



Inspecting policing
in the public interest

City of London Police's approach to tackling domestic abuse

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Introduction

The extent and nature of domestic abuse remains shocking. A core part of the policing mission is to prevent crime and disorder. Domestic abuse causes both serious harm and constitutes a considerable proportion of overall crime. It costs society an estimated £15.7 billion a year.¹ Seventy seven women were killed by their partners or ex-partners in 2012/13.² In the UK, one in four young people aged 10 to 24 reported that they experienced domestic violence and abuse during their childhood.³ Forces told us that crime relating to domestic abuse constitutes some 8 percent of all recorded crime in their area, and one third of their recorded assaults with injury. On average the police receive an emergency call relating to domestic abuse every 30 seconds.

People may experience domestic abuse regardless of their gender, ethnicity, religion, sexuality, class, age or disability. Domestic abuse may also occur in a range of different relationships including heterosexual, gay, lesbian, bi-sexual and transgender, as well as within families.

While both men and women can be victims of domestic abuse, women are much more likely to be victims than men.

The cross-government definition of domestic violence and abuse is:

“any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to:⁴

- *psychological*
- *physical*
- *sexual*
- *financial*
- *emotional”.*

¹ Walby, S. (2009). *The cost of domestic violence*. Retrieved from: www.lancaster.ac.uk/fass/doc.../Cost_of_domestic_violence_update.doc

² Office for National Statistics (2013). *Focus on violent crime and sexual offences 2012/13 – Chapter 4: Intimate Personal Violence and Partner Abuse*. Retrieved from: http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/dcp171776_352362.pdf

³ Radford L, Corral S, Bradley C et al (2011) *Child abuse and neglect in the UK today*. London: NSPCC.

⁴ All definitions are taken from www.gov.uk/domestic-violence-and-abuse

Controlling behaviour is defined as a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour.

Coercive behaviour is defined as: an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim. This definition includes so-called honour-based violence, female genital mutilation and forced marriage.

Tackling domestic abuse and keeping its victims safe is both vitally important, and incredibly complicated. The police service needs to have the right tools, resources, training and partnerships in place to help it identify victims and keep them safe. It also needs to investigate and bring to justice offenders, when no two domestic abuse environments are the same, and some victims have suffered in silence for years or even decades.

In September 2013, the Home Secretary commissioned HMIC to conduct an inspection.⁵ We were asked to consider:

- the effectiveness of the police approach to domestic violence and abuse, focusing on the outcomes for victims;
- whether risks to victims of domestic violence and abuse are adequately managed;
- identifying lessons learnt from how the police approach domestic violence and abuse; and
- making any necessary recommendations in relation to these findings when considered alongside current practice.

To answer these questions, HMIC collected data and reviewed files from the 43 Home Office funded forces. We spoke to 70 victims of domestic abuse in focus groups throughout England and Wales and surveyed over 100 victims online. We also surveyed 200 professionals working with victims of domestic abuse.

We inspected all police forces in England and Wales, interviewing senior and operational leads in forces, holding focus groups with frontline staff and partners, and carrying out visits to police stations (which were unannounced) to test the reality of each force's approach with frontline officers. Our inspection teams were supplemented by expert peers, which included public protection

⁵ www.gov.uk/government/news/major-review-of-police-response-to-domestic-violence

experts from over 15 forces and those working with victims of domestic abuse in voluntary and community sector organisations.

This report details what HMIC found in the City of London Police and at the end of the report we set out some recommendations. These recommendations should be considered in conjunction with the recommendations for all forces made in the national report.⁶ A glossary of frequently used terms also appears at the end of the report.

⁶ There is a requirement under section 55(5) and section 55(6) of the Police Act 1996 for the police and crime commissioner to publish a copy of their comments on this report, and the recommendations for all forces in the national report, and forward these to the Home Secretary.

Domestic abuse in City of London⁷

Calls for assistance



In the City of London domestic abuse accounts for 1% of calls to the police for assistance. Of these calls, 4% were from repeat victims.

Crime

1%

Domestic abuse accounts for 1% of all recorded crime.

Assault with intent

0%

City of London recorded 13 assaults with intent to cause serious harm, of these none were domestic abuse related in the 12 months to end of August 2013.

Assault with injury

7%

The force also recorded 268 assaults with injury, of these 18 were domestic abuse related. This is 7% of all assaults with injury recorded for the 12 months to end of August 2013.

⁷ Data in this section is based upon forces' own definition of calls for assistance and domestic abuse, and forces' use of domestic abuse markers on IT systems.

Source: HMIC data collection. Crime figures are taken from police-recorded crime submitted to the Home Office.

Harassment

28%

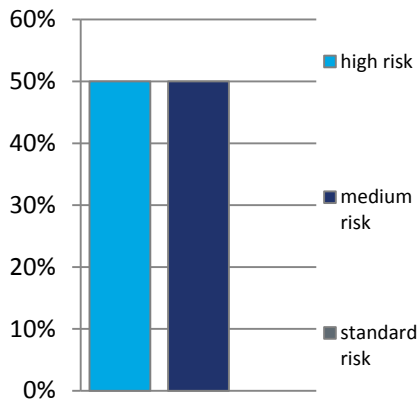
The force recorded 25 harassment offences, of these 7 were domestic abuse related. This is 28% of all harassment offences recorded for the 12 months to end of August 2013.

Sexual offences

0%

The force also recorded 52 sexual offences, of these none were domestic abuse related in the 12 months to end of August 2013.

Risk levels



On, 31 August 2013 City of London had 2 active domestic abuse cases; 50% were high risk, 50% were medium risk, and 0% were standard risk.

Arrests



For every 100 domestic abuse crimes recorded, there were 68 arrests in City of London. For most forces the number is between 45 and 90.

