

Committee(s): Police Authority Board	Dated: 21 st October 2021
Subject: Violence Against Women & Girls: Update report	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	People are safe and feel safe
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	N
If so, how much?	N/A
What is the source of Funding?	N/A
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?	N/A
Report of: Commissioner of Police Pol xx-21	For information
Report author: Carly Humphreys, Chief Inspector, Response, Local Policing	

Summary

Sarah Everard's murderer's actions have shaken trust in policing and highlighted that women and girls have real concerns about their safety and violence against them. There are critical issues for the whole of policing that need to be examined and acted on, from vetting to professional standards, to how predatory or misogynistic behaviour is challenged. In line with the national policing response City of London Police (CoLP) is prioritising its response to Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) and this report is an interim update on the work in progress. A full report, including a VAWG action plan will be brought to November's Police Authority Board.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to note the report.

Main Report

Background

1. The murder of Sarah Everard by a serving Metropolitan Police officer, Wayne Couzens has understandably required forces to consider the implications from this appalling tragedy. Whilst this is just one of many cases of violence against women and girls, the fact that the perpetrator was a serving police officer has had a direct impact upon the confidence of many women towards policing. It has also encouraged a number of women to come forward to describe their own negative experiences of working for the police.
2. This report outlines the work being conducted externally and internally to enhance public confidence, reassure our community and address concerns of some of our staff.

This work will be supported throughout the organisation and communicated through an external and internal media campaign.

The National Position

3. The National Police Chiefs Council and the College of Policing will soon be launching a national police strategy for VAWG. This will be led by a new, full-time National Police Lead for VAWG, Deputy Chief Constable Maggie Blyth to drive and coordinate action. In Force we have appointed Detective Chief Superintendent Rebecca Riggs, as our Lead in this area, supported by Detective Chief Inspector Carly Humphreys.
4. The Home Secretary has launched a non-statutory inquiry to investigate the issues raised by the conviction of Wayne Couzens. The inquiry will be made up of 2 parts, establishing a definitive account of Couzen's conduct leading up to his conviction, as well as any opportunities missed and looking at any wider issues across policing – including vetting practices, professional standards and discipline, and workplace behaviour. HMICFRS will be asked to conduct a thematic inspection of vetting and counter-corruption procedures in policing across England and Wales – including forces' ability to detect and deal with misogynistic and predatory behaviour.
5. The Prime Minister will launch a Home Secretary-chaired taskforce to drive cross-government action on tackling violence against women and girls to help maintain public confidence in policing. The new group will report into the Crime and Justice Taskforce chaired by the Prime Minister, Minister for Crime and Policing, Kit Malthouse, and Maggie Blyth. It will meet for the first time in the autumn.
6. Alongside national policing we are currently waiting for further guidance from the Home Office on their request for police forces to record and identify, on an experimental basis any crimes of violence against the person, including stalking and harassment and sexual offences, where the victim perceives it to have been motivated by a hostility based on their sex. CoLP Chief Officer Team is revising our position on this. NPCC is also awaiting the Government's response to the upcoming Law Commission Review, which is considering including misogyny as a hate crime, to provide guidance to us and all police forces of the Government's intention and the correct next steps.

Community Engagement

7. The force has an internal Vulnerability Working Group (VWG), chaired by Detective Superintendent Richard Waight. This feeds into the Vulnerability Steering Group (VSG) chaired by T/Commander Evans, which has an internal and external membership, notably including a representative from the Department of Community & Children's Services and also a representative from the Police Committee. Both of these groups meet quarterly to oversee many aspects of VAWG, but a more specific VAWG Action Plan has been developed and will be presented to your November Board.
8. Local Policing is currently revising its Night Time Economy (NTE) plan focussed around VAWG, which will incorporate a force-wide approach through a dedicated NTE team. This team will draw upon officers from both Local Policing, the Public Protection

Unit (PPU) and the third sector to combat the threat towards women and girls. This is planned for launch early 2022. However due to commence on the 26th November 2021 is the Christmas Campaign, which will see increased resourcing dealing with the NTE and with a focus on vulnerability into the New Year.

