CSU) Manager meetings highlighting good and poor practice. The CSU Service Delivery Team continues to run quarterly repeat caution data searches to identify and challenge any non compliance. The current cautioning rate for DV sanction detections is approximately 45% of all detections.

The MPS has recently been working with the Data Accuracy Team to identify a health check process for DV cautions against current DPP/CPS and ACPO guidance. An instruction to boroughs will be disseminated in the near future.

**5. SCD2 Units to ensure and be able to demonstrate they have working relationships with their local borough Community Safety Partnerships and local sexual violence service providers from the voluntary and community sector.**

SCD2 Detective Inspectors have bespoke annual targets set by SCD2 to ensure appropriate liaison with statutory partners and NGO's. There is an expectation that they will increase local partnership links.

SCD2 officers attend appropriate meetings including MARAC's and victim-focused forums, and cluster DIs maintain records of these.

A list of all pan-London and local partners, together with contact details, are now available to all staff on the SCD2 intranet site.

**6. MPS CSU, Sapphire Unit and CAIT managers should ensure that compliance with Victims Code of Practice (VCOP) is consistently met regardless of crime types and referral pathways are developed with local support providers.**

The MPS VAWG Working Group's draft Performance Framework will capture Victims Code of Practice VCOP compliance as part of potential risks the data could highlight. While developments to the current MPS VCOP Report will be implemented to ensure VAWG Performance Framework data sets are included.

**7. MPS review their adoption of the definition and recording of domestic violence to ensure that children and young people can be accurately recorded and that domestic violence in young adult relationships can be effectively addressed.**

The MPS currently works to the ACPO definition of domestic violence as follows:

*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. (Family members are defined as mother, father, son, daughter, brother, sister and grandparents, whether directly related, in-laws or step-family) (ACPO, 2004)*

The CSU Service Delivery Team is aware of and has been engaged in consultation with the ACPO lead for DV, ACC Carmel Napier, on the effectiveness of the definition and to these ends are aware that there is discussion at a ministerial level to change the definition to include persons 'aged 16 and over'.

In the meantime the CSU Service Delivery Team are acutely aware of the need to ensure that any victim of domestic abuse, regardless of age, is given a professional response. The Domestic Violence standard operating procedure outlines the approach the MPS will take pending the review of the definition:

### **Extract from MPS Domestic Violence Standard Operating Procedure**

*This definition is wide to ensure that we capture all forms of domestic abuse within a family context, including cases of forced marriage and 'honour' based violence, however we know that many DV cases affect those under 18 years old and we must ensure that those victims are not given an inferior service because they are not adults, within the definition.*

The MPS has the capability to retrieve data in relation to domestic abuse and younger victims/perpetrators using relationship codes and crime types. Consequently, the Working Group's VAWG draft comprehensive performance data for VAWG will also include Age.

### **8. MPS to make refresher training on domestic violence available for officers and staff coming into frequent contact with the public every 5 years.**

A review of MPS training that touches on or may have an impact on 'Violence against Women and Children' is being undertaken in relation to Specialist Crime training, Constable foundation training, Territorial Policing COCU, HR3 and the Metropolitan Special Constabulary training to establish levels of training that currently exist, knowledge gaps and future need for refresher training.

The existing DV (incorporating DASH) 'train the trainers' package and student training package are available and fulfil the training requirement but were not designated as 'mandatory' for TP. This training review is on-going.

**The updates for each recommendation have been provided by the CSU Service Delivery Team, Operation Jigsaw, Crime Academy, SCD15, SCD2 and SCD5.**



## Domestic and Sexual Violence Board Legacy

*The DSVB has been a very valuable forum. It has made a large contribution to the safety of women in London, improved performance and ultimately reduced risk. It's been a valuable tool in shaping policy and I'd like to see something like it continue in some shape or form in the future.*

*DCI Sam Faulkner, MPS Crime and Customer Strategy Command*

### **Good Practice - Critical Success Factors**

Since 2009 we have taken responsibility for collating good operational practice from the boroughs that have presented to it and sharing that with subsequent boroughs. The examples below are those which emerged from our 2011 sessions as innovative, inspiring and most importantly, thought to be replicable across any other borough. Please refer to our previous DSVB and VAW Annual Reports for Critical Success Factors identified from previous years.

The information reproduced here has been provided by the boroughs themselves.