Outcomes



City of London recorded 71 domestic abuse related crimes for the 12 months to the end of August 2013. Of these crimes, 25% resulted in a charge, 14% resulted in a caution and, 4% had an out of court disposal, for example, a fixed penalty notice for disorderly conduct.

Executive summary

The City of London is a unique policing environment. It covers a square mile of the capital city which contains only 8,600 residents but hosts over 350,000 transient workers and tourists per day. The levels of reported domestic abuse are low, and those which are recorded, often involve victims and offenders who reside outside the force area, of the 71 recorded domestic abuse crimes for the 12 months to August 2013, only 12 involved residents of the City of London. This makes the safeguarding actions and ongoing care and support for victims who reside outside the force area a real challenge.

Identifying victims

HMIC found that control room operators were very aware of the importance of identifying vulnerable and repeat victims. The command and control computer system used to log calls to the control room provides the control operators with computerised reminders. These are used to good effect to ensure that every caller is asked about potential vulnerability or whether they have been a victim before. Control room supervisors conduct weekly audits to check that operators have used appropriate questions to identify vulnerable and repeat callers.

All domestic-abuse-related incidents reported via the command and control system are overseen by a supervisor within the control room, who is responsible for ensuring that an accurate risk assessment is completed by an Inspector or above and any appropriate safeguarding measures actioned.

Keeping victims safe

The force focuses on both ensuring a satisfactory investigation, as well as on keeping the victim safer. Many of the domestic abuse incidents reported in the City of London relate to victims and offenders who reside outside the force area, with almost half of all reported incidents occurring on the street, rather than within the home. The force demonstrates a positive approach to dealing with victims who do not reside in the City of London, and HMIC found that the information that was recorded and passed to other policing organisations as part of any safeguarding plans was informative and of a high standard.

Operational staff use the domestic abuse, stalking and harassment (DASH) risk assessment form, which on completion is presented to an officer of the rank of inspector or above, who is responsible for the risk grading, and ensuring that immediate safeguarding measures have been considered and actioned.

However, HMIC is concerned that as these are recorded on paper, they are not easily researched, meaning that officers may attend incidents and be unaware of previous cases involving the same victim or perpetrator.

HMIC found that officers do not have access to body-worn cameras which would help gather evidence during the early stages of an incident to support prosecutions.

Managing risk

Domestic abuse cases are overseen by specialist investigators who have strong links with partners, especially children's and adult social services. Risk assessments are reviewed regularly to ensure that appropriate levels of support are given to the victims.

The force has recently invested in the recruitment of a vulnerable victims advocate to further enhance the service provided to victims, and secured external funding for the ongoing provisions of a sanctuary scheme for victims of domestic abuse.

The multi-agency domestic abuse conferences (MARAC) process is under-developed and conferences are only called on a needs basis for high-risk cases. While the force is confident that a MARAC can be called at short notice, this is rarely tested and ongoing case management and oversight is not evident.

Organisational effectiveness for keeping people safe

HMIC found the force recognised the need to develop systems and processes to better understand and manage the risk to domestic abuse victims in the future. There has been a significant reduction in the number of domestic abuse incidents being reported to the police, which has prompted the commissioning of a problem profile to try and understand why this is the case.

There is a designated domestic violence court at the city magistrates' court for initial hearings of appropriate cases and the force makes good use of special measures such as video interviews for victims.

There is no formal process to deal with prison releases and perpetrators being released on bail although these account for small numbers.

Findings

How does the force identify victims of domestic abuse, and in particular repeat and vulnerable victims?

HMIC found that control room operators were very aware of the importance of identifying vulnerable and repeat victims. The command and control computer system used to log calls to the control room provides the control operators with computerised reminders. These are used to good effect to ensure that every caller is asked about potential vulnerability or whether they have been a victim before. Control room supervisors conduct weekly audits to check that operators have used appropriate questions to identify vulnerable and repeat callers.

All domestic-abuse-related incidents reported via the command and control system are overseen by a supervisor within the control room, who is responsible for ensuring that an accurate risk assessment is completed by an Inspector or above and any appropriate safeguarding measures actioned.

The City of London Police works together with the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) in a well-established call handling collaboration. This means that all emergency 999 calls and non-emergency 101 calls for the City of London Police are answered by MPS staff. Most incidents of domestic abuse are received by the police through this route.

The operators who receive the call from members of the public identify the incident as domestic abuse, make an assessment of whether the call requires an officer to attend immediately and mark the call record as a domestic incident on the computer database.

Call operators within the MPS understood what constitutes a domestic abuse incident. HMIC observed how domestic abuse incidents were flagged on computer systems and how callers were provided with information about how they could keep themselves safe while on the telephone. Where appropriate, victims were kept on the line until the police attended. This meant the operator was able to provide reassurance to the victim and also record any noise or speech in the background. This may provide important evidence for any subsequent crime inquiry.

The details of the incidents reported within the City of London area are recorded on the computer aided dispatch system (CAD) and then transferred electronically to City of London Police. An operator within the force control room conducts a review of the initial information taken by the MPS and completes a special message format (SMF) risk assessment. This has been specifically designed to identify repeat and vulnerable callers. Although this is a duplication

of effort, the consequence is that all incidents are quality-assured to ensure that appropriate action is taken and any vulnerability identified at an early stage.

Control room staff use a language line provision to help assess the vulnerability of callers whose first language is not English; this is available to all control room operators. They also use a computer system called Unicorn, which holds details of member of the public who may have difficulties in communicating, to ensure the police can quickly identify who is calling and the nature of any disability.