9. The precise scale of concern amongst women and girls within the City is largely unknown and requires a mature assessment drawing upon the support of local businesses and partner agencies. Ward Panel events are being planned to seek the views of the community and establish with whom we can improve engagement to build additional confidence. Similarly, we are establishing links with our business leads through our newly established Business Crime Reduction Partnership (BCRP). This will enable us to explore from a business community perspective, how we can increase confidence and reduce fear regarding VAWG. Critical to this broader understanding is also the role of our Independent Advisory Scrutiny Group (IASG). A meeting with Local Policing is scheduled for the 21st October 2021 to focus on this. We will also continue our partnership work with the City of London Corporation (CoL), with whom we will liaise and engage with to explore options.
10. In targeting high harm offenders, a joint preventative operation is being launched on the 26th November 2021 alongside the Metropolitan Police Service and British Transport Police to focus on high-visibility engagement on late and night shifts to tackle VAWG. This activity will be focused in and around transport hubs and licensed premises with a particular focus on ensuring the safety of lone females and monitoring the presence of lone males outside such premises.
11. Work continues with licensed premises and there is a clear pathway to increase female safety through WAVE (Welfare and Vulnerability Engagement) training. This implements the 'ASK FOR ANGELA' scheme across NTE venues. Policing across London has joined together with Safer Sounds, part of the Safer Business Network, and licensed venues across the capital to help keep people safe while enjoying a night out. The safety initiative 'Ask for Angela' is being relaunched on 21st October 2021 in the City and will be rolled out to bars, clubs and other licensed businesses. People who feel unsafe, vulnerable or threatened can discreetly seek help by approaching venue staff and asking them for 'Angela'. This code-phrase will indicate to staff that they require help with their situation and a trained member of staff will then look to support and assist them. Venues that support 'Ask for Angela' have been given Welfare And Vulnerability Engagement (WAVE) training.
12. To date, the Safer Business Network (SBN) has delivered training to 15 venues, but the scheme will be re-launched on the 21st October 2021. A funding bid to the Home Office has been submitted for £50k relating to the Safety of Women at Night (SWAN), if successful, the SBN this will deliver the training to a further 300 venues across the City.

Police Deployment

13. Consideration has been given regarding the deployment of plain clothed officers. A revised policy around prohibiting proactive lone working for plain clothed officers has been communicated to staff. Officers have also been instructed on our newly established public verification process using the FCR (Force Control Room). This now

provides reassurance to members of the public should they seek to challenge the identity and deployment of an officer. We have ensured consistency across London, with the Metropolitan Police and British Transport Police regarding this response.

14. On 1st October 2021 Commissioner Dyson wrote a communications piece following the sentencing of Wayne Couzens, which was shared externally on Twitter, Facebook, Nextdoor and the CoLP website. Messaging will also continue to be shared through the Monthly Sector Update; the next issue being at the end of this month, which has a circulation of Alderman and Common Councillors.

Prevention

15. Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) Interim Report¹ highlighted that we must sustain our focus on taking action to prevent crimes against women and girls before they are committed, including working with partner agencies to tackle the issues that can contribute to someone adopting harmful behaviour. All HMICFRS inspection recommendations are reported to the Strategic Planning and Performance Committee (SPPC), which next meets on 3rd November 2021.
16. The City currently has two registered sex offenders subject of a MAPPA (Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangement) offenders. These offenders are managed through assigned offender managers with a focus on responding to intelligence through proactive policing.
17. Last week, Local Policing received confirmation that they were successful in their bid to obtain £28k of funding relating to 'Safer Street' initiatives, which deliver several night safety hubs across various locations in the City (to be confirmed). These will run until March 2022. Further funding requests have been submitted to the Home Office.
18. The education of men and boys regarding their responsibility as an 'active bystander' to make women and girls feel safe is also an important area. The PPU has already begun to scope this work, which will be delivered alongside partner agencies.
19. PPU and the Vulnerable Victim's Advocate have delivered a webinar presentation to female CoL staff regarding personal safety. Due to its success, a wider training package is being delivered for businesses across the City. PPU will launch '16 Days of Action Against Gender Violence'; an international campaign from 25th November 2021. This will include victim hubs at different locations in the City whilst encompassing 'Good Night Out'² and WAVE³ training sessions for licensed premises.

Enforcement

¹ [Interim report: Inspection into how effectively the police engage with women and girls - HMICFRS \(justiceinspectorates.gov.uk\)](https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk)

² The 'Good Night Out' campaign supports nightlife spaces and organisations to better understand, respond to, and prevent sexual harassment and assault, through specialist training, policy support and an accreditation programme. [Info | Good Night Out Campaign](#)

³ The WAVE Programme consists of a training, best practice guidance and the Ask for Angela campaign.