*Harrow: Working together with Safer Neighbourhoods Teams to tackle domestic violence.*

Regular consultation takes place between Harrow's Intelligence Unit, Community Safety Unit, Safer Neighbourhoods Team (SNT) lead and Harrow Council. The borough recognised that failure to identify domestic violence has considerable impact on the victim, his or her family and the wider community. The Harrow SNT lead has encouraged ward panels supporting neighbours calling police to report suspected abuse. The Community Safety Unit highlights risk cases to SNT Inspectors, disclosing high risk cases where an offender has been charged with bail conditions or a post conviction order against them. The CSU will also make SNT aware of addresses where there are abusive relationships. The Inspector also confidentially briefs SNT sergeants. The Borough Intelligence Unit will provide an overall figure of DV related calls and arrests in the monthly SNT Newsletter. SNT will engage with Ward panels on a case to case basis when the risk is assessed as high, seeking assistance for a problem solving approach.

*Harrow: Borough Commander on Good Leadership.*

The Borough Commander Dal Babu leads the Senior Management Team (SMT) which fully recognises the impact of domestic and sexual violence (DSV). SMT personally brief all new officers and staff on the importance in dealing with DSV and the inherent risks attached to it. They highlight both national and local statistics which bolsters the importance of a positive police response.

All team briefings emphasise the need to understand the position of victims of abuse and promote a zero tolerance approach when dealing with those responsible. In addition Harrow's introduction pack for officers joining the borough includes practical information and illustrates the importance of dealing with Domestic Violence effectively. There is a focus on heightened risk factors, cycles of abuse and an emphasis on helping and supporting victims and their families, as well as measures required to reduce the risk of harm. This practice extends to Harrow's Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)<sup>31</sup>.

There is recognition that dealing with domestic violence in a holistic way means that resolving the issues will ultimately reduce violence, or stop residents from becoming victims of crime and reduce demand on police and partners. The Detective Inspector in charge of the CSU routinely meets with the Borough Commander to discuss individual cases and general learning to maintain constant service improvement for the victims of domestic violence.

The Borough Commander holds regular meetings with the lead political member for women's issues as well as a lead member for community safety. A review of all crime types and performance is part of the agenda. Domestic violence is one the key crime types discussed and police and local authority take actions on any learning. The Daily Management Meeting DMM chaired by the Borough Commander or his Deputy reviews every recorded Domestic Incident with a view to ensure robust compliance with the Domestic Violence Strategic and Operational Procedures (SOP). The Borough Commendation ceremony rewards officers who have supported victims' of domestic violence and values their work along with other types of crime.

#### *Hillingdon: Reducing Repeat Domestic Violence*

The following five principles in relation to repeat victimisation intervention are very much interrelated. Good practice and success factors can be measured in terms of;

- Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC): MARAC cases focus on high risk only and are not closed without a resolution. All courses of action must be followed and outcomes shared before agreeing to close a case. This avoids taking one course of action and then having to open the case when it is found to be unsuccessful. This approach has resulted in Hillingdon MARAC receiving only 10 repeat referrals in 2010.
- Prisoner Intelligence Notification System (PINS): PINS is an agenda item at every MARAC meeting. All MARAC perpetrators are placed on the PINS list. If a perpetrator is to be released from prison the MARAC will discuss the case, contact the victim and also notify the lead agency. This allows time for any

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<sup>31</sup> Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hubs bring together statutory and non-statutory safeguarding professionals from across a partnership into one secure room, to join up information and identify where vulnerable people may be at risk. They then make decisions based on the fullest intelligence picture available.

preparation and risk management to take place such as the installation of Sanctuary<sup>32</sup> within the home.