HMIC found that generally staff within the force control room understood what makes a caller vulnerable and what constitutes a repeat victim. Control room operators use computerised reminders to ensure that every caller is asked about potential vulnerability or whether they have been a victim of domestic abuse before. This is checked by control room supervisors who conduct weekly audits.

The CAD system automatically identifies repeat telephone numbers and addresses but does not automatically identify repeat callers by their individual name. If the address is not recognised by the CAD system, operators rely on information contained on other police databases, many of which can only be accessed by trained intelligence officers.

The force has recently introduced reactive intelligence officers (RIOs) into the control room. These officers are able to search police databases that cover the London area, including the MPS, and pass timely information to officers attending domestic abuse incidents. As a small geographical policing area, the average response time for emergency deployments is only four minutes, yet we found that the RIOs were able to carry out simple checks before officers arrived in the majority of cases, with more intelligence being passed after officers had arrived and started to resolve any immediate safety issues.

While the development of the new intelligence role within the control room is encouraging, HMIC noted that frontline officers were frustrated that the RIOs are not available on every shift on a 24-hour basis and that not all the officers employed in this role have access to key intelligence systems. Where RIOs were not available, officers became reliant on the MPS to conduct checks on their behalf, which were often time consuming and ineffective.

How does the force respond to victims of domestic abuse? This includes initial action, including risk assessment

The force focuses on both ensuring a satisfactory investigation, as well as on keeping the victim safer. Many of the domestic abuse incidents reported in the City of London relate to victims and offenders who reside outside the force area, with almost half of all reported incidents occurring on the street, rather than within the home. The force demonstrates a positive approach to dealing with victims who do not reside in the City of London, and HMIC found that the information that was recorded and passed to other policing organisations as part of any safeguarding plans was informative and of a high standard.

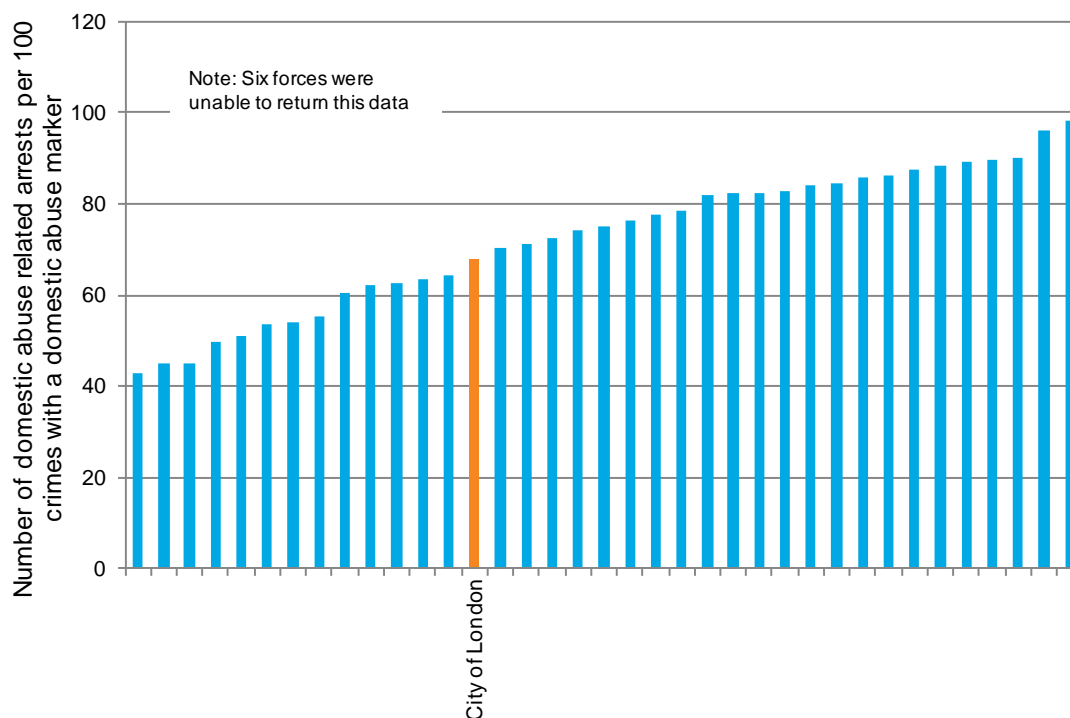
Operational staff use the domestic abuse, stalking and harassment (DASH) risk assessment form, which on completion is presented to an officer of the rank of inspector or above, who is responsible for the risk grading, and ensuring that immediate safeguarding measures have been considered and actioned. However, HMIC is concerned that as these are recorded on paper, they are not easily researched, meaning that officers may attend incidents and be unaware of previous cases involving the same victim or perpetrator.

HMIC found that officers do not have access to body-worn cameras which would help gather evidence during the early stages of an incident to support prosecutions.

For every 100 domestic abuse crimes recorded there were 68 arrests in City of London. For most forces the number is between 45 and 90.⁸

⁸ Based on forces' own definition of domestic abuse and use of a domestic abuse marker on IT systems.

Figure 1: Number of domestic abuse related arrests per 100 crimes with a domestic abuse marker for the 12 months to 31 August 2013⁹



Source: HMIC data collection

Domestic abuse is not a defined priority within the 2013–16 policing plan. However, HMIC found a positive approach to domestic abuse across the force which was evident in the action taken to make victims safer as well as the investigation processes.

Due to the demographics of the policing area, the force responds extremely well to all types of crimes and crime related incidents with 98 percent of emergency calls receiving a police officer at the scene within ten minutes, with average time being just 4.5 minutes. For violent, domestic related crime the response is usually in the form of a response vehicle containing two officers, which enables the police to take immediate action to protect the victim.

Safeguarding actions are considered against the known or perceived risk to the victim. Frontline officers have a good understanding of their responsibilities to consider and protect children of the family, particularly in high-risk cases.

⁹ Based on forces' own definition of domestic abuse and use of a domestic abuse marker on IT systems.

Attending officers put in place 'fast time' safeguarding actions which are recorded on the CAD incident log. Such actions include the immediate control and removal of the perpetrator; the flagging of the address on the CAD system to ensure that future calls are treated as a priority; and the use of TecSOS phones which are given to some high risk victims.¹⁰

Attending officers complete the DASH risk assessment form. This is later passed to an inspector who makes the decision on the classification of the victim's level of risk and what safeguarding action is appropriate. While this scrutiny from a senior officer directs a professional discussion and challenge to test the attending officers' assessment and actions, partners highlighted that they often found police initial assessments of risk to be graded lower than would be expected. Partners are concerned that officers did not really understand domestic abuse sufficiently to identify unique risk factors in certain family environments. As a result, they felt that risk was being under-assessed so fewer cases were being discussed at MARACs.

HMIC noted that police inspectors have been given the responsibility to check the assessments but have not been trained in this key function, and therefore often rely on profession judgement, which may lead to inconsistent decision making. DASH risk assessments are currently paper-based records and are therefore not readily searchable or auditable. The force has highlighted plans to introduce an electronic version of this form as part of its ongoing developments in streamlining processes. HMIC is concerned that this means that officers attending incidents of domestic abuse may not have relevant information from previous incidents readily available to them to help inform their risk assessment.

Regardless of the risk level, it is widely understood that force policy directs that positive action will be taken in all cases of domestic abuse. Response officers are clearly aware of this policy and reported that this meant they would arrest wherever the circumstances allowed. However, the rationale behind such a policy was not so well understood and this has led to some officers questioning the validity of the policy as it undermines their discretion to take what they would view as appropriate action for the given circumstances.

Training in domestic abuse is sporadic and HMIC found limited evidence of ongoing professional development in this area beyond initial recruitment, where officers undergo a two week attachment to the public protection unit (PPU), responsible for investigating domestic abuse crimes.

¹⁰ TecSOS phones allow the user to activate immediate contact with the emergency services, providing details of the location from the handset and triggering an immediate recording of all activity in the vicinity of the device.

The force has not issued guidance or policy relating to stalking, harassment or the management of vulnerable people. This is a concern as these are important areas which require clear guidance and understanding if victims are to be identified and protected.

The force provides officers with electronic training packages which are available through the College of Policing NCALT facilities. However this training provision is not mandated or evaluated to determine if it has been completed and understood by officers. As an example, at the time of the inspection, HMIC found that only 44 staff within the City of London police had completed the NCALT training package on stalking and harassment.

Crime investigations relating to domestic abuse are started by response officers and then handed to the specialist investigators in the PPU. An initial statement or early account is taken from the victim and any key witnesses by response officers. This is later supplemented by a more detailed statement as part of the investigation by trained detectives. HMIC reviewed a small sample of prosecution files. Generally, they were of good quality and contained relevant evidence to support the prosecution. Successful prosecutions tended to be those which were strengthened by the availability of photographic or video evidence.

HMIC found that obtaining early photographic evidence of injuries was being hampered through lack of cameras. Some officers reported that in the absence of available equipment, they took photographs using their own mobile phone, accepting that this may lead to questions about the integrity of the images if used evidentially.

The force has invested in, and uses body-worn cameras during licensing enforcement operations and public order events. However, these are not routinely used in gathering evidence for domestic abuse incidents. This is despite a widespread understanding that video evidence of first report and scenes discovered by the police would aid the prosecution process, especially where a victim does not support a prosecution. This is a missed opportunity to support victims by gathering the best possible evidence to prosecute perpetrators.

In 2012–13, the force recorded a total of 152 incidents, 63 of which occurred in the street and 60 in the home. The force makes very effective use of CCTV evidence gathered regarding those crimes that take place in the street. However, there is a higher attrition rate for offences which take place in homes. HMIC is concerned that this is in part due to the lack of video and photographic evidence. The force needs to address this issue and maximise the opportunities

to gather video and photographic evidence where it is appropriate and available.

How are victims of domestic abuse made safer as a result of the police response and subsequent action?

Domestic abuse cases are overseen by specialist investigators who have strong links with partners, especially children's and adult social services. Risk assessments are reviewed regularly to ensure that appropriate levels of support are given to the victims.

The force has recently invested in the recruitment of a vulnerable victims advocate to further enhance the service provided to victims, and secured external funding for the ongoing provisions of a sanctuary scheme for victims of domestic abuse.

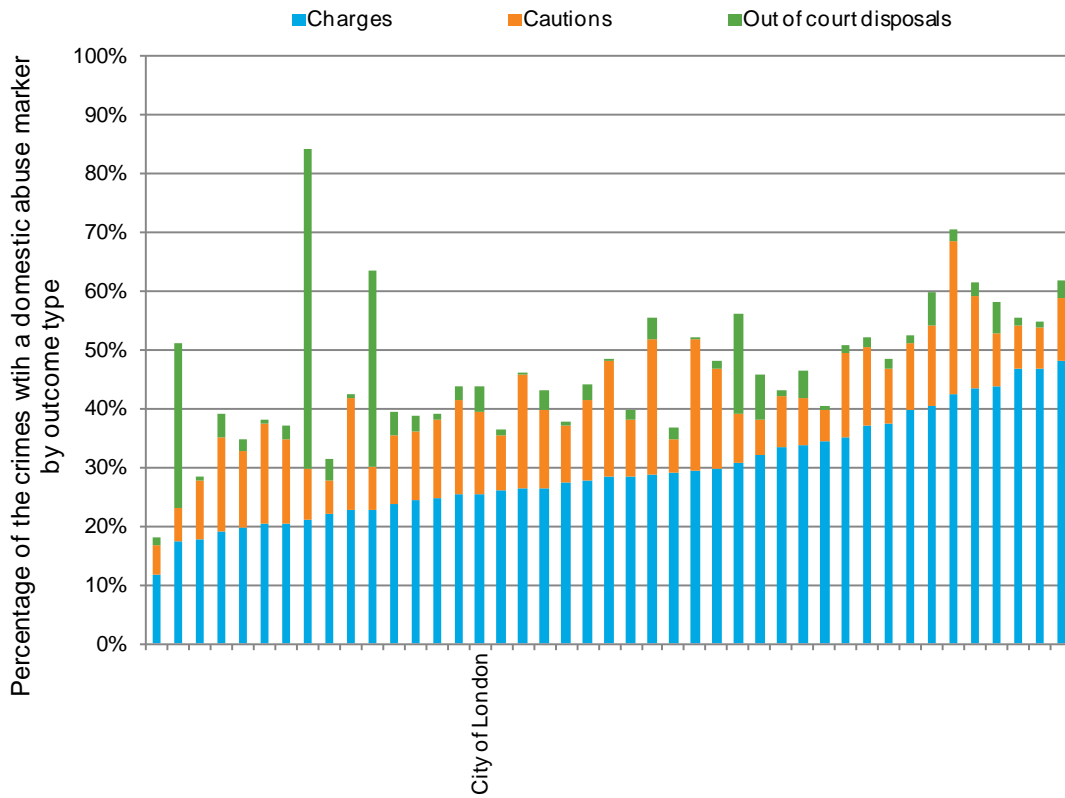
The multi-agency domestic abuse conferences (MARAC) process is under-developed and conferences are only called on a needs basis for high-risk cases. While the force is confident that a MARAC can be called at short notice, this is rarely tested and ongoing case management and oversight is not evident.

The City of London recorded 71 domestic abuse related crimes for the 12 months to the end of August 2013.¹¹ Of these crimes 25 percent resulted in a charge, 14 percent resulted in a caution and 4 percent had an out-of court-disposal, for example a fixed penalty notice for disorderly conduct.

Figure 2: Percentage of different outcome types used for crimes with a domestic abuse marker for the 12 months to 31 August 2013¹²

¹¹ Based on forces' own definition of domestic abuse and use of a domestic abuse marker on IT systems.

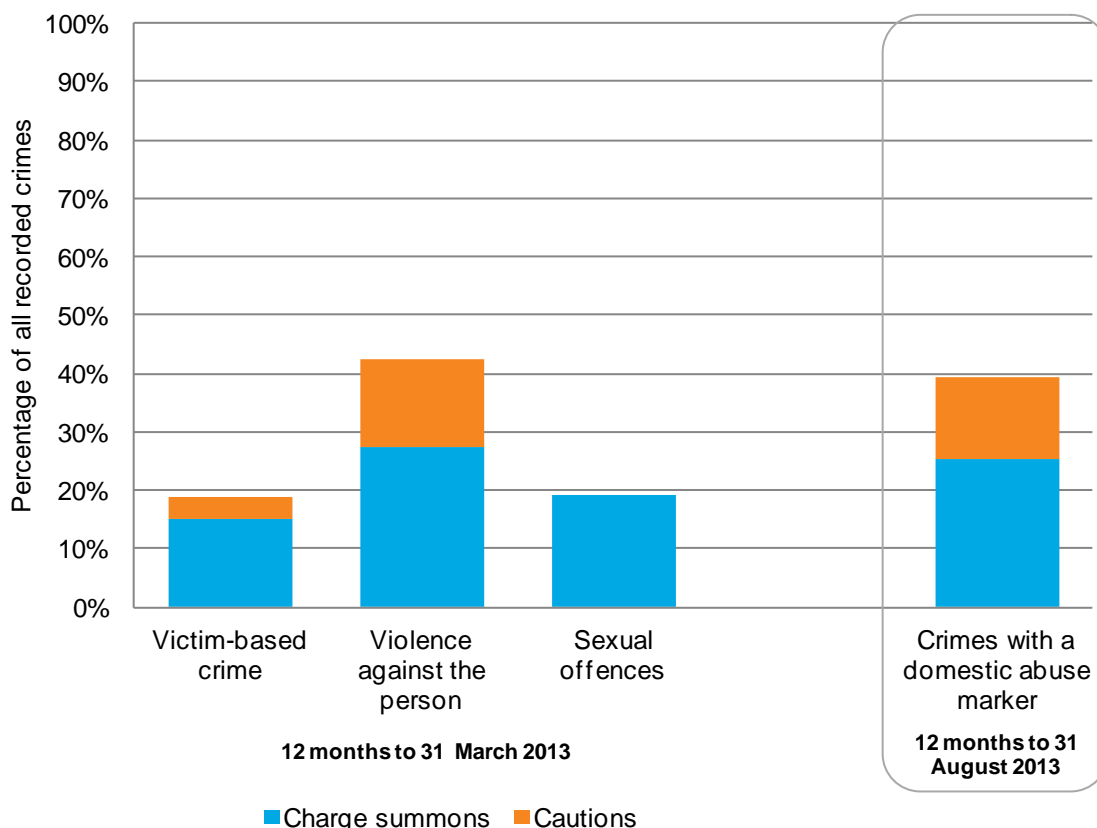
¹² Based on forces' own definition of domestic abuse and use of a domestic abuse marker on IT systems.



Source: HMIC data collection

The City of London charges a higher proportion of crimes with a domestic abuse marker than recorded victim-based crime. This may indicate that the force has a different approach to domestic abuse outcomes than other crimes.

Figure 3: Percentage of charge summons and cautions used for victim-based crime, violence against the person, sexual offences and all crimes with a domestic abuse marker¹³



Sources: HMIC data collection, Home Office Crimes detected in England and Wales, ONS Crime in England and Wales

The PPU is well resourced. It is led by a detective inspector and two detective sergeants who supervise eight accredited detectives with a range of skills and specialist knowledge. While staff within the unit are allocated specific responsibilities, the team manage a range of public protection issues within the safeguarding environment. This means that they are trained to deal with crimes including child abuse and domestic abuse. Officers within the team have developed strong links with practitioners from a range of partners and other service providers, for example children and adult social services. The team provides seven-day coverage until 6.00pm (4.00pm at weekends), with CID dealing with any custody investigations outside these times. PPU staff review all cases of domestic abuse and re-assess the risk levels.

¹³ Based on forces' own definition of domestic abuse and use of a domestic abuse marker on IT systems.

Since the force restructured under the City First programme, the responsibility for relevant policy development and the maintenance of operational procedure has passed to the public protection unit. With no additional resource, staff are concerned that they lack the capacity to do this, and their day-to-day work which may lead to slippage in policy management. This needs to be closely monitored by the force.

To improve the services to victims, the force has recruited a vulnerable persons' advocate. The appointment of this experienced and dedicated professional has strengthened relationships with partner agencies, and led to the introduction of outreach clinics from non-police premises. This supplements the ongoing work with victim support, who run support surgeries at the police premises at the Barbican Centre. The force is also contributing to several domestic abuse awareness events involving Baroness Scotland, through which over 500 domestic abuse toolkits have been distributed to businesses in the city area. The aim of this is to help people understand the consequence of domestic abuse and build confidence in the public to report incidents either directly or through a third party.

Only response units who attend incidents are actively involved in dealing with domestic abuse and safety planning for victims. Neighbourhood teams working in the community on a daily basis could provide a vital service in ensuring the safety of the victim and the compliance of the perpetrator but are not actively involved in safety planning. This would also relieve some of the pressure on the PPU and make all staff understand their responsibility to reduce risk.

The MARAC protocol in the City of London is under-developed and only used on a needs basis for high-risk cases. HMIC noted that only one MARAC had been held within the force area in 2013 as all other high-risk cases involved individuals who lived in other police areas. The force was, however, confident, that the capacity was there to hold an emergency MARAC at short notice if needed, although this had not been tested.

Does the force have appropriate systems, processes and understanding to manage domestic abuse and risk to victims in the future?

HMIC found the force recognised the need to develop systems and processes to better understand and manage the risk to domestic abuse victims in the future. There has been a significant reduction in the number of domestic abuse incidents being reported to the police, which has prompted the commissioning of a problem profile to try and understand why this is the case.

There is a designated domestic violence court at the city magistrates' court for initial hearings of appropriate cases and the force makes good use of special measures such as video interviews for victims.

There is no formal process to deal with prison releases and perpetrators being released on bail although these account for small numbers.

There is no process within the force to respond to prison releases of domestic abuse offenders or releases from custody at court. However, with such a small number of cases, the PPU were confident that with any which resulted in a conviction and lengthy court sentence, they would be aware of the release date and be able to take action. PPU track all active cases involving an offender going to court, and PPU officers routinely attend court hearings if a perpetrator may be released from custody.

The level of domestic abuse being reported to the police within the City of London is reducing. The year-to-date figure (from 01 April 2013 to 05 December 2013) is just 82 cases. This compares to 152 cases in 2012–13 and 178 cases in the previous year. There are numerous awareness raising initiatives and events held in the force area such as the one with Baroness Scotland. Despite these campaigns, reporting of domestic abuse cases is reducing.

In response, the force has commissioned a problem profile for domestic abuse. This is an intelligence product, created by analysts that will outline the risk and threats from domestic abuse and recommendations on how the police may use resources to mitigate those risks. It is anticipated that this will provide the force with a better understanding of how to protect people from domestic abuse in the future.

There is an opportunity for the force to further develop communication strategies that encourage those suffering domestic abuse to report it to police and other agencies while they are transiting through the city area. The city environment is unique in that victims may be entering a perpetrator-free area during their work time which will enable them to report abuse to the police in a safe environment, if they are given the right encouragement and support.

The force does not currently have a robust offender management programme for high-risk domestic abuse perpetrators as no such individuals have been identified through the force intelligence systems. However, HMIC found that officers understand what a serial offender is, and were aware of at least one individual who exhibited serial stalking behaviours. It is a concern that this had not been highlighted on force systems. Officers are not aware what process should be used to highlight this individual to all frontline officers. This has been identified as an area for development and the force is in consultation with the

College of Policing who are assisting them with the development of a process to rectify this.

The force intelligence bureau has been recently reorganised. Domestic abuse intelligence is researched by the wider 'communities' intelligence desk. Information and intelligence are passed to neighbourhood and response officers. HMIC found very little information or tasking of officers related to offenders or victims of domestic abuse.

The MARAC process is under-developed and conferences are only called on a needs basis for high-risk cases. While the force is confident that a MARAC can be called at short notice, this is tested rarely, and ongoing case management and oversight is not evident. The identification and retention of a MARAC co-ordinator within the Safer City Partnership would strengthen this process and provide a better service to high and potentially medium risk victims.

Recommendations

As a result of this inspection, HMIC has developed recommendations which are designed to tackle any risks identified in the service to victims of domestic abuse. These force specific recommendations should be considered in conjunction with recommendations to all forces set out in the national report.

1. The force should implement a new domestic abuse policy to provide greater clarity on stalking, harassment and the management of vulnerable people.
2. The introduction of reactive intelligence officers (RIOs) into the control room is seen as a positive development in improving the policing response to victims. The force should ensure that better coverage is available and that officers who are employed in this role are suitably trained and have access to all relevant information systems.
3. The force should develop a structured domestic abuse training programme focusing on the domestic abuse definition and providing scenario based examples to assist officers in making informed decisions on the assessment of risk and give clear guidance on delivering effective safeguarding actions.
4. The force should make more effective use of body-worn cameras to capture early evidence of injuries and scene footage to strengthen the evidence base for prosecutions.
5. The MARAC process should be re-developed and more actively engaged in ongoing case management processes, including transient crime reporting to ensure that appropriate safeguarding measures are actioned in a consistent manner.

Glossary

Bail conditions

A court can remand a defendant in custody or grant bail, with or without conditions attached. Before the first court hearing, the police can also retain a defendant in custody or grant bail, with or without conditions attached, but their powers to do so are more limited than the court's. Conditions can only be imposed to ensure that the defendant attends the next court hearing, commits no new offences in the meantime, and does not interfere with any witnesses or obstruct the course of justice.

Body worn camera

A video camera, worn on the helmet or upper body of an officer, which records visual and audio footage of an incident.

CAADA (Co-ordinated Action Against Domestic Abuse)

CAADA is a national charity supporting a strong multi-agency response to domestic abuse. Its work focuses on saving lives and public money.

CAADA provides practical help to support professionals and organisations working with domestic abuse victims. The aim is to protect the highest risk victims and their children – those at risk of murder or serious harm.

CCTV

Evidence from Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) can be used to support police investigations. It is primarily used for corroborating what is already known in investigating incidents and to trigger further opportunities to carry out investigation, such as the identification of witnesses and suspects.

Clare's Law

Clare's Law – the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme – is designed to provide victims with information that may protect them from an abusive situation before it ends in tragedy. The scheme allows the police to disclose information about a partner's previous history of domestic violence or violent acts. The Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme is named after Clare Wood who was

brutally murdered in 2009 by her former partner George Appleton, who had a record of violence against women.

Code of Practice for Victims of Crime

The Code of Practice for Victims of Crime (the Victims' Code) places a statutory obligation on criminal justice agencies to provide a standard of service to victims of crime or, where the victim died as a result of the criminal conduct, their relatives. The obligations the Victims' Code places on the agencies concerned include that:

- They provide victims, or their relatives, with information about the crime, including about arrests, prosecutions and court decisions;
- They provide information about eligibility for compensation under the Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme;
- Victims be told about Victim Support and either be referred on to them or offered their service;
- Bereaved relatives be assigned a family liaison police officer; and
- Victims of an offender who receives a sentence of 12 months or more after being convicted of a sexual or violent offence have the opportunity to make representations about what licence conditions or supervision requirements the offender should be subject to on release from prison.

There are enhanced entitlements for victims of the most serious crime which includes domestic violence.

Coercive control

This is term and concept developed by Evan Stark which seeks to explain the range of tactics used by perpetrators and the impact of those on victims. It highlights the on-going nature of the behaviour and the extent to which the actions of the perpetrator control the victim through isolation, intimidation, degradation and micro-regulation of everyday life. Crucially it sets out such abuse can be psychological as well as physical. Coercive control is explicitly covered by the definition of domestic abuse.

Control room

A police control or communications room manages emergency (999) and non-emergency (101) calls, and sending police officers to these calls.

Counter-allegation

Where someone initially identified as the perpetrator makes an allegation against the victim. If counter-allegations are not identified and resolved agencies may be providing services to the perpetrator and inadvertently helping them isolate and control the victim. The victim may not get access to the services they need because they are labelled 'the perpetrator'.

Crime Scene Investigator

Police staff who work alongside uniformed and plain clothed police officers during the investigation of a crime to locate, record and recover evidence from crime scenes.

DASH – domestic abuse, stalking and harassment (DASH 2009)

DASH is a risk identification, assessment and management model adopted by UK police forces and partner agencies in 2009. The aim of the DASH assessment is to help front-line practitioners identify high risk cases of domestic abuse, stalking and so-called honour-based violence.

Domestic Homicide Review

Local areas are expected to undertake a multi-agency review following a domestic homicide. The process aims to assist all those involved, to identify the lessons that can be learned from homicides where a person is killed as a result of domestic violence, with a view to preventing future homicides and violence.

Domestic Violence Prevention Notices (DVPN)

A DVPN is the initial notice issued by the police to provide emergency protection to an individual believed to be the victim of domestic violence.

This notice, which must be authorised by a police superintendent, contains prohibitions that effectively bar the suspected perpetrator from returning to the victim's home or otherwise contacting the victim.

A DVPN may be issued to a person aged 18 years and over if the police superintendent has reasonable grounds for believing that:

- the individual has been violent towards, or

- has threatened violence towards an associated person, and
- the DVPN is necessary to protect that person from violence or a threat of violence by the intended recipient of the DVPN

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

Female genital mutilation (sometimes referred to as female circumcision) refers to procedures that intentionally alter or cause injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons. The practice is illegal in the UK.

Frontline

These are police officers or police staff who are in everyday contact with the public and who directly intervene to keep people safe and enforce the law. The HMIC publication, *Policing in Austerity: Rising to the Challenge* (2013) sets this out in more detail.

Golden hour

Commonly used to refer to the time after a crime has been committed during which there is maximum potential for recovery of forensic evidence

Harassment

The term harassment is used to cover the 'causing alarm or distress' offences under section 2 of the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 as amended (PHA), and 'putting people in fear of violence' offences under section 4 of the PHA.

House-to- house

House-to-house enquiries are likely to feature in many investigations to: identify suspects and canvas for witnesses in areas connected to an incident, establish who lives or works in a particular location, and obtain an account of their movements during relevant times.

High risk

Term used when, following a DASH risk assessment, there are identifiable indicators of risk of serious harm. The potential event could happen at any time and the impact would be serious. Risk of serious harm (Home Office 2002 and OASys 2006): 'A risk which is life threatening and/or traumatic, and from which recovery, whether physical or psychological, can be expected to be difficult or impossible'.

IDVA – independent domestic violence adviser

Independent domestic violence advisers or advocates (IDVAs) are trained specialists who provide a service to victims at high risk of harm from intimate partners, ex-partners or family members, with the aim of securing their safety and the safety of their children. Serving as a victim's primary point of contact, IDVAs normally work with their clients from the point of crisis, to assess the level of risk, discuss the range of suitable options and develop safety plans.

Incident

When a member of the public calls for police assistance, or a police officer observes or discovers a crime the police usually create an incident record. This is the first step, the police will then decide whether a crime has been committed and, if it is appropriate, create a crime record.

Intimate Partner Violence

This describes physical, sexual, or psychological harm by a current or former partner or spouse. This type of violence can occur among heterosexual or same-sex couples and does not require sexual intimacy.

MARAC (Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference)

MARACs are regular local meetings where information about high risk domestic abuse victims (those at risk of murder or serious harm) is shared between local agencies. By bringing all agencies together at a MARAC, and ensuring that whenever possible the voice of the victim is represented by the IDVA, a risk focused, co-ordinated safety plan can be drawn up to support the victim. There are currently over 270 MARACs operating across England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland managing more than 64,000 cases a year.

MASH – Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub

A Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) brings together staff from police and partner agencies who work from the same location, sharing information and ensuring a timely and joined-up response to protect children and vulnerable adults.

Medium risk

Term used when following a DASH risk assessment there are identifiable indicators of risk of serious harm. The offender has the potential to cause serious harm but is unlikely to do so unless there is a change in circumstances, for example, failure to take medication, loss of accommodation, relationship breakdown, drug or alcohol misuse.

National Domestic Abuse helpline

A Freephone 24 Hour National Domestic Violence Helpline, run in partnership between Women's Aid and Refuge, is a national service for women experiencing domestic violence, their family, friends, colleagues and others calling on their behalf.

The Helpline can give support, help and information over the telephone, wherever the caller might be in the country. The Helpline is staffed 24 hours a day by fully trained female helpline support workers and volunteers. All calls are completely confidential. Translation facilities for callers whose first language is not English, and a service for callers who are deaf or hard of hearing are available.

Partnership

A term used where collaborative working is established between the police and other public, private or voluntary organisations.

Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (PACE)

The Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 and the PACE codes of practice provide the core framework of police powers and safeguards around stop and search, arrest, detention, investigation, identification and interviewing detainees. www.gov.uk/government/collections/police-and-criminal-evidence-act-1984-pace-current-versions

Positive action

The term refers to the steps and action taken at all stages of the police response to ensure effective protection of victims and children, while allowing the criminal justice system to hold the offender to account. It is often used in the context of arrest policy, police guidance states that “arrest will normally be ‘necessary’ under the terms of PACE to protect a child or vulnerable person, prevent the suspect causing injury and/or to allow for the prompt and effective investigation of the offence”.

Problem-solving

Problem-solving is a term used in policing where forces systematically identify and analyse crime and disorder problems, develop specific responses to individual problems and subsequently assess whether the response has been successful.

Refuge

A refuge is a safe house where women and children who are experiencing domestic violence can stay free from abuse. Refuge addresses (and sometimes telephone numbers) are confidential. According to Women’s Aid on a typical day, **over 7000 women and children** are resident in refuge accommodation in England

Risk assessment

A risk assessment is based on structured professional judgment. It provides structure and informs decisions that are already being made. It is only a

guide/checklist and should not be seen as a scientific predictive solution. Its completion is intended to assist officers in the decision-making process on appropriate levels of intervention for victims of domestic violence.

Safeguarding

The term safeguarding is applied when protecting children and other vulnerable people. The UK Government has defined the term 'safeguarding children' as: *"The process of protecting children from abuse or neglect, preventing impairment of their health and development, and ensuring they are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care that enables children to have optimum life chances and enter adulthood successfully."*

Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC)

SARCs are specialist medical and forensic services for anyone who has been raped or sexually assaulted.

They aim to be a one-stop service, providing the following under one roof: medical care and forensic examination following assault/rape and, in some locations, sexual health services.

Standard Risk

Term used following a DASH risk assessment where current evidence does not indicate likelihood of causing serious harm.

Victim Personal Statement

The Victim Personal Statement (VPS) gives victims an opportunity to describe the wider effects of the crime upon them, express their concerns and indicate whether or not they require any support.

Provisions relating to the making of a VPS and its use in criminal proceedings are included in the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime (Victims' Code), which was published on 29 October 2013 and came into force on 10 December 2013.

Vulnerable

A term used to describe a person who is in need of special care, support, or protection because of age, disability, or risk of abuse or neglect.

What Works Centre for Crime Reduction

The What Works Centre for Crime Reduction is hosted by the College of Policing. The What Works Centre for Crime Reduction will: review research on practices and interventions to reduce crime, label the evidence base in terms of quality, cost and impact, and provide police and crime commissioners and other crime reduction partners with the knowledge, tools and guidance to help them target their resources more effectively.

It will be led by a core team from the College of Policing, and supported by a "commissioned partnership programme" which has been jointly funded by the College and the Economic and Social Research Council.