20. The Force tasking process monitors outstanding suspects for VAWG related offences, this is tracked daily to ensure that all opportunities for apprehending suspects are exploited. Specifically for VAWG offences, the force has three outstanding suspects⁴; two of which are residing overseas.
21. Improving upon our investigation standards is also a critical part of our enforcement plan. When a VAWG crime has taken place, the force will ensure that there is a seamless approach from initial police contact to investigation and subsequently onto the criminal justice system; ensuring that the best support is in place for the victim. For allegations made where there has not been a successful prosecution for the victim, a recent audit from the Domestic Abuse CPS London District Prosecutor, provided a wholly complimentary review of the force's supervision and decision making.
22. PPU work closely with the London RASSO (Rape and Serious Sexual Assault) CPS leads, working together on a Joint Action Plan. An outcome of this joint MOU in relation to securing early CPS investigative advice has improved opportunities for conviction. Regular dip-sample reviews of VAWG offences are conducted for the force Crime Scrutiny Group. Data in respect of this area will be reported in the November paper.
23. Compliance to the Victim's Code is monitored through the Force Resolution Centre and reviewed by the PPU Detective Chief Inspector (DCI). This ensures that all victims have been updated within the appropriate time frame and that investigations are receiving appropriate supervision.
24. Local Policing, by the end of November 2021, will complete a review to ensure that all first responders are equipped to deal with disclosures of domestic abuse, sexual violence, stalking and female genital mutilation. An example of this being the implementation of our domestic abuse '20 point plan' which requires mandatory supervisor attendance at the scene. Additionally, THRIVE (Threat, Harm, Risk, Investigation Opportunities, Vulnerability of the victim and Engagement level required to resolve the issue)⁵ training has already been delivered to all first responders, the monitoring of this plan is captured within the force Crime Standards Board, including a monthly 'deep dive' of selected cases.

Professional Standards Department (PSD)

25. A review of all sexual misconduct and intelligence cases from the past five years is ongoing. From this review, the force is satisfied that all cases have been dealt with effectively and reassured that any risk factors have been identified. This includes ensuring that our contributions to the national barred and advisory list are fully up-to-date. Currently there are two live cases being investigated by PSD, related to VAWG.

⁴ Correct at 13/10/21 – source PPU.

⁵ THRIVE methodology is a recognised technique in policing and is used by a number of police services around the country. It enables our responders and investigators to make an individual assessment of every incident, so we can fit the action we take to the particular circumstances. This provides victims of crime with a bespoke service commensurate with what has occurred and the level of impact on the victim.

26. PSD also has ownership of the NPCC led Sexual Harassment Implementation Plan. This was reviewed in March 2021 and reflects that we are up-to-date with our national requirements.
27. Pro-active work remains at the forefront in relation to Abuse of Position for a Sexual Purpose (APSP). A number of inputs have been delivered internally to educate staff into spotting the signs, as well as externally to vulnerable groups and businesses. This is complemented by a force wide publication of the new NPCC approved video focused on APSP and how to support officers who identify it. More broadly, the specific role of the PSD Engagement Officer has ensured that both internally and externally we outline our force values, standards of professional behaviour and clear reporting routes where wrongdoing is suspected.
28. The force has also developed a Standing Operating Procedure (SOP) in relation to APSP, one of only a small number of forces to have done this, underlining the seriousness in which we are ensuring that APSP is being fully addressed in the risk profile for the force.
29. Vetting is completed in accordance with the College of Policing APP (Approved Professional Practice). This includes mandatory Police checks and Complaints and Misconduct checks, if they have worked in another police force. Any applicant with a conviction, caution or misconduct finding for violence against women will not be granted vetting due to the impact of public confidence on the police service. Any applicant with untested intelligence relating to such matters will be risk-assessed and may include a vetting interview to enable a balanced and proportionate decision to be made.
30. In a bid to speed up the recruitment and vetting process, which can be lengthy, an approach had been taken by the Force to recruit some individuals on a risk assessed basis. This meant that they could join the organisation sooner and commence work on a risk managed basis subject to vetting completion. On the 7th October 2021, the Recruitment Oversight Board agreed that the force would no longer 'Risk Manage' individuals into the force, meaning that full vetting would need to be awarded before they commenced employment (unless there are extenuating circumstances which would require a documented rationale by a designated Chief Officer lead).