- Keep suspects in custody: The borough has a culture of retaining DV perpetrators in custody; this message comes from the Borough Commander down, and so ensures that officers from the custody suite are supportive. This time allows for support to be put in place with the victim and allows the police to put any necessary bail conditions in place for when the offender is then released. The borough sometimes sends officers to the court to support the police case; sending a message to the judiciary that the case is serious. Hillingdon held 154 DV suspects in 2010; an average of one every 2.4 days. This significantly reduces repeat offending; demonstrating that the police and court system take DV seriously.
- A dedicated 'non-Crime' Sergeant: One Sergeant is dedicated to dealing with reports to the police which do not cross the threshold into offences but whereby intervention can be seen as a proactive and preventative approach to reducing further reports or escalation. This Sergeant conducts a risk assessment, reviews the history of the case, and contacts the person who made the report to identify how best to assist them. They will then agree a bespoke referral which can include domestic violence support for the victim, alcohol management for the perpetrator, or assistance with civil injunctions. Non-Crime Crime Book intervention<sup>33</sup> has resulted in a month by month reduction of reports, as well as freeing up the time for detectives to investigate offences only. Hillingdon borough has had 161 fewer reports between June 2010 and November 2010 than the same period for the previous year.
- Victim Support and Independent Domestic Violence Advocates (IDVAs): IDVAs provide specialist support to high risk victims of domestic violence and Victim Support staff and volunteers also provide support to victims. This can consist of information on managing risk if the victim chooses to stay in the relationship, assistance with fleeing into refuge and everything in between such as access to civil injunctions. Hillingdon police also have a range of responsibilities under the victim's code of practice (VCOP) including keeping victims up to date on cases, and 94% of victims of domestic violence are kept regularly informed and updated on at least a monthly basis.

### *Islington: Whittington Hospital Project*

The Victims of Violence Project at the Whittington was commissioned and funded by London Borough of Islington for 2 years from October 2009. The project, based on the Cardiff Model seeks to reduce violence in the community, with a corresponding

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<sup>32</sup> The Sanctuary scheme entails the provision and installation of security measures to a residents home

<sup>33</sup> This refers to instances in which no offence has been committed under law but which is nonetheless recorded as an incident and responded to accordingly by police. This means that a pattern of abuse is recorded by the police and that victims can still be referred onto support and given information.

reduction in both crime and associated injuries. There are three main domains for the project; domestic violence, serious youth violence, and elder abuse. Primarily focussing on Domestic Violence during 2010, the project will broaden its scope in 2011 to include serious youth violence and abuse of the elderly.

Following a period of piloting ways of working in 2009, by July 2010 systems to ensure effective data capture from patients attending the Emergency Department became more reliable and peaked at 90% of all patients identified as victims of violence. There exists scope for improvement in the quality of the data captured, an action plan is currently in place to achieve this.

Within the DV domain, there has been an emphasis on staff training and the implementation of policy and standard operating procedures at the Whittington for patients disclosing DV. One of the major challenges encountered has been working across local authority boundaries as only 40% of the patients were from Islington, 30% from Haringey and the remainder from Barnet, Enfield, Hackney and Camden. The project resulted in 8 patients with high risk of injury being referred to the MARAC (though not all to Islington). During the last six months of 2010 112 victims of domestic violence were identified within the Emergency Department (20.5% of all identified victims of violence). An enhanced referral pathway to specialist domestic violence agencies is currently being piloted working across local authority boundaries capturing over 90% of all victims of DV.

Whilst there has been no evaluation of the financial impact of the project, the following may give an indication of potential savings.

#### *Patient Vignette A*

Female patient attended Emergency Department with a fractured ankle following a prolonged incident of domestic violence (DV) with a long term partner. The intervention of the Victims of Violence (VoV) Project Clinical Nurse Specialist allowed for disclosure of DV and support from Solace Women's Aid, who assessed the patient's risk of further serious injury or death as very high. In the six months *prior* to the admission referred to above, the patient had attended the Emergency Department on three separate occasions. In the 12 months following admission, she has not attended the Emergency Department, however her case has been re-heard at MARAC. The health costs associated with the Emergency Department attendances and inpatient admission for this patient in 2009 were £7000; there have been no health costs occurred at the Whittington in 2010.

A preliminary analysis of the total cost of identified victims of violence to the Emergency Department at the Whittington is estimated to be at least £200,000 for 2010.

*Recommendation: Borough Commanders review these Critical Success Factors and those from previous DSVB reports and identify any areas for development within their own boroughs.*

## The future of pan-London oversight

The MPS, as we have noted, have sometimes taken forward corporate recommendations more slowly than we might have liked. For example, in the 2006-07 Annual Report we recommended that Safer Neighbourhoods Teams play a greater role in tackling domestic violence – something which some boroughs are in the process of taking on, following recommendations from Domestic Violence Homicide Reviews.

So whilst we haven't always managed to get the results we wanted at the time we asked for them, we've certainly been an accurate predictor of what needs to be done and by whom. What does this tell us, and the MPS? Listen to the experts.

On a borough basis, individual boroughs have taken away bespoke action plans and delivered against them admirably – sometimes taking actions even further than we had asked them to. But for London as a whole, the DSVB recommendations to the MPS tend to be implemented only where there is internal impetus to do the same thing. This insular approach to change means missed opportunities for improvement.

*The DSVB has been set the task of investigating progress on one of the greatest blots on what we hope is an increasingly civilised society. That one half of our population automatically feels some greater constraints or fears from time to time just because of their sex ought to remain shocking to us all. The Board has steadily and determinedly held the Police to the challenge of continuously upping its game, always challenging but seeking to be constructive. There is no grandstanding, just a rich record of identifying weaknesses robustly and enthusiastic sharing and disseminating of good practice. I'm proud to have had a part in its work.*

*Clive Lawton, MPA Independent Member*

But it is not just for the MPS to listen. As we have noted above, we have been willing to listen and develop, and we highlight this as a principle of good oversight. We have asked the MPS what we should be doing to help support them in their work, and how both the MPS and MPA can help create an environment which is conducive to reducing domestic and sexual violence. Frequently raised issues were around adequate resourcing, sufficient training for officers and staff, and reviews of the performance framework to better reflect the needs of victims.

Most frequently, indeed from almost every borough report, the issue raised was greater synergy between the MPS and CPS to create a more joined up criminal justice system and avoid conflicting targets. As we have seen above, work is finally underway with SCD2 and the CPS to deliver this in relation to rape offences. We would therefore recommend that future governance be mindful of this issue in its oversight of the police and that the MOPC utilise any powers additional to those held by the MPA to progress this.

*Recommendation: The MOPC, perhaps through the LCRB, should use its capacity to oversee crime, community safety and criminal justice to conduct a whole system review of the criminal justice process for VAWG cases and identify key blockages and areas for improvement to be addressed by an action plan.*

All the recommendations and other content within the reports are available online. A range of the MPS suggestions are provided below;

- MPS to have more input in schools so that pupils are aware of offences that can be committed.
- The failure rate of DV cases at court is an area that is not being addressed. The Police focus on charging offenders, the CPS is too quick to drop cases where the victim may be unwilling to support the prosecution. This means that DV offenders are highly unlikely to receive punishment for the crimes they commit. The performance culture needs to change so that all parties are supporting the victim and doing everything possible to ensure that offenders are convicted.
- Although there is an entire week dedicated to Public Protection during the probationer period, it is the belief that the collective Police response to domestic violence would be more consistent and considered if more in depth training was made available to new recruits on the risks and implications of the long term cycle of such abuse.
- MPA should provide clarity on what constitutes good performance.
- MPA assistance is required in underpinning the need to measure sexual violence performance less around detection rates and more around the quality of service provided to the victim.

It is clear that the issues we have raised corporately with the MPS are those the operational police officers also wish to see improved.

The challenge for us now will be to ensure that expert, independent and targeted oversight is not lost in the transition process from the MPA to the MOPC. As this report is being written, much of the detail relating to the functions and practice of the MOPC, even down to its launch date, is still being explored and agreed through the Parliamentary progress of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Bill.

Whilst the creation of the MOPC will create new ways of ensuring that the police are held to account on behalf of Londoners, and that the voices of Londoners continue to shape policing priorities, the principles of both challenge *and* support, the championing and sharing of good practice and ensuring the voices of victims are heard must find their place within this new structure.

*The review process has raised some issues that will help to improve the quality of service. There needs to be continuity post-MPA and it would be useful to expand to explore other high risk areas such as, for example, missing persons.*

*David Tucker, Enfield Borough Commander*

The question we are being asked now is; as the DSVB closes, who will ensure that this level of oversight will continue? Of course it will be that will be a decision for the Police and Crime Commissioner to decide how MOPC resources are directed. We would recommend only that it continues in some form and that the learning and legacy of the DSVB be a part of that new function.

*Recommendation: The MOPC should retain the capacity and expertise to independently and rigorously review MPS strategy, policy, and practice across MPS units which deal in any way with domestic and sexual violence, encompassing all forms of violence against women.*

## Conclusion

*The Board brings a non police perspective to bear on their work. I think it is very easy to fall into the trap of only considering services to the victims who have actually reported. The Board serves an essential purpose in reminding the boroughs that the vast majority of victims do not report – so they need to consider how their performance and attitudes may prevent or otherwise deter specific groups of victims from coming forward and then consider how they can tackle this to make reporting an option available for everyone. It also reminds the boroughs that there are wider issues to tackle than simply the police performance figures. It promotes wider partnership working by including such a wide range of services on the Board and using constructive feedback to improve services to victims.*

*Elizabeth Harrison, Haven Manager*

We are proud to have contributed to the improvement of the MPS response to domestic and sexual violence. We recognise that change is coming and with that change comes new opportunities; to address wider issues within the criminal justice system, to engage more directly and productively with the public and with partners, and to provide accountability for the governance of the biggest police force in the country.

We hope that in taking forward these new responsibilities, the PCC and MOPC will consider the recommendations we have made, and the issues we have raised, and will ensure that the MPS continues to deliver the very best possible service to Londoners.



## Appendix One: Data

All forms of Violence against Women.  
Source: MPS, June 2011.

	Current 12 months (Jun 10 - May 11)	Previous 12 months (Jun 09 - May 10)
<b>Domestic Violence</b>		
Number of Incidents of DV	121395	120117
Number of Offences of DV	48339	51130
Sanction Detection rate (%) for DV	48.8%	48.5%
Percentage of Sanction Detections that are cautions	44.8%	47.6%
<b>Harassment</b>		
Number of Incidents of Harassment	37615	40959
Number of Offences of Harassment	34325	39320
Sanction Detection rate (%) for Harassment	36.4%	36.4%
Number of Incidents of putting a person in fear of violence	7399	7694
Number of Offences of putting a person in fear of violence	8457	8901
Sanction Detection rate (%) for putting a person in fear of violence	32.6%	31.6%
<b>Sexual Offences</b>		
Number of Incidents of Rape	4198	3716
Number of Offences of Rape	3330	2996
Sanction Detection rate (%) for Rape	17.8%	21.4%
<b>Trafficking &amp; Sexual Exploitation</b>		
Number of Offences of trafficking persons for the purposes of sexual exploitation	39	45
Sanction Detection rate (%) for trafficking persons for the purposes of sexual exploitation	20.5%	8.9%
Number of Offences of trafficking for the purpose of exploitation	22	15
Sanction Detection rate (%) for trafficking for the purpose of exploitation	40.9%	20.0%
Number of Offences of buying sexual services of a child	2	4
Sanction Detection rate (%) for buying sexual services of a child	0.0%	50.0%
Number of Offences of causing, encouraging, arranging or facilitating child prostitution or pornography	14	16

Sanction Detection rate (%) for causing, encouraging, arranging or facilitating child prostitution or pornography	71.4%	50.0%
Number of Offences of controlling any of the activities of a child involved in prostitution or pornography	2	0
Sanction Detection rate (%) for controlling any of the activities of a child involved in prostitution or pornography	50.0%	N/A
<b>Female Genital Mutilation</b>		
Number of Incidents of FGM	21	46
Number of Offences of FGM	1	2
Sanction Detection rate (%) for FGM	0.0%	0.0%

DRAFT

# Glossary

ACC - Assistant Chief Constable  
ACPO - Association of Chief Police Officers  
CSU - Community Safety Unit  
DASH - Domestic Abuse, Stalking, and 'Honour' based violence  
DCFD - Diversity and Citizen Focus Directorate  
DSV - Domestic and Sexual Violence  
DSVB - Domestic and Sexual Violence Board  
DV - Domestic Violence  
DVB - Domestic Violence Board  
FGM - Female Genital Mutilation  
HBV - 'Honour' Based Violence  
IDVA - Domestic Violence Advocate  
ISVA - Independent Sexual Violence Advocate  
LGBT - Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender  
MASH - Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub.  
MOPC - Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime  
MPA - Metropolitan Police Authority  
MPS - Metropolitan Police Service  
NPIA - National Police Improvement Agency  
OCU - Operational Command Unit  
PINS - Prisoner Intelligence Notification System  
SCAIDP - Specialist Child Abuse Investigation Development Programme  
SCD - Specialist Crime Directorate  
SD - Sanction Detection  
SMT - Senior Management Team  
SNT - Safer Neighbourhoods Team  
SOIT - Sexual Offences Investigative Techniques  
SV - Sexual Violence  
VAWG - Violence against Women and Girls  
VCOP - Victims Code of Practice