Diversity, Equality and Inclusion (DEI)

31. On the 6th October 2021, Commissioner Dyson led a forum session to listen to staff from across the force and included the sharing of experiences of being a woman in the City of London Police. On Thursday 14th October 2021, Commissioner designate Angela McLaren held a further session for women only.
32. The issues raised have been collated and a Working Group is due to meet this week in order to co-ordinate follow-up communications and implement appropriate suggestions for improvement. Additionally, the Professional Standards Department (PSD) will support any officers who come forward to report concerns linked to sexual misconduct, both current and historic.

33. Members will already be aware from the regular quarterly reports to the Professional Standards and Integrity Committee (PSIC) on Equality and Inclusion (E&I) that internally, significant work is already in progress regarding E&I. Notably, from April 2022, the force will be launching a series of mandatory annual *values, standards and ethics* sessions for all employees. These inputs will bring together mixed groups of officers and police staff (of different ranks and grades), to collectively explore our culture and values. The sessions will include outside speakers from the communities we serve, to describe the impact policing has had on their lives - both good and bad. These voices will of course include female victims of violence and harassment.
34. Next year the force will also offer short secondments to external organisations who excel in E&I. Our staff who take part will be able to find out from employees of these organisations how they work, and in turn bring back their experiences and best practice to inform our internal approach to E&I. The organisations selected for the scheme will include those which champion female leaders and have concrete measures in place to promote and nurture gender equality.
35. HR processes have also been enhanced to reflect our E&I commitment. This is evidenced through an 'Aspirations Paper' recently agreed at the Force E&I Strategic Board which has set an objective: *To increase the representation of Female Police Officers by 2.6% per year to reach representation of 50% female Officer by 2031*. Currently, our percentage of female Police Officers is 23.7% whereas for Police Staff, it is 57.8% (correct as of September 2021, source 'Force HR Monitoring Report' due to the November SPPC). Of note, at the recent Chief Inspector promotion process, four out of the 6 successful applicants were female. Part of the strategy to deliver this will be to continue making use of initiatives such as 'Police Now' which attracts a high proportion of female applicants. In addition to advertising through the National Staff Networks in order to attract more female interest.
36. Externally, by the end of Quarter 1 for 2022, the force is committed to hosting an E&I conference in the Square Mile. The conference will underscore the force's commitment to E&I and simultaneously provide a platform to explore and promote best practice in policing, for all protected characteristics.
37. The force will make best use of liaising with the Gender Network and LGBT Network. This will seek to ensure that processes are in place to listen to women and trans-women in order to hear what they think needs to take place to improve policing. In November 2021, LGBT+ advisors will undergo training, this will equip them to commence a number of initiatives such as community engagement events which can focus on protecting women and girls.
38. There are specific strands of our wellbeing strategy that fit within our focus surrounding VAWG; all new starters and transferees have direct contact upon induction from the Staff Networks, and Federation or Unite. Additionally, the Buddy Scheme is offered to all new joiners. This is led at Chief Superintendent rank and focuses on culture, the importance of being oneself, and having the confidence to challenge inappropriate behaviour or wrongdoing such as predatory or misogynistic behaviour. This scheme is being extended to Police Staff.

39. In November 2021, the force will provide a re-accreditation for Mental Health First Aiders. Although interactions will remain confidential, this may provide a broader indication regarding who is utilising the service and whether there are any gaps in provision. The bi-monthly coffee mornings, which have been a great success, will also continue to support wellbeing and have a future theme of gender.
40. The force has also now allocated a 'HeForShe' Senior Lead. This is an emerging piece of work for the force which centres around the premise that both women and men are equally critical to achieving gender equality and promoting women's empowerment.⁶

Governance and Performance

41. Locally, governance within the force for VAWG will be formally managed through the Performance Management Group with plans to have a more detailed measure within the CoLP Policing Plan 2022-23 for VAWG under the Vulnerability priority. The Policing Plan Measures get reported to your SPPC on a quarterly basis.
42. Additional governance will sit within the VAWG partnership forum which feeds into the Safer City Partnership to drive activity across partnerships, including charities and the third sector.

Conclusion

43. Overall, this report updates Members and has outlined what the force is doing to enhance its response towards VAWG. The focus is very much two pronged; firstly, to develop and improve upon our policing response to these issues and re-build trust and confidence within our communities. Secondly, to ensure that we have a committed internal response for our workforce.
44. These commitments will be overseen through formal governance as described in the report to ensure that progress is monitored and evolved as we increase our internal and external dialogues to tackle VAWG.

Appendices - None

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⁶ <https://www.heforshe.org/